



Uttarakhand Silkyara tunnel incident: NDMA official says,

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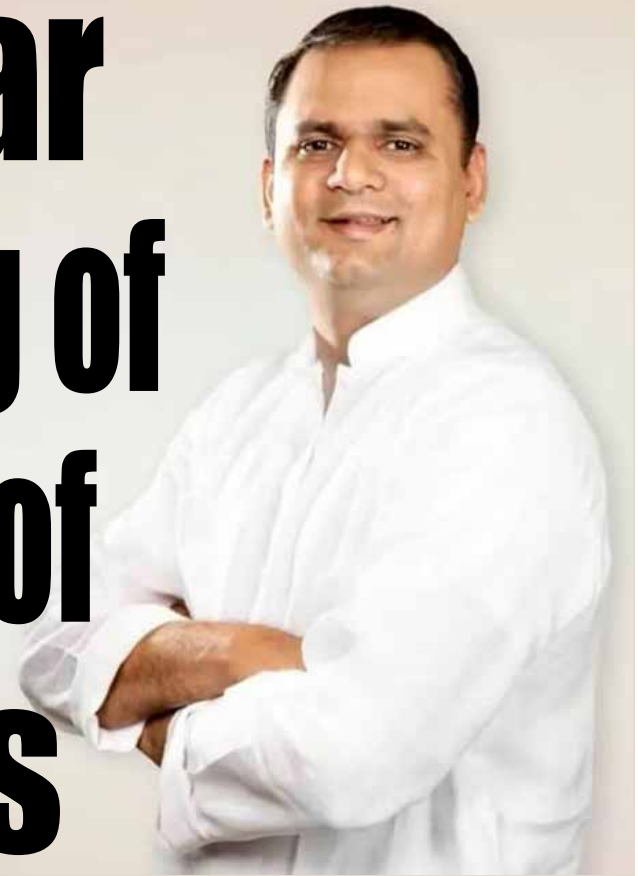
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Speaker Narwekar resumes the hearing of the disqualification of Shiv Sena MLAs



AV Team

Amid the ongoing hearing of disqualification pleas of the Shiv Sena MLAs, Speaker Rahul Narwekar Monday said that he is taking all the efforts to adjudicate the petitions within the stipulated time given by the Supreme Court. Narwekar also said that he will ensure that principles of natural justice are followed and that rules of legislative assembly cannot be violated during the process.

Narwekar told medianpersons in Sind-

hudurg "I have planned to complete the hearings and adjudicate the petitions within the time frame given by the apex court. I am taking care not to affect the principles of natural justice. I will decide on the disqualification of (Shiv Sena) MLAs at an appropriate time,". Setting the timeline, the Supreme Court had last month directed Narwekar to adjudicate disqualification petitions of rebel Sena MLAs by December 31.

The apex court had come down heavily on Narwekar over the delay in adjudication of the petition against Shinde-led

Sena MLAs, saying the Speaker cannot defeat the orders of the top court. Dismissing the Sena UBT MP Sanjay Raut's allegation over the "instability" of the state government, Narwekar said that the government has already achieved the magic figure of majority in the Assembly.

Narwekar also slammed Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray over his comments on violating anti-defection laws, stating that it is the Speaker who will decide whether there has been a violation of the anti-defection law and not Aaditya Thackeray.

"The Assembly Speaker will decide whether or not there has been any violation of the anti-defection laws. Thackeray should not make any comments about it. If the violation has taken place, I will take an appropriate decision. I can assure the people of the state that I will not take any wrong decision," he told media. Meanwhile, Narwekar will resume the hearing of the disqualification from Tuesday, during which the Sena MLA Sunil Prabhu's cross examination by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led Sena's lawyer will continue.

Why are relationships at stake?

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

Loving and appreciating the people we care about is important in building strong and healthy relationships. In relationships, it's essential to remember that they require effort and commitment. Just like any other aspect of life, they have their ups and downs. The key to a successful relationship is communication, trust, and empathy. When faced with challenges, remember that they are opportunities for growth, not roadblocks. Cherish the good times, learn from the tough times, and always strive to be the best partner you can be. Love, respect, and support each other, and together, you can overcome anything that comes your way. Protecting a relationship requires effort from both partners. Open and honest communication is the foundation of a healthy relationship. Be reliable, keep your promises, and avoid betraying your partner's trust. Trust can take time to build but can be shattered in an

instant. Treat your partner with respect and kindness. This means listening to their perspective, acknowledging their feelings, and avoiding disrespectful behaviour.

Spend quality time together, nurturing your connection. Make an effort to create shared experiences and memories. Establish healthy boundaries to maintain individual identities within the relationship. Discuss and agree on what is acceptable and what isn't. Disagreements are natural. Learn to resolve conflicts in a constructive way, focusing on understanding each other rather than winning the argument. Be there for each other during both good and challenging times. Offer emotional support and encouragement. Physical and emotional intimacy are important aspects of a relationship.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

Why are relationships at stake?

