



Chairman's micmicry controversy: Ruling party MPs

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Parliament security breach incident: Patiala House Court allows application moved by one of the accused Neelam Azad's family seeking a supply of a copy of FIR



The Patiala House Court on Thursday allowed an application moved by one of the accused Neelam Azad's family seeking a supply of a copy of FIR registration under various sections of IPC and UAPA in connection with the Parliament security breach case. The court also allowed plea seeking court

direction to Delhi Police to allow Neelam's Lawyer to meet for legal advice during the custodial remand period.

Additional Sessions Judge Dr Hardeep Kaur said the concerned Investigation Officer is directed to furnish the copy of the present FIR to the applicant/accused as per law.

The court also said, considering the totality of circumstances, this Court is of the considered view that the applicant/accused is entitled as a matter right to legal assistance and the right is available to her even when she is in police custody. In order to have an effective and meaningful interaction between the applicant/accused and

her counsel, it is hereby directed that on every alternate day, a 15-minute interaction of the applicant/accused Neelam with her counsel, as mentioned in the vakalatnama, be arranged within the visible range of the IO of the present case but outside his audible range.

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Jagdeep Dhankhar mimicry row, Media reached all lows

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

First time in the history of the Indian parliament 141 MPs have been suspended. Out of these, 95 are from the Lok Sabha and 46 from the Rajya Sabha. This mass suspension has developed the crisis in Parliament, especially at a time when crucial bills were tabled and passed with limited discussion. The only fault of MPs is that they keep raising questions and bring the government into an awkward situation. The root of the contention lies in the Opposition's demand for a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament. They seek a discussion on the recent security breach incident on December 13, where intruders stormed the Lok Sabha and released

smoke canisters.

Well! all the suspended MPs were having a chill moment, to make the situation lite TMC leader Kalyan Banerjee was mimicking Jagdeep Dhankhar, and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was seen recording it. The scenario was somewhat like school children teasing their teacher. Soon after this episode, mainstream media got geared up to make breaking news and there were several prime time debates. But unfortunately no media has the guts to question the government over the mass suspension.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Jagdeep Dhankhar mimicry row, Media reached all lows

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Supreme Court lawyer has filed a complaint against Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee who has stirred a row by mimicking Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar during the Opposition's protest at the Parliament complex.

In this entire saga, no media ever questioned the security lapses, attack on parliament and also the reason for such aggression by civil society. unemployment is the biggest issue in the country and the security breach in parliament exposed many things.

Now the mimicry saga is escalated to divert attention from the suspension of 142 MPs. Never in the history of Parliament has there been suspension of MPs on such a large scale.

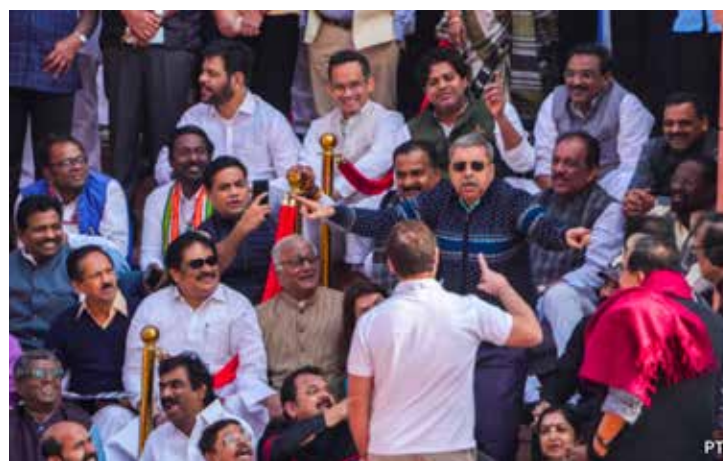
Above all a Supreme Court lawyer has filed a complaint against Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee who has stirred a row by mimicking Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar during the Opposition's protest at the Parliament complex. The video of Banerjee derisively mimicking Dhankhar has since gone viral. The advocate, Vineet Jindal, has filed a complaint with Ethics Committees of Rajya Sabha & Lok Sabha and sought the expulsion of all the members involved in the incident.

In this entire saga, no media ever questioned the security lapses, attack on parliament and also the reason for such aggression by civil society. unemployment is the biggest issue in the country and the security breach in parliament exposed many things. BJP can never handle such humiliations. They knew that the opposition was not in a mood to spare them. They suspended hundreds of MPs.

Let me tell you this was not the first time some leader is mocking another leader; our PM Modi mocked many opposition leaders. He made fun of them by calling names and adding tags. Modi mocked former Vice President Hamid Ansari during his farewell event in August 2017., one of India's most distinguished diplomats, reducing his identity to his religion and in effect alleging that his entire professional and political achievements were because of his religious identity. No BJP leader or media took this incident seriously.

Now the mimicry saga is escalated to divert attention from the suspension of 142 MPs. Never in the history of Parliament has there been suspension of MPs on such a large scale. But those who talk about mimicry, just remember who mimicked whom and that too in the Lok Sabha. Soon after this episode Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee clarified that he didn't intend to hurt Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar when he did his impression outside Parliament. Calling mimicry a "type of art", Banerjee defended his action by citing a past instance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi "doing mimicry in Lok Sabha". Jagdeep Dhankhar is ex-governor of Bengal.

Unfortunately, these are our lawmakers, and that is our ruling party who ignore the crucial issues of the country but wasting their time on petty issues. Asking questions in parliament is considered a crime. Media has already become "His master's Voice" by keeping themselves as watch dogs. In the era of



weaker opposition, it's the duty of the media to make the ruling government accountable. If all voices are suppressed then there will be only dictatorship. The Indian government can go one sided and arrogant, which they already are.

Jagdeep Dhankhar, the man famous for being the governor of West Bengal, has been announced the NDA's candidate for the post of VP. He is also famous for being the lawyer of Salman Khan who bailed him out. He has been rewarded for the efforts he has put in while being the governor of Bengal. He went out of the normal working routine of a governor and tried to meet and become the voice of people who were affected due to violence. He was mocked by the opposition but he persisted with his efforts. People also threw allegations on him for working on the order of the central govt, which might be true. But do you really expect a governor appointed by the central govt not to pay heed to the ruling party? Ideally yes because Governor is not a political post but we don't live in an idealistic world. So the post of speaker should be neutral.

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Flat No. 2, J- Wing Ground floor, Sumer Nagar Building 3, S.V. Road,
Near Gandhi Motors, Borivali - West, Mumbai - 400 092.

Editor

Dr. Vaidehi

Vaidehi has received several Awards like Icongokarmavir chakra, Bedal Powell scout and guide awards 2021- best journalist, Newspaper Association of India award- best journalist. She received lot of awards for her contribution towards journalism.

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For any queries regarding the editorial desk, contact - 7506760610

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Voices



The ecological impact of soil pollution incurs significantly higher costs



- Vijay Garg

If the soil pollution is not checked, the environment will suffer and life as we know it, may come to a grinding halt. Soil and water are the essential components that sustain life, including that of humans, on our planet. Soil is the medium on which all types of living organisms are maintained. Every religion that has evolved with us has highlighted the importance of soil. The Vedic civilization held the soil in the highest regard as Mother Earth. The prayer to Prithvi, the Earth, is invoked in the Atharva Veda: "Let what I unearth from thee, O Earth, sprout and develop once more in a swift manner." The veneration of vegetation, trees, animals, and soils is exclusive to India. Consequently, it discourages the application of harsh chemicals and pesticides, as they may inadvertently cause harm to the beneficial nutrients and living microorganisms inside the soil.

The Earth teems with biodiversity and is the foundation for all living organisms. Earth is where plants, trees, animals, and even soils are revered. Unfortunately, the present generation is doing more harm to the lifeline of our species. We have done enough damage to the soil by focussing on development and ascetics. The fertile agricultural lands pay way to flats and gardens with exotic plants.

Soil is a fundamental resource for agriculture, providing essential nutrients and a medium for plant growth. Erosion, loss of topsoil, and degradation can significantly reduce soil fertility, leading to decreased crop yields. The cycling of nutrients in the soil is critical for the health and productivity of plants. Soil is home to various microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi, and protozoa. Unfortunately, these microbes are destroyed by chemical fertilizers, weedicides and pesticides. The health of soil and water is interlinked. Pollution caused by anthropogenic activities ultimately reaches the soil through water. We take soil for granted. We dispose of solid waste, plastics, and toxic chemicals in the soil. We burn our solid waste on its surface

without concern for its rich biodiversity.

The ecological impact of soil pollution incurs significantly higher costs. It is imperative to refrain from using contaminated soil for agricultural purposes, as the chemicals can seep into the crops, harming consumers. Utilizing polluted soil for crop cultivation typically leads to lower yields than uncontaminated soil, exacerbating the issue by causing additional erosion due to a lack of plant cover, thereby transferring toxins to previously uncontaminated areas.

Addressing soil pollution is crucial for the long-term health of ecosystems, agricultural sustainability, and human well-being. Sustainable land management practices and a collective effort to reduce pollution sources are essential for mitigating the impacts of soil pollution. Healthy soils act as carbon sinks, sequestering carbon and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The fundamental meaning of the term "nature" is closely connected to notions such as natal, nativity, and native, indicating that anything that is born and destined to die is intrinsically natural. Understanding this interdependence demonstrates that nature and mankind are inseparable.

Hence, our interactions with nature have a direct influence on our own well-being. Our connection with nature is based on mutual reliance. It has been argued that the unrelenting destruction of rainforests and deciduous forests is justifiable to expand the amount of land used for agricultural purposes.

Similarly, transforming agricultural lands into commercial areas is justifiable in the name of development. Our ignorance prevents us from seeing that even if we were to emerge victorious in this conflict, we would still be on the losing side. Our idea that the job of nature is to run the motor of our economy is the driving force behind this war against nature, which we intend to wage. The economy is an owned subsidiary of ecology.

Letters to the Editor

National Mathematics Day

December 22, 2023 will mark the 136th birth anniversary of the mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan, and the day is celebrated as National Mathematics Day in remembrance of him. The main objective of the celebration of this day is to make people aware of the development of mathematics and its importance in the growth of humanity. Leaving the world at the young age of 32, Srinivasa Ramanujan contributed monumentally to mathematics that only a few could match in their lifetime. He was the youngest Indian to become a Fellow of the Royal Society, London.

The field of number theory in math was enriched by Ramanujan with his intuitive research and enormous contribution to it. He was well ahead of his time and provided a great link to several milestones in the history of mathematics. Ramanujan's mystifying math-

ematical equations, scribbled in black ink and running into about 130 pages, were chanced upon by Professor George Andrews of Pennsylvania State University in 1976 at the library of Trinity College in Cambridge. These works later electrified the world of mathematics, prompting physicist Freeman Dyson to remark, "Flowers that grew from seeds that ripened in Ramanujan's garden". The theme for this year's International Day of Mathematics is "Mathematics for everyone".

Jubel D'Cruz

Cricketers worth their weight in Gold!

Price tag of ₹24.75 crs for Mitchel Starc & ₹20.50 crs for Pat Cummins may be crazy sum for a franchise tournament but players deserves big bucks simply for the fact that BCCI earns thousands of crores of rupees out of the tournament. Feel happy for uncapped player Sameer Rizvi who went for ₹8.40 crore but my concern remains that such crazy sums should not spoil cricketers even before they have played for their country & they

need to be given counseling to keep their feets grounded.

IPL is a money minting tournament for BCCI & not very sure if it benefits the game in anyways. Games of countries like West Indies have suffered the most as their players prefer IPL to playing for their national side who even fail to qualify for World Cup in the bargain. BCCI is part & parcel of sports in general in our country & crazy money earned out of IPL, more so when profits are not taxed should be used to promote other games like hockey, football, boxing etc where we have sea of talent & scope to win medals at Olympics!

S.N.Kabra

Enzymes can degrade plastics

Plastic products are a cemented part of everyday life, from containers and clothes to bags, bottles and food packaging. However, plastics resist degradation, instead breaking down into smaller particles that invade natural ecosystems and threaten the organisms living in them, including humans. Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) a polymer widely used in common plastic

products due to its durability and cheap cost is a primary target for scientists to reduce plastic pollution. Utilizing enzymes and other biology-based methods to break down PET in plastic showing promise in the scientific community and forming the basis of many novel research projects. Scientists identified a mutated form of an enzyme called leaf-branch compost cutinase (LCC) that degrades PET. This mutant LCC also retains the monomers of PET so that it can be repeatedly remade into high-quality plastic products, an example of how plastic can be recycled in a circular economy. The LCC mutant enzyme can become a permanent solution to plastic recycling and can provide a insight for future enzyme studies for plastic recycling.

Vijaykumar H K

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afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com

No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own)

City

Over 859 people have been arrested in drug-related offences at Thane district



As many as 859 people have been arrested for drug-related offences in Maharashtra's Thane district from January 1 till November 28 this year and 723 cases registered in this connection, officials said on Thursday.

Drugs and other items worth Rs 4.01 crore were seized from drug-peddlers during this period, they said.

These figures were provided by authorities during a recent meeting of the district-level anti-drug coordination committee presided over by Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Punjabrao Ugale and attended by senior officials of various departments.

"A total of 723 offences related to drugs were registered in Thane district between January

1 and November 28. As many as 859 people were arrested in these cases, and drugs and goods worth Rs 4,01,94,718 were seized from drug-peddlers," inspector Sanjay Shinde from the Thane police's anti-narcotics cell said.

During the meeting, Ugale directed the officials to intensify inspection of closed chemical units and to ensure that medical stores do not sell cough syrups and other such medicines without the prescription of doctors.

He asked the officials to maintain a strict vigil at landing points of various water bodies in the district.

The police official also directed that the details of drug addicts who come to hospitals for treatment be compiled and the same be followed up to identify drug traffickers, Shinde said. **PTI**

Anti-Terrorism Squad holds two Bangladeshi citizens living illegally in Navi Mumbai



The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Thursday arrested two Bangladeshi citizens living illegally in Navi Mumbai, said an official from the Maharashtra ATS. As per the received information, ATS officials raided a residential area in Navi Mumbai's Kamothe township and arrested two Bangladeshi nationals for staying in the country illegally.

This is not the first instance in the recent past when illegal

immigrants from Bangladesh have been arrested in Maharashtra. Earlier this month, acting on a tip-off, a joint team of ATS and Pune police raided the residences of the suspects on Monday and arrested them. The arrests follow a joint operation between the ATS and Pune Rural Police, which arrested eight Bangladeshi nationals from Narayangaon town in Pune district for allegedly staying illegally in India. **ANI**

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Parliament security breach incident:...

In case, if the meeting cannot be arranged on that day, then the meeting can be postponed to the next available date, further said the Court. Neelam's counsel advocate Suresh Kumar Chaudhary appeared before the concerned Judge and said family and lawyers should be provided with the FIR it is a constitutional right and also allowed us to meet with Neelam. The plea stated that on December 15, 2023, a family of the accused with their advocate visited Police station Sansad Marg, New Delhi to get a copy of the FIR and to meet with the accused.

When we had words with the investigating officer and requested him to provide a copy of the FIR to a family member of the accused and meet accused Neelam he clearly denied grant such permission and straight forward said to take an order from the court to get the copy of FIR and meeting with accused.

It is, therefore, most respectfully prayed to this

court in the interest of justice to kindly grant the permission to get the copy of FIR as well as the meeting with accused Neelam or any further relief may kindly be granted, stated the application copy. The Patiala House Court on Thursday has also extended the custodial remand of four accused individuals, Manoranjan, Neelam, Sagar, and Anmol, to the Special Cell of Delhi Police for 15 more days until January 5, 2024, in the Parliament security breach case.

The case involves a security breach that occurred on December 13, when two youths jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber during Zero Hour, setting off smoke cans and raising slogans.

The probe earlier revealed further that two pairs of shoes were made on a special order in Lucknow, as the accused learned that the shoes of visitors to the new Parliament were not checked and they could hide their smoke cans under their footwear, sources said. **ANI**

Navi Mumbai: Police registers case against man and his parents for allegedly running an investment firm illegally

Police have registered a case against a man and his parents in Navi Mumbai for allegedly running an investment firm illegally and cheating four investors to the tune of Rs 52.08 lakh by assuring them high returns, an official said on Thursday.

The accused, from Uran area in Navi Mumbai, accepted deposits from the four victims between January and April this year while promising to get their money doubled in 30 days, the official from Uran police station said.

According to the official, the accused operated the investment business without due permission from the government and the Reserve Bank of India.



Following a complaint by the victims, the police registered offences on Wednesday against the three accused under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code,

the Prize Chits and Money Circulation Schemes (Banning) Act, and the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, he added. **PTI**

BMC appeals people not to dump garbage in drains

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has appealed to people not to dump garbage in drains and said it is planning punitive action against violators. The city

civic body collected 1,042 metric tonnes of debris and 139 tonnes of solid waste in the last fortnight under the 'deep cleaning' campaign. It has been observed that people are frequently throw-

ing garbage in drains of Mumbai after the deep cleaning drive, a BMC release on Wednesday said, adding that dumping waste in a drain blocks the wastewater drainage. **PTI**

Nation

Chairman's micmicry controversy: Ruling party MPs stand in solidarity with Jagdeep Dhankhar



Ruling party members on Wednesday participated in the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha while remaining standing to express solidarity with Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar after a TMC MP mimicked him in Parliament premises. The treasury benches participated in the Question Hour proceedings while standing for about ten minutes. Among those seen standing were Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Education Minister Dharmendra

Pradhan, Transport minister Nitin Gadkari and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi.

A political row broke out on Tuesday after Trinamool Congress leader Kalyan Banerjee derisively mimicked Dhankhar during the opposition's protest on the stairs of Parliament against the MPs' suspension, drawing strong condemnation from the ruling BJP. The BJP also attacked the opposition over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi making a video of the performance by Banerjee.

As soon as the House resumed at noon, Joshi said, "In protest against the action of their party's former president (Rahul Gandhi) and in your honour and in honour of the Constitution, we would participate in the Question Hour while remaining standing in silence. We request for your permission". "We strongly condemn how Rahul Gandhi insulted you and your constitutional position. To tarnish a particular community and section of society is not right," he said. "As far as I have seen, this is the first time they have fallen to this level and there is no end to this. We strongly condemn this. They have been insulting people at constitutional positions," Joshi said.

The minister said for 20 years they "insulted" the prime minister because he comes from a poor family and belongs to the OBC background. They kept on "insulting" him even after he became the prime minister, he said. PTI

Kharge slams centre over suspension, says "Those responsible for protecting MPs failed in their constitutional duties"



Those responsible for protecting MPs have failed in their constitutional duties, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday, in an apparent attack on the Lok Sabha speaker and the Rajya Sabha chairman over the suspension of opposition members from the two Houses of Parliament. Addressing party leaders at a crucial

meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), Kharge also said his party has learnt valuable lessons from the recent assembly polls and urged party workers to focus on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections now. This is the first meeting of the Congress' highest decision-making body after the party's poor showing in the assembly polls. PTI

Amid wrestlers harrasment case, Olympic medallist Sakshi quits wrestling after after Brij Bhushan loyalist becomes WFI chief

Rio Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik on Thursday announced her retirement from the sport, protesting against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh loyalist Sanjay Singh winning the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) election for the top job, here. Sanjay, a close associate of outgoing WFI chief Brij Bhushan became

the new WFI president with his panel winning 13 of the 15 posts in the elections here on Thursday. "We fought from our heart but if a man like Brij Bhushan, his business partner and a close aide is elected as the president of WFI, I quit wrestling," said a teary-eyed Sakshi, and kept her shoes on the table in a dramatic announcement. PTI

WB teachers' recruitment scam: SC issues notice to ED over bail plea filed by TMC MLA Manik Bhattacharya

The Supreme Court has issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate on a bail plea filed by jailed former West Bengal Board of Primary Education chairman Manik Bhattacharya in connection with the primary teacher recruitment scam. A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and SC Sharma sought a response from the central investigating agency and tagged the plea along with his another plea.

The apex court in its order on December 15 stated, "Issue notice. Tag with...". Trinamool Congress (TMC) MLA Bhattacharya filed an appeal challenging the November 16 order of the Calcutta High Court whereby his bail plea was turned down. Bhattacharya was arrested by ED on October 11, 2022, for allegedly not cooperating with the investigation.



Earlier, the top court had dismissed Bhattacharya's plea against his arrest by the ED in connection with alleged irregularities in recruitment. Both the ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have been investigating the case. The alleged scam involved appointments as

teachers and non-teaching staff in State-run schools via illegal means. In his plea against the arrest, the ED had told the top court that Bhattacharya was a key person in a money laundering case relating to the alleged irregularities in primary teachers' appointments. ANI

Health ministry sources said, "No plan to make Covid testing mandatory at airports"

There is no plan so far to make RT-PCR testing for COVID-19 mandatory at airports for travellers, Union health ministry sources said on Thursday, amid an uptick in coronavirus infections in India. Even though the number of cases is rising and the JN.1 sub-variant has been detected

in the country, there is no cause of immediate concern as 92 per cent of those infected are opting for home-based treatment, indicating mild illness, they said. There is also no increase in hospitalisation rates and COVID-19 is an incidental finding in people hospitalised due to other medical conditions. PTI

World

Pakistan: Amnesty International says, "deeply concerned" over excessive force against the Baloch Long March protestors in Islamabad



Frowning on the use of water cannons, tear gas and excessive force against the Baloch Long March protestors in Islamabad on Thursday, Amnesty International has said that it was 'deeply concerned' over the crackdown. It reiterated its demand to release all the protesters and drop the charges against them.

"Amnesty has reviewed videos showing water cannons, tear gas and batons being used against the protestors. Dozens have been detained and several others injured, including women, minors and elderly persons, violating their rights to liberty, security and protest," the Amnesty Inter-

national South Asia, Regional Office said, taking to X. "Amnesty International reiterates its demands that the Government of Pakistan - Immediately release all protestors, and drop any charges brought against them for solely exercising their right to freedom of expression and right to protest," it added. Amnesty also called for an impartial investigation of all extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances in Balochistan. Taking to X, it posted, "Conduct an impartial investigation of all extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, particularly in Balochistan, in line with inter-

national standards. Compensate families of victims of extrajudicial killings and those forcibly disappeared."

Meanwhile, the Official Account of Baloch Yakjahti Committee-Kech posted a video on X, that showed scenes from Barkhan Rukni where the Baloch people have blocked the main highway of Punjab to Balochistan against 'state terrorism' in Islamabad. "All the highways of Balochistan will be closed while the movement against state terrorism and Baloch genocide will be started in Balochistan from today," the council said.

"Let the state remember that they have not only tortured a few people, but they have declared war against the Baloch nation. By attacking Baloch mothers and sisters, the state has made it clear to the Baloch nation that the state considers Balochistan as its colony and does not consider the people here as human beings," the Baloch Yakjahti Committee said in a post on X. ANI

Nepal: AQI in Kathmandu has moved to "very unhealthy" category



The Air Quality Index (AQI) in Kathmandu has dropped to "very unhealthy" as the mercury drops, setting a record for the lowest temperature of the year. The minimum temperature in the valley dropped to 4.8 degrees Celsius, the lowest recorded temperature this year.

As per the pollution station set by the US Embassy in Phora Durbar, the AQI stood at 226 at 11 am local time while it had slid down to 168 at 2:45 pm (NST) as per the recording of the same station, still making the air unhealthy to breathe.

Meteorologist Sanjeev Adhikari from the Weather Forecasting Division said that the mini-

mum temperature in Kathmandu Valley plummeted to 4.8 degrees Celsius this morning, marking the lowest recorded temperature this year. "This minimum temperature is the most chilling we've experienced in Kathmandu Valley this year," he remarked.

Just yesterday, on Wednesday, the minimum temperature in Kathmandu Valley was 5 degrees Celsius, showing a notable drop from the temperatures recorded earlier. Additionally, the maximum temperature in Kathmandu Valley today is expected to range between 17 and 19 degrees Celsius. The temperature fluctuations have underscored the intensity of the current cold spell in the region. ANI

Taiwan: Ministry of National Defence says, "Eight Chinese aircraft, 3 vessels detected nearby"

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence announced on Thursday that eight Chinese People's Liberation Army aircraft and 3 PLAN vessels around Taiwan were detected at 6 a.m. UTC. The Ministry said that the Taiwan Armed Forces have monitored the situation and tasked appropriate forces to respond.

"8 PLA aircraft and 3 PLAN vessels around Taiwan were detected by 6 a.m.(UTC+8) today. #ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and tasked appropriate forces to respond," stated Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence on X. Taiwanese officials have declared that they will take action in response to Chinese balloons flying in close proximity, contingent on threat assessments.

The defence ministry in Taipei emphasised on Wednesday that the

current surge in balloon activity is believed to be related to weather monitoring, influenced by the prevailing winds during this time of year, Voice of America reported.

The global concern over the potential espionage use of balloons gained traction in February when the United States claimed to have shot down a Chinese surveillance balloon. China, however, insisted that the balloon was a civilian craft that had unintentionally strayed off course.

With the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections on January 13, Taiwan remains on high alert for various Chinese activities, both military and political. Officials in Taipei have issued warnings, suggesting that Beijing might attempt interference to influence voters in favour of candidates preferred by China. ANI

UK: Missing Indian national student found dead, probe underway

The UK's Metropolitan Police are on Thursday appealing for information to piece together the last movements of Gurashman Singh Bhatia, a missing Indian student whose body was found by police divers in a lake in Canary Wharf area of east London.

The Met Police said the 23-year-old had been reported missing after a night out with friends last Thursday, December 14. Officers went on to carry out extensive enquiries, including viewing CCTV, speaking to witnesses and analysing phone and financial data. Water searches were also carried out in the area and a body believed to be that of Bhatia was recovered by police divers in the water in South Quay.

Gurashman's death is being

treated as unexpected, and while there is nothing to suggest it was suspicious, we will ensure our investigation is as thorough as possible to confirm this, said Detective Chief Superintendent (DCI) James Conway, responsible for local policing in the Tower Hamlets area of Canary Wharf. Because of this, we are releasing a CCTV image of Gurashman that was taken before his disappearance and would like anyone who may have seen him in the Marsh Wall area on the evening of Thursday, 14 December and in the early hours of Friday, 15 December, to contact us, he said.

Conway added that this was an extremely tragic outcome to their missing persons inquiry and not the news he was hoping to give to Gurashman's family and friends. I send them my deepest

condolences, he said. The police noted that although formal identification has not yet taken place, Gurashman's family has been informed. Meanwhile, anyone with information about Gurashman's movements has been asked to call 101 quoting the reference CAD5787/15Dec.

There had been widespread social media appeals by the Indian student community in the UK after the Sikh student was reported missing. What a tragic, heartbreaking loss of one of our beautiful lives. I had spoken to his father and friends only some days ago when we first found out he was missing and had been praying for his safe discovery, said Sanam Arora, Chair of the National Indian Students and Alumni Union (NISAU) UK. PTI

Expression

Untamed savage ambition



Er Rajesh Pathak

Columnist

The people with jihadist mentality favoring the death penalty for apostasy and homosexuality have no place in Europe. These are incompatible to the values of European civilization. So says Georgia Maloney, and occasion being the recent convention of her Brothers of Italy party, which was attended by UK PM Rishi Sunak and billionaire Elon Musk, notably. There are considerable number of Islamic cultural centres running inside Italy financed by Saudi Arabia, and which escaped not her knowledge—she added.

And what Elon Musk said take

the note of it also. If population is getting shrunk that doesn't mean the perils of illegal influx of immigration be ignored for the industrial needs or whatever. If that is not checked, not only Italy and Britain but entire Europe will be disappeared culturally. The reasonable cultural identity has to be maintained to live with what is your own by root.

But Italy is not the one alone to face organized Islamic expansionist untamed tactics. Where Muslims are 8% of the population in that France last year the Anti-separatism law has come to force. And now the appropriate cause has come to fore to enforce it, too. Government is in its way to take an action against a Muslim school in Paris. For the organisation running it is adamant on violating the law of the land. As



an initial step Government has put its funding to it on hold.

Notably, the interior minister, Gerald Dermanin, had put 24 mosques to closure in last 2 years. And the the leader of opposition Marine Le Pen of Ressemblant party is not yet satisfied. She wants all

the mosques nursing Jihad must be shut down uncategorically; and whatever be the amount of Jihadist elements they must be deported back to the country of their origin. Moving ahead, Austria has even imposed the law on what Le Pen wanted in her country.

The Secret Sauce for Success



C.K. Subramaniam

Columnist

When it comes to startups, the hustle for rapid growth is real. But here's the catch—the thrill of growing fast often brings its own set of problems. Think hasty decisions, burning cash like it's going out of style, and employees feeling the burnout blues. Turns out, this kind of growth can stir up more trouble than triumph. Startups should aim for steady, sustainable growth, akin to tending to a plant—you can't yank it skyward and expect magic. The secret sauce is building a sturdy foundation and letting the growth flow at a pace that won't leave your company gasping for

breath.

There is another plot twist. Investors can crank up the pressure, demanding quick wins that might be more of a sprint than a marathon. The result? A foundation as shaky as a house of cards. The antidote lies in clear, honest talks with investors. Lay down the facts, set achievable goals, and school them on the wonders of sustainable growth. It is like planning a trip; sometimes, the scenic route might take longer, but the rewards are worth the wait.

Now, let us talk about the allure of high valuations that often blinds startups from the real deal—creating value for customers and stakeholders. Here is the fix: shift gears. Focus on solving actual problems and adding value. It's like constructing a house—the real magic happens when it becomes a home, not just an impressive facade.

The first-of-its-kind ranking of cities and states evaluated parameters like the number of registered businesses, availability of mentors, research and development institutes, growth-stage start-ups, and funding rounds to identify which cities remain the go-to destinations for founders.

Metro cities, especially, retained its place of pride as the pioneer in the start-up landscape. It owes its continued prominence to factors such as its first-mover advantage, a culture steeped in innovation, access to substantial capital, a diverse talent pool, and a strong emphasis on cutting-edge technologies with global connectivity. Many triumphant start-up stories originate in these bustling metropolises, leveraging their vibrant and supportive ecosystems and a rich pool of skilled professionals to propel ventures

forward. Recognizing the pivotal role of the surrounding ecosystem and access to the right talent in the early stages, founders gravitate toward urban centres where talent is readily available.

While emerging start-up destinations may hold promise, the challenges associated with investor and government stakeholder engagement often prompt start-ups to invest more effort in building and maintaining crucial relationships with major investors and government bodies concentrated in Metro cities. While Mahatma Gandhi mentioned that India lives in its villages, for now, founders are leaning on metros where they get easier access to a dynamic workforce, unparalleled networking opportunities, and vibrant entrepreneurial culture.

Entertainment



Actor Raveena Tandon posts a special birthday wish for her dearest friend from the industry

Actor Raveena Tandon on Thursday penned a special wish for her darling friend and actor Govinda on his birthday. Raveena shared the video of their first song from the film 'Dulhe Raja', which was released in 1998 and reminisced about their first collaboration in the film industry.

Raveena and Govinda share a special bond and their camaraderie has stood the test of time. Along with a video, she penned a sweet note, "My dearest Darling friend Chichi, @govinda_herono1 This was our first song together after many misses of getting a chance to work with each other, we finally started Dulhe Raja, with the blessings of Kali Mata, and Harmesh ji at the helm. After the very first shot of this song together, I knew this is the beginning of a very long association. Here's to our films and friendship together for so many years! Happy Happy Birthday my friend @govinda_herono1! Chiranjeevibhava Jai Bholenath! Samarthobhava, Aayushmaanbhava."

As soon as Raveena posted birthday wish, fans and followers chimed in the comment section. Birthday boy Govinda wrote, "Thank you so much for your wishes my dearest Rav[?] @officialraveenatandon Believe me I knew it too I told Harmesh ji apki picture se zyada aapke gaane challenge aur gaane se bhi zyada apke Hero Heroine Zintak hai! Lots of love[?] Jai Bholenath Har Har Mahadev." **ANI**

Ajay Devgn reveals about his father when he was beginning his career into acting



On the latest episode of the popular chat show 'Koffee with Karan,' Ajay Devgn revealed how his father, the late action director Veeru Devgan started his career and was once also a street "gangster." Ajay graced the 'Koffee' couch with filmmaker Rohit Shetty.

When host Karan Johar asked Ajay, "Do you think your father such a celebrated loved man Veeru Devgan that time in the industry got his dues that he truly deserved?"

Ajay instantly started narrating his father's story, he said, "Eventually. When he (Veeru Devgan) also started he ran away from his home in old Punjab, when he was 13 years old. He came to Bombay without a train ticket and was even put behind bars.

He didn't have any work, no food to feed himself. Ajay added that one day someone helped Veeru by asking him to wash his cab every day if he wanted to sleep in it."

"He (Veeru Devgan) started from there and eventually became a carpenter. Then he became one of the gangsters in Sion-Koliwada area. He was a carpenter also and there were gang wars. One day a very senior action director Mr Ravi Khanna was passing by and there was this street fight going on. So, he stopped the car and called my dad after the fight and asked, 'What do you do?' and he said 'I'm a carpenter'. So, he said one nice line, 'Tu ladta acha hai, come and meet me tomorrow' and made him a fighter. So that's where he (Veeru) started from," Ajay added. **ANI**

Couple Greta Gerwig and Noah Baumbach ties Knot in New York



Director-writer couple Greta Gerwig and Noah Baumbach were married in New York at City Hall. A representative for Gerwig confirmed the news to People magazine. Gerwig, 40, and Baumbach, 54, most recently worked on the record-breaking "Barbie", which they co-wrote and she directed.

The couple has been together for over a decade, meeting on Baumbach's 2010 directorial "Greenberg" before they officially started dating in 2011. They got engaged in 2020. Earlier this year, Gerwig and Baumbach welcomed their second child, a baby boy. They became parents to their first child, Harold (four). Baumbach also shares son Rohmer, 12, with his former wife "Greenberg" co-writer Jennifer Jason Leigh. In addition to working on their own projects, the duo has frequently collaborated in a writing, directing or acting capacity on films, including "White Noise", "Frances Ha" and "Mistress America". **PTI**

Actor and comedian Sunil Grover pens adorable note, praises brother, SRK and director of 'Dunki'



Actor and comedian Sunil Grover on Thursday penned down a heartfelt note for brother Anil Grover in his film 'Dunki' co-starring Shah Rukh Khan, released today. Taking to Instagram, Sunil shared a poster of 'Dunki' which he captioned, "Dunki' day today. Every SRK sir's movie has been special to me. And this one is made by my favourite director Mr. Raj Kumar Hirani. It can't get bigger. And this one has one more AND, and that is, my younger brother Anil Grover is part of this film. Look at the poster you will know ;). Mere Rabba!! It can't be more special."

"With a grateful and happy heart I am going to watch it today. @anilgroverhere welcome to this beautiful world of cinema and entertainment. Have a fun ride. God bless you. You make us proud. looking forward!! Main toh lutt putt gaya @vickykaushal09 @boman_irani sir @taapsee @castingchhabra @vikramkochhar and the entire team of Dunki," he added. Anil played the role of Balli in 'Dunki' SRK's character Hardy's friend.

Soon after he shared the post, Sunil's friends and fans swamped down the comment section and dropped red hearts and fire emoticons. Anil commented, "Thank you Bhaiya for your wishes, blessings & constant support always. Grateful to the entire team who helped me realise this dream." **ANI**