



By CM Devendra Fadnavis said,
"Rahul Gandhi is God's gift to

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Congress slams Shinde govt over Dharavi redevelopment project, says "The biggest loot in modern India continues"



AV Team

The Congress Sunday slammed the government over the Dharavi redevelopment project being given to the Adani group, saying this is an example of how the conglomerate is getting enriched at the expense of people. The Congress' attack came a day after a protest was held in Mumbai against the Dharavi redevelopment project being helmed by the Adani group. It said "the biggest loot

in modern India continues" in full public gaze with the "complete support" of the ruling party. Former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray has alleged it was the "world's biggest Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) scam".

In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh alleged that the unique quality of the "Modani Mega Scam" is not just that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is channeling lakhs of crores towards his "close friends" and creating a

Modi-Made Monopoly (3M), but that the money is coming straight from the pockets of ordinary Indians. "We already know that the inflated cost of over-invoiced coal imports is being borne by lakhs of electricity consumers and that middle-class travellers are paying Modani's inflated airport charges," he said.

The Congress has been attacking the Adani Group, accusing it of wrongly benefitting from the BJP government. The party has been demanding a joint

parliamentary committee probe into the allegations of stock manipulation made by US research group Hindenburg. The business conglomerate has denied any wrongdoing on its part. Ramesh said it is now becoming even more clear that the true beneficiary of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project are not the people of Mumbai, or of Dharavi, but the "PM's closest friend, aided and abetted by Devendra Fadnavis".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 04

Jigna Vora, a journalist from Mumbai, got her voice back through TV shows?

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Two decades ago, there was a female daredevil journalist, who wanted to say no to the hierarchy of the press room. She was doing many crime stories independently to create her own stand and name in the media. But one fine morning her fate challenged her and she had no clue which hell she was landing in. Jigna Vora began her reporting career in 2006 with the Free Press Journal (FPJ). She reported on underworld don Abu Salem and former encounter specialist Daya Nayak. After her stint with the FPJ, she worked with the Mumbai Mirror and Mid-Day until 2008.

Vora is from Mumbai and got married to a businessman in Gujarat at an early age. Soon after her marriage, she had to go through

a lot of domestic violence. Her husband had to beat her; in-laws used to abuse her. From this marriage she had a son. After son's birth her life became more miserable, Jigna finally returned back to her parents' home in Mumbai and filed for divorce. It was during those numerous court visits that Vora got fascinated with court proceedings and the people she met there. With help from a childhood friend, she got a job at the Free Press Journal to support her son and her parents. Vora's role as a reporter gave her a new sense of empowerment. The divorce came through three years ago.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Jigna Vora, a journalist from Mumbai, got her voice back through TV shows?

Jigna was an independent woman. She was flamboyant and loud. Her transformation from a submissive housewife to a confident reporter surprised her close friends.

Who knew Jigna would be linked to Dey's murder? Day was returning to his home on his motorcycle from Ghatkopar four unidentified men on motorcycles opened fire on him at Hiranandani Gardens, Powai

The police alleged that Vora had supplied the address and licence plate number of Dey's motorcycle to Chhota Rajan. Police claimed Vora's professional rivalry was the reason for Dey's murder.

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By now Jigna was an independent woman. She was flamboyant and loud. Her transformation from a submissive housewife to a confident reporter surprised her close friends. She eventually graduated to doing stories related to the underworld. After her short stint with Mid-Day, Vora went on to join the Indian Express and later the Asian Age. After Dey's murder, she was seen at the Mid-Day office trying to get his job. She wanted to be made Head of Investigations, a post held by Dey. But the management refused. They said they had not heard of her stories. She was furious at the refusal. Vora's crime reports were mediocre and not as sensational as that of Dey.

Who knew Jigna would be linked to Dey's murder? Day was returning to his home on his motorcycle from Ghatkopar four unidentified men on motorcycles opened fire on him at Hiranandani Gardens, Powai. He was reported dead on arrival at the Hiranandani Hospital, with nine exit wounds on his body. Mumbai Police speculated the murder was a professional job, and may be related to his reporting on the oil mafia. The oil mafia, which pilfers oil being transported and also dilutes it before sale, has been under pressure since the killing of Yashwant Sonawane in January 2011. Dey had also reported that Chhota Rajan was the mastermind behind a shooting involving Dawood Ibrahim's brother Iqbal Kaskar in Mumbai. The murder was widely denounced by the press and the local government.

On 27 June 2011, after sixteen days of investigations, the Crime Branch declared they have cracked the case. Police officials caught seven people from different locations of India. Of which three were detained from Chembur, in Mumbai; one in Solapur; and remaining two from Rameshwaram, in Tamil Nadu. All the suspects resided in different parts of Mumbai except Satish Kalia, who settled down in Trivandrum after the birth of his daughter and cases against him were cleared. After the shootout they fled to evade arrest. All the seven suspects Rohit Thangappan Joseph alias Satish Kalia, Arun Dake, Anil Waghmode, Babloo, Sachin Gaikwad, Mangesh Agawane and Chhottu are history-sheeters. The suspects were allegedly from

Chhota Rajan's gang.

On 21 February 2012, Mumbai Crime Branch chargesheeted journalist Jigna Vora (Deputy Chief of Bureau of Asian Age) under stringent provisions of Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) and various other penal offences for her alleged role in the sensational murder. Jigna Vora had been under the Mumbai police's radar since 4 July 2011 after the police intercepted a conversation between Manoj, brother of Vinod Asrani, who has also been arrested and the gangster Chhota Rajan. The police alleged that Vora had supplied the address and licence plate number of Dey's motorcycle to Chhota Rajan. Police claimed Vora's professional rivalry was the reason for Dey's murder.

On 27 July 2012, Jigna Vora was granted bail by a special court reasoning that she has a child to look after and is a single parent and that she had no previous criminal record. The 2023 TV Series Scoop deals with the story of Jigna Vora, focusing on the events leading to and after Dey's murder, her subsequent arrest and the courtroom proceedings. Jigna Vora was acquitted in 2018 by a trial court and her acquittal was upheld by Bombay High Court. The court concluded that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had failed to provide any direct evidence linking Vora to the 2011 killing of Dey. She is currently a contestant on the Indian reality TV show, Bigg Boss Season 17, which started in October 2023. After a series called "Scoop" on Netflix and Bigg Boss, the voiceless Jigna got her voice to tell people what all she had to go through. Jigna's life is always a roller-coaster ride, hoping she will bounce back again forever.

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Diary



**United We Stand,
Divided We Fall**



- C.K. Subramaniam

The mayhem and paralysis in every session of Parliament and state legislatures drive most citizens, commentators and observers to despair and cynicism. Almost every session is marked by noisy scenes, chaos, cacophony, disruption, repeated adjournments, obstruction and paralysis. This pattern repeats itself in almost all state legislatures and Parliament year after year. This time for a change intruders created a stir and that is enough for chaos inside the parliament.

Opposition says Parliament will remain stalled till Home Minister speaks in Parliament on the issue; BJP alleges links between accused and Trinamool MLA. Fewer security staff, reduced height of the visitors' gallery from the House floor in the new Parliament building, an increase in the number of visitors of late, and shoes not being checked and these are among factors that contributed to Lok Sabha security breach. If there is a security threat, why not measures to prevent such an attack with preventive measures take in time. This is the second such attack and the second one took place on the anniversary day of the day of the first attack.

To safeguard our country from security breaches the powers-that-be must uphold the values set out in the objectives and carry out measures and beef up security to keep all ends close to make it workable from all angles. It is a great relief that nobody was harmed in the security breach

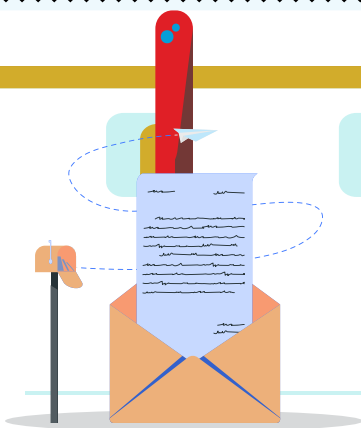
in Parliament on December 13, 2023. However, it is a tragic coincidence that the breach occurred on the same day as the deadly and tragic Parliament attack in 2001.

Two people disrupted the Indian Parliament as they set off a smoke canister inside the legislature in a major security breach. They jumped onto the floor of the Lower House of the Parliament from an overhead visitors' gallery. They were carrying canisters which started emitting yellow smoke, which led to chaos in the House. The parliamentarians joined hands to see the end of intruders and that is the teamwork displayed in front of the public representatives. It proved a point that "United we stand, divided we fall."

It appeared as though a movie shooting was taking place on the floor of the house. The latest security breach led to a similar fear nationwide as people tried to understand the gravity of the situation.

People across the nation were intrigued to know whether or not these smoke cans, also known as smoke bombs, are dangerous to life. The smoke cans are available in retail markets and are often used during military operations. Common people also use them during celebrations, sporting events, photoshoots, and more. It is not only a lesson but an ultimatum to the pressing problems of parliament attack on a broad daylight with security cordoning the area carrying all security equipments.

Letters to the Editor



Unnatural deaths of journalist

Many journalists have died unnaturally while reporting on the wars between Russia-Ukraine and Israel. By the end of 2023, 94 journalists have been killed and 400 journalists have been jailed. The global issue of safety and loss of lives of journalists has been raised worldwide. Since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 68 journalists have lost their lives so far. More than one a day and this rate is 72% of the deaths of journalists worldwide. There are mainly Palestinian journalists in Gaza. Many journalists have also lost their lives in Russia's attack on Ukraine. Ukraine has become a dangerous country for journalists in the Russia-Ukraine war. As a result, there has been a decrease in the unnatural deaths of journalists in the North and South of America. Last year, the number was 29. Now, by the end of the year, 7 deaths of journalists have been reported. All in all, the unnatural death of journalists is a matter of global concern.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar

Travelling in AC comfort is still a luxury even if one is forced to travel 'standing'!

Comfort comes at a price & not surprised that seating capacity has shrunk in AC locals which are more spacious & have no room to travel on footboard since doors need to be shut. Metro-type seating makes sense to increase capacity as youngsters won't mind travelling even if they are made to travel without a seat (standing) as many anyways have a desk job & 'standing' is a good exercise to burn some calories.

Railways can even experiment few compartments without seats to increase capacity during peak hours & commuters should not have any issues as 'locals' remains the fastest mode of transport & travelling in air-conditioned comfort is still a luxury even if one is forced to travel 'standing'!

S.N.Kabra

Atrocities against women are growing day by day

It is shocking to note that Girls and Women are missing more frequently. These are sold for begging, domestic work and sex work, which is disheartening and disturbing. Parents, whose daughters found missing are facing difficulty at police stations in getting their complaint

registered. As per indian criminal law any police station can register the First Information Report and transfer the case to the station concerned later on. (section 154 of criminal code 1973) This is known as zero FIR.

KLRao

Passengers must follow the elevator rules!

The lift at Bandra railway station suddenly stopped and around twenty two passengers were stuck in it for more than thirty five minutes. Most of them included senior citizens and women passengers. Twenty-two people entered the elevator, which had a capacity of eight to ten people at a time. Needless to say that, the elevator abruptly stopped functioning due to overload. This incident indicates that some passengers do not follow the rules properly, so such incidents happen. It is better if the station masters of the railways pay attention to the fact that only senior citizens and disabled persons and pregnant women should be allowed to use the lift at the railway station. Automatic escalators are available for other able-bodied passengers. So, the number of passengers in the lift will be limited as per the rules.

Sudhir Kangutkar

Fight for existence

Qutub Minar is the original 'Vishnu Stambha' and Taj Mahal is the 'Tajomahalaya'. Despite there being concrete evidence, these monuments are still being hailed as foreign artefacts and even though Kashi Vishweshwar's Shiva Linga is visible to all, a Court battle has to be fought for its custody. Our superior culture has been overshadowed by the blind imitation of foreigners. Vedic Scriptures and religious practices such as Sanskrit, Ayurveda and Yoga practices, various Sanatan forms of worship, etc. are glorified by the West. Before they start teaching us these practices, it will be better to adopt them ourselves in all walks of life. The identity of Dharma, culture and history of valour inspires the future generations to fight for existence and increases their enthusiasm. Exactly the same concept had discussed in the last 'All India Hindu Rashtra Convention'.

Sagar Shirodkar

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com

No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own)

City

Dy CM Devendra Fadnavis said, "Rahul Gandhi is God's gift to BJP" over BJP office-bearers meeting



Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis took a dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during a meeting of BJP office-bearers in Nagpur. Fadnavis humorously remarked, "Rahul Gandhi is God's gift to BJP. If the leader of the opposition party is like this, then we must consider ourselves fortunate." He went on to taunt Rahul Gandhi, suggesting that having an opposition leader

like him brings luck to the BJP.

Fadnavis highlighted the internal challenges faced by the Congress, stating, "Today, the condition of Congress has happened because they only thought about themselves. The importance of parties and organizations has diminished, and the leader grew, but not the workers."

Drawing a contrast with BJP's approach, Fadnavis shared an interaction with BJP leader Amit

Shah. "Amit Shah replied that if there is anyone most loyal in BJP, it is our workers. No one is bigger than ordinary workers. This is possible only in BJP," he said. Fadnavis, while addressing the gathering, urged the party members to focus on the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, emphasizing the significance of Mahavijay 2024 as their goal. Fadnavis emphasized the flexibility in leadership within the BJP, stating that changes are made to allow the new generation to emerge. He assured that those sidelined would be given different roles to contribute to the party. Fadnavis concluded by expressing the party's goal to place India back in the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting the BJP's commitment to change and development. ANI

Navi Mumbai airport after D B Patil likely to get Centre's nod soon Minister: Union Minister Kapil Patil



The proposal to name the upcoming airport in Navi Mumbai after late leader D B Patil has reached the office of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is likely to be approved soon, Union Minister Kapil Patil has said. Speaking at a symposium organised during the Agri Mahotsav on the topic 'Loknete D B Patil International Airport' at Dombivili on Saturday, Patil said the name of the new airport will be confirmed at the last stage of its construction. Late D B Patil had led several protests by farmers and landowners surrounding Panvel tehsil in Raigad district when the City and Industrial De-

velopment Corporation (CIDCO) acquired land in the area decades ago. The airport is expected to become operational next year. "A resolution to name the airport was passed in the state legislative assembly and council in November last year and sent to the Centre. The proposal has since been forwarded by the home department to the secretary in the Prime Minister's office," the minister said. Former MP Sanjiv Naik and the Bhumiputra Sangharsh Samiti have demanded about giving jobs to locals at the new airport. To this, Patil said, "I don't think bhumiputras (locals) will be denied jobs." PTI

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Congress Shinde govt over Dharavi redevelopment....

Despite official and unofficial claims, the reality is that the Dharavi project will result in the Adani conglomerate being given a mammoth 10.5 crore square feet of real estate Transferable Development Rights (TDR) equivalent to 6-7 times the area of Dharavi, the Congress leader claimed. He said this has been presented in a detailed study by the Mumbai Regional Congress Committee President and Dharavi MLA, Varsha Gaikwad.

TDR is a transferable credit that allows builders who use land, for instance, in approved slum development projects to be compensated with extra construction rights in other areas, Ramesh pointed out. "We have previously asked the PM to explain how the Adani conglomerate came to win the lucrative Dharavi project after an earlier tender"?? won by a different developer"?? was cancelled and rebid. In the earlier tender, the developer was offered a TDR equivalent to 5 crore square feet, but this has now jumped by 110%, which could give the Adani conglomerate a profit margin as high as 434%," Ramesh said.

These supernormal profits

have been enabled by Fadnavis' modifications of Development Control Regulations on 5 November, 2018 and 28 September, 2022 that have the effect of handing the Adani conglomerate a huge TDR bank, he alleged. "By doing away with indexation, these government resolutions give the Adani conglomerate the freedom to sell TDR anywhere in Mumbai, including south and central Mumbai and that too at much higher rates than previously allowed," Ramesh claimed.

All Mumbai developers will now be compelled to buy 40 per cent of their TDR requirement from the Adani conglomerate at exorbitant rates, he said. Noting that Dharavi is a very diverse, thriving community of seven lakh people that represents a mini-India, Ramesh said it has a large number of small, independent businesses that generate an estimated Rs 100 crore in annual income to the government. "Yet documents show that most of these people will be evicted out and only 54,461 slum dwellers and 9,522 residents in chawls and buildings will receive a rehabilitation home within Dharavi," the Congress leader said.

Nagpur factory blast: 9 killed at explosive company

Nine people were killed while three others were injured in an explosion occurred at a solar explosive company near Bazargaon village in Maharashtra's Nagpur on Sunday morning, police said. According to officials, a total of 12 workers were present inside the unit of the solar company when the blast took place. The explosion occurred at a cast booster plant of the firm. ANI

NCP chief Sharad Pawar said "Diamond trade used to take place in the Bandra Kurla Complex of Mumbai, now shifted to Gujarat"



Day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Surat Diamond Bourse, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar said that earlier diamond trade used to take place in the Bandra Kurla Complex of Mumbai, from where it has been shifted to Gujarat. "Those who are in power today do not

have the power to think about the country. The Prime Minister will inaugurate the diamond business in Surat. Earlier, diamond trade used to take place in the Bandra Kurla Complex of Mumbai; now it has been shifted from here to Gujarat," Sharad Pawar said while speaking at his party's Swabhiman Sabha at Maharashtra's Raigad on Saturday.

The NCP chief claimed that since the diamond trade has shifted to Surat, lakhs of people have lost their jobs.

"Lakhs of people got employment due to this market. Due to the diamond trade going to Surat, the local people will lose their jobs," Pawar said. The NCP chief also claimed that owing to the NAINA project (Navi Mumbai Airport Influence Notified Area), employment resources of farmers are being "snatched." "Due to this, along with farming, the employment resources of the farmers are also being snatched away," he said. ANI

Nation

CM Siddaramaiah said, "It won't be a mute spectator in corruption, if cases found it will be investigated"



daramaiah dismissed claims of shortages, affirming that necessary funds are allocated. The CM assured reimbursement for the Shakti Yojana expenses through KSRTC and emphasised the government's commitment to development work.

Highlighting financial achievements, the Chief Minister stated that his government had spent over Rs 73,928 crore on development, exceeding the previous administration's expenditure. He emphasised the fulfilment of promises, with the fifth guarantee set to begin in January. Acknowledging the emergence of a new COVID variant, Siddaramaiah informed that the Health Minister would convene a meeting for precautionary measures. In response to a case of assault on women in Belagavi, Siddaramaiah expressed confidence in the police's capability to investigate. He stated the government's willingness to hand over the case to any organisation, ensuring a fair investigation and punishment for the guilty. ANI

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asserted on Sunday that the government will not be a mute spectator in the face of corruption, stating that if any cases are found, an investigation will be conducted and action will be taken against the culprits. The Chief Minister made this statement during the inauguration of the girl's Balamadira building in Gadag.

Responding to concerns about buses under repair in the KSRTC and allegations of bribery within the department, Sid-

daramaiah mentioned an ongoing investigation into the previous government's corruption cases. He assured that action would be taken against those found guilty, including officials demanding bribes from drivers to allocate duties. Addressing questions about the caste census report, Siddaramaiah emphasised that it is premature to label it unscientific before submission. He urged waiting for the report and criticised speculations without knowing its contents.

On project funding, Sid-

Bihar: Missing man was found dead at Danapur village



A man who was reported to be missing, was found dead in the Danapur village of Bihar's Gopalganj, said the police on Sunday. The incident took place within the Manjha police station limits.

"We got information that a man named Manoj Kumar, who worked as a caretaker at Shiva Temple in Danapur under the Maja Poluice Station limits, had been missing. Taking cognizance of the matter, we scanned CCTV footage in the locality. Meanwhile, yesterday, it was learned that his body was found in Danapur, which led to deep anguish among the locals," said Pranjali Kumar, Senior Divisional Police Officer (SDPO),

Gopalganj.

Furious over the killing of the man, who worked as a caretaker at Shiva Temple in Danapur, the mob pelted stones on the police. "They created massive jams on the roads and pelted stones on the police personnel. Some of the rowdy elements have been detained by the police," the SDPO added.

Further, SDPO Kumar said that an FIR has been registered into the case and that the police are looking at all aspects related to the matter. "An FIR has been registered into the matter. We are looking at all related aspects of the matter. A probe is underway into the matter," he said. More details are awaited. ANI

Delhi: 14-year-old girl allegedly forced into prostitution racket, 3 held



Delhi police have arrested three persons for allegedly forcing a 14-year-old girl into prostitution, officials said on Sunday. The arrested accused have been identified as Irshad, Hasibul and his wife Sanjary - all residents of Bihar.

Police said that information was received about a sex racket running in a house in the Sadar Bazar, after which a team raided and rescued the girl. The minor, a native of Bihar, was found confined at a house at Katra Atma Ram of Sadar Bazar.

The operation uncovered

that the purpose of her confinement was prostitution, and she was reportedly abducted and forcibly kept at the specified address. "It was revealed that the girl was trafficked by the accused from Bihar. She was kept locked in a room, where she was being forced into prostitution," they said. "The victim was abducted, confined and forced into prostitution for months by the three accused persons who have been arrested," they said while adding that the girl is an orphan and was abducted from her native place 5-6 months ago. A case has been registered against the accused persons u/s 363, 368 A, 370, 370 A, 376, 34 IPC, and 6 POCSO, 3, 4, 5, 6 Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, dated 17/12/23, at PS Sadar Bazar. The victim is being counselled and further investigation is ongoing, said police. ANI

Parliament security breach incident: Police recovers phone parts of the accused from Rajasthan

The phone parts of the accused involved in the Parliament security breach incident have been recovered from Rajasthan, police sources said on Sunday. All the phone parts were found in burnt condition. Delhi police is however yet to recover Lalit Jha's phone.

Delhi police sources revealed earlier that Lalit Jha, the accused in Parliament security breach incident, destroyed five mobile phones before arriving in Delhi, and was misleading the investigating team. Before the security breach, the four accused had handed over their phones to Jha to prevent crucial investigation details from reaching the police, anticipating their arrest.

"Lalit Jha destroyed not four but five mobile phones after fleeing to Rajasthan's Kuchaman,"



said police sources. Earlier, Patiala House Court here on Saturday granted seven-day custody of Mahesh Kumawat, the sixth accused in the Parliament security breach case, to the Police. Delhi Police sought 15 days of custodial remand of accused Mahesh Kumawat. He is the sixth accused arrested in the case. The other five accused including Lalit Jha have already been taken into police custody. The Patiala House Court on Friday granted seven-

day custody of Lalit Jha, the accused in the Parliament security breach case. The security breach happened on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack on December 13.

Two people--Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D--jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour, released yellow gas from canisters and shouted anti-establishment slogans before being overpowered by the MPs. ANI

World

Serbia: Elections has started test of ruling govt, Amid dissatisfaction over rising inflation, corruption, and gun violence



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic's ruling right-wing Serbian Progressive Party (SPS), which leads opinion polls by double digits, is widely anticipated to retain control of parliament.

However, the party faces stiff competition in municipal elections in Belgrade, particularly by a loose alliance of opposition parties and candidates running under the slogan "Serbia Against Violence," according to Al Jazeera. Although Vucic is not on the ballot, the election is widely regarded as a referendum on his government and governance. This year, antigovernment rallies drew hundreds of thousands to the streets, prompting the formation of the "Serbia Against Violence" alliance, which challenged Vucic's party's control. The protests erupted following two mass shootings in May that killed 18 people, including nine children, Al Jazeera reported. ANI

The voting process for the parliamentary and local elections started in Serbia on Sunday, which will put the country's ruling party to the test amid dissatisfaction over rising inflation, corruption, and gun violence, Al Jazeera reported. The sudden elections, which were announced last month, will elect a new government for Serbia's 250-seat parliament as well as local councils in the majority of towns.

US: American entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy talks about workingstyle, says "energy of the crowds"



Indian-American leader and Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy had participated in 42 campaign stops this week by Saturday, more than any other 2024 candidate, USA TODAY reported. Opening up on his workstyle, he said that he is staying motivated by the "energy of the crowds" in Iowa, the first state to hear from voters next month, as he blitzes crucial early battlegrounds.

The Ohio-based entrepreneur will also keep up his rigorous timetable next week, hitting 38 events. Acknowledging that there is a "logistically grueling element" to his schedule, the 38-year-old said that he is campaigning caffeine-free. "I am confident that's going to be the right way to get elected—not being insulated from the people we are representing, but in many ways, being responsive to the people we're representing,"

he told USA TODAY. "I would rather spend time with these caucusgoers and Pizza Ranches across the state, rather than being a cloistered mega-donor retreat," he added. He repeated what he had said multiple times before and said it all stems from a lesson learned from his parents. "Here's how you spell luck: W-O-R-K," Ramaswamy said. "It's always been a formula that has worked for me in my life, be it in my academic background, be it as a student, be it in my career, as a businessman and now on this journey." ANI

UK: Indian student goes missing, BJP leaders requested EAM Jaishankar to look into the matter



An Indian student named GS Bhatia, who studies at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom, has been missing from East London since December 15. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa informed about the incident on social media platform X (formerly Twitter) and brought this to the attention of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

According to Sirsa, Bhatia was last seen in Canary Wharf, East London, on December 15. He also urged Loughborough University and the Indian High Commission to join the effort to

find him. "GS Bhatia, a student of Loughborough University, has been missing since Dec 15. Last seen in Canary Wharf, East London. Bringing to the kind attention of @DrSJaishankar Ji We urge @lborouniversity & @HCI_London to join efforts in locating him. Your assistance is crucial. Please share and spread the word," Sirsa posted on X (formerly Twitter). He also posted the residence permit and college identification card of Bhatia on X. The BJP leader asked people to share the news and shared two contact numbers to provide any information about the Indian student. ANI

Afghanistan: Over 260,000 illegal Afghan immigrants have left Pakistan to their native place

Over 260,000 illegal Afghan immigrants have left Pakistan for Afghanistan using the border crossings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dawn newspaper reported. Dawn is a Pakistani English-language newspaper.

As per official data, apart from 250,000 Afghans who left for their homeland voluntarily, 6,360 persons were deported from different parts of the country via Pakistan-Afghan border crossings in KP, including 5,228 from KP, 125 from Islamabad, 974 from Punjab and 34 from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The data, shared by the provincial home department, also said that over 250,000 illegal immigrants had left via Torkham in Khyber tribal district, 3,646 via Angoor Adda border crossing in South Waziristan tribal district, whereas 698 persons left Pakistan for Afghanistan via Khar-



lachi border crossing in Kurram district, as per Dawn. According to the data, 797 illegal immigrants left for Afghanistan on Saturday.

It added that, according to a recent survey conducted by the district administrations across the province, 761 illegal immigrants were still present in the province. Meanwhile, the Interna-

tional Rescue Committee, Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, Islamic Relief Worldwide, CARE, Intersos, and some other organisations have highlighted the urgent situation of 5,00,000 individuals who have returned to Afghanistan and are facing critical needs for food, shelter, and employment during the winter, TOLO News reported. ANI

Expression

Vocational exposure is Solution of employability



Vijay Garg

Retired Principal Educational
Columnist Malout Punjab

Vocational Education



Industry stakeholders must bring cognitive skills, a growth mindset, cultural intelligence, and digital literacy to create innovators and entrepreneurs in the country.

India's GDP growth has brought optimism against the backdrop of an unbalanced world economy. In this scenario, the focus is once again on skilling initiatives. Skill India Mission and the skill development of the new generation are crucial for building 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the need for every youth to be empowered with skills starting from school time, to become important stakeholders in a development revolution.

Today, education is not limited to what is taught in schools, colleges, and universities. The scope of learning has widened due to the evolving market and digital advancements. Acquiring market-driven skills will provide great placement opportunities to the youth and strengthen the foundation of 'Viksit Bharat'.

India has a demographic advantage that needs to be harnessed by building the capacity and infrastructure for skilling, reskilling, and upskilling both existing and new entrants to the workforce. The goal was to increase the proportion of formally skilled workforce from the current 5.4% to at least 15% by 2022-2023. However, the India Skills Report 2022 by Wheebox shows that the overall youth employability in India is only 48.7%. While several government-led skilling initiatives are covering some ground, they are not enough to meet the targeted supply of 109 million workers.

According to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data, 86% of those aged between 15 and 59 years have not received any vocational training, while the remaining 14% received training through diverse formal and informal channels. The conversion of this pool into human capital requires a dedicated focus on skilling and education. There is ample evidence to prove that upskilling the youth could lead to increased incomes, higher profitability, and greater productivity in the economy.

The NEP has set a clear goal to increase the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, including vocational education, to 50% by 2035. We are determined to achieve this goal by adding 3.5 crore new seats to higher education institutions (HEIs) focusing on a flexible curriculum with creative combinations of subjects, integrating vocational education with mainstream education, and allowing multiple entries and exits with appropriate certification. We will establish Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) at par with IITs and IIMs to provide the best possible education to our students.

We are committed to providing vocational exposure to at least 50% of learners through school and higher education by 2050. We firmly believe

that every child should learn at least one vocation and be exposed to several more. With over 15 lakh schools teaching 25.38 crore students, India has one of the largest education networks in the world, and we are determined to make it even better.

However, we acknowledge that achieving this ambitious goal requires sustained, concerted efforts, willpower, and steadfastness in implementing critical reforms. We need to invest in setting up skill centres in every high school across the country and recruit vocational teachers. Adding technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions to our schools is also essential. We are confident that, as India aspires to be the world's third-largest economy by 2030, investing in our education system is not a big task. We will do what it takes to make India a world leader in skill.

It is vital to impart skill training to our young children so that they can develop an interest in entrepreneurship. This will expose them to emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, drones, the Internet of Things (IoT), Real Time Analytics, and so on. Automation and data exchange are at the core of the fourth Industrial Revolution – Industry 4.0, and therefore, we need to train our young brains accordingly. While a

few of them may join the government and services sector, most of them will find their way into the manufacturing and service sector, which is filled with opportunities in our country.

Although some skilling schemes have been restructured, the problem has not been fully addressed. For instance, when the government introduced the Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana (GKRY) in 2020 to address skilling and unemployment issues caused by reverse migration, it did not work out as expected. Many reports suggest that GKRY's market demand-driven skilling initiatives were not successful and did not reach the intended beneficiaries. This indicates a systemic problem that affects the talent ecosystem in India. Therefore, instead of merely making youths 'Labharathi' (Beneficiary), we should equip them with the necessary skills to make them Workman)

The informal sector employs around 93 per cent of India's working population, which puts them at a high risk of exclusion. To mitigate this risk, marginalized groups need to be engaged through both online and offline channels. Common Service Centers (CSCs) can help with last-mile reach, while user-friendly and vernacular interfaces can benefit job and skill seekers across different segments. The Talent NODE is not a silver bullet, but with an innovative and inclusive approach, it can help between 50-80 million people find better job opportunities that match their skills and aspirations. An interconnected ecosystem can create a million different opportunities, enabling India's youth to become job-ready and contribute significantly to the country's development.

It is crucial for industry stakeholders, including the government, private, and public sectors, to bring cognitive. This will help the youth to be job-ready and contribute significantly to India's development as a developed nation.

Entertainment



Couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt talks about their daughter's nick name

Celebrity couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt are among the most loved B-town couples. Both of them are often seen talking about their daughter Raha on various occasions. On Sunday, Alia took to her Instagram and conducted an 'Ask me Anything' session on her stories. During the session, a user asked the 'Raazi' actor "Raha's nick name?" to which she replied, "Rahu, Rara, Lollipop (to name a few)."

Another user asked Alia, does she feels separation anxiety for Raha? To which he responded, "It's never easy leaving her. But I guess that'll take a while to change. Knowing she's with family even when I'm away makes me feel less guilty somehow." **ANI**

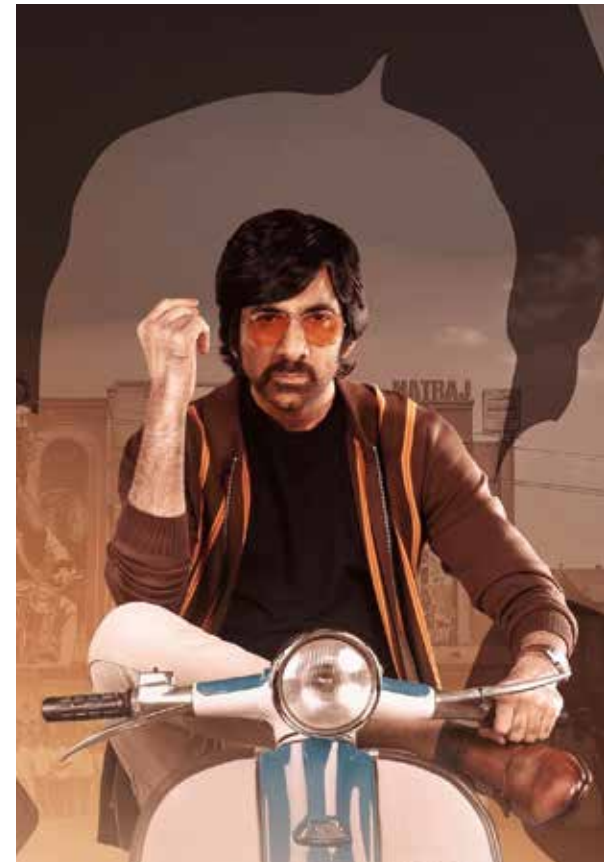
Indian Police Force film comes up with teaser, Kiara Advani reacts with fire emojis



Actor Kiara Advani on Sunday reacted to the official teaser of her hubby Sidharth Malhotra's upcoming web series 'Indian Police Force'. Taking to Instagram, Kiara shared the teaser on her stories, which she captioned with multiple fire emoticons.

The makers of 'Indian Police Force' on Saturday unveiled its official teaser which received a good response from the fans. Directed by Rohit Shetty and Sushwanth Prakash, the seven-episode action-packed series revolves around Indian cops.

It marks the OTT debut of actor Sidharth Malhotra. As per a statement, the series is a tribute to the selfless service, unconditional commitment and fierce patriotism of the Indian police officers across the country who put everything on the line in their call of duty to keep us safe. **ANI**



Actor Ravi Teja comes with his upcoming project named as "Mr Bachchan"

Actor Ravi Teja on Sunday announced that his next film is titled "Mr Bachchan" after his favourite megastar Amitabh Bachchan. Directed by Harish Shankar, the tagline of the upcoming Telugu movie is "Naam Tho Suna Hoga (You must have heard the name)". Also starring Bhagyashri Borse, "Mr Bachchan" is backed by People Media Factory, Panorama Studios and T-Series. **PTI**

Vikrant Massey reveals about Bollywood industry and nepotism, says "It is a merit-based institution"

Many think that Bollywood is not an amiable place for outsiders. However, Vikrant Massey has a different perception of nepotism in the industry, which is based on his own experience. He told ANI, "It is a merit-based institution. Log nepotism ki baat karte hain (people talk about nepotism) but mai logon se kehta hu even a shopkeeper in Chandni Chowk would not go out to search for someone to sit in the shop; he would ask his son only. So, it is in every field. I am not a trained actor. If you are someone's son or daughter and you get ample opportunities, if you are not good at work, you will be immediately shown the door in this industry."

The actor added that it is also a fact that this is a challenging industry. He shared, "I have seen many people coming from North India; jinki apni kothiya hai, they left them and came here. I have seen them sleeping with 6-6 people. So, there is a misconception that things are easy here. It is a very democratic community. It is a very robust and progressive community but it is not a family. It is a very competitive industry. There are thousands of actors who want to take my place. Do they wish well for me? Or am I irreplaceable? No. If I break my leg, someone else will come and take my place and start shooting in the next 4 days, and that is how competitive it is."

However, the actor emphasized that it is work that matters and not the caste. "Have seen technicians who came from Chhattisgarh and worked as light men initially but now they have a big name as technicians. They got this based on their work and creativity. It is a beautiful industry where caste and religion don't matter." **ANI**