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While spending time together is essential, having personal space and interests can also strengthen your bond. Encourage each other's individual growth.

People can lose faith in relationships for various reasons, and it's a complex issue influenced by individual experiences and societal factors.

A relationship takes work, and if one or both partners stop putting in the effort to nurture it, it can deteriorate, leading to a loss of faith.

Keep the romance alive and continue to express affection. Relationships change over time. Be adaptable and willing to grow together, especially as life circumstances evolve. Don't forget to express gratitude and appreciation for your partner. Recognize the qualities and actions you love about them.

While spending time together is essential, having personal space and interests can also strengthen your bond. Encourage each other's individual growth. Accept that mistakes will happen. Learn to forgive and move forward, letting go of past grievances. A strong relationship is an ongoing effort. Keep working on it, and don't take your partner for granted. Remember, no relationship is perfect, but by consciously applying these principles, you can build a resilient and lasting connection with your partner. People can lose faith in relationships for various reasons, and it's a complex issue influenced by individual experiences and societal factors.

Past negative experiences, such as infidelity or emotional abuse, can erode trust and make it difficult to have faith in future relationships. Unrealistic expectations about what a relationship should be can lead to disappointment and disillusionment. Poor communication or a lack of understanding can lead to misunderstandings and emotional distance. External pressures, such as financial problems or work-related stress, can strain a relationship and make it challenging to maintain faith in it. Societal trends and the portrayal of idealized relationships in media can create unrealistic standards and make people question their own relationships. A relationship takes work, and if one or both partners stop putting in the effort to nurture it, it can deteriorate, leading to a loss of faith.

Insecurity or low self-esteem can lead individuals to doubt their worthiness in a relationship, which can affect their faith in it. As people grow and change, their values and priorities can shift, leading to questions about the compatibility of their current relationship. Some people are afraid to be emotionally vulnerable and may avoid deeper connections, leading to a lack of faith in relationships. A history of short-lived relationships may contribute to cynicism about long-term commitment.

It's important to note that while these factors can erode faith in relationships, they are not insurmountable. With self-awareness, effort, and communication, individuals and couples can work through these challenges and rebuild faith in the potential for healthy, loving relationships. Faith and commitment are indeed fundamental to the success of a good relationship. Faith in your partner involves believing that they are reliable and have your best interests at heart. Trust is the cornerstone of a healthy relationship, providing a sense of security and emotional safety. Commitment signifies the intention to stay dedicated to the relationship over the long term. It's a promise to work through challenges and cherish the good times, providing a sense of stability and continuity. In a committed relationship, couples are more likely to weather the storms together. The com-

mitment to one another strengthens their ability to overcome obstacles and face adversity as a team. Knowing that your partner is committed and trustworthy encourages open and honest communication. You can discuss difficult topics and share your feelings without fear of betrayal.

Commitment promotes a willingness to resolve conflicts and find compromises. Instead of seeking an easy way out, committed partners work together to find solutions. In a committed relationship, both partners are invested in each other's well-being. They offer emotional support and encourage personal growth and happiness. Faith and commitment can enhance intimacy, as partners feel safe and comfortable being vulnerable with each other. This can lead to deeper emotional and physical connections. Commitment allows couples to make plans and decisions together, whether it's about marriage, family, career, or personal goals. Over time, people change, and life circumstances evolve. Commitment and faith enable partners to adapt to these changes and grow together. A strong sense of faith and commitment often leads to greater fulfillment and satisfaction in the relationship, as both partners work together to create a loving and supportive environment.

In summary, faith and commitment provide the essential glue that binds partners together in a healthy, successful relationship. They create a foundation of trust, security, and mutual support, allowing couples to navigate the ups and downs of life together with resilience and love. Marriages can fail for various reasons, and it's a complex issue influenced by individual circumstances and societal factors. Poor communication or a breakdown in communication can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts that erode the foundation of a marriage. Unrealistic expectations about what a marriage should be like can lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction. Money-related issues, such as debt, financial instability, or disagreements over financial management, can strain a marriage. A lack of physical and emotional intimacy can create distance between spouses.

It's important to note that while these factors can contribute to the failure of marriages, each relationship is unique, and the combination of reasons can vary widely. In many cases, problems in a marriage can be addressed and resolved through open communication, counselling, and mutual effort. However, there are instances where separation or divorce is the best option for both individuals to find happiness and fulfilment. Seeking professional help from therapists or counsellors can be valuable in navigating these challenges.

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Milk : A basic part of a healthy and balanced diet



- Er. Prabhat Kishore

Milk is a major part of our diet. It is also considered a complete food. It is a major source of valuable nutrients such as vitamins A, B, D, B12, carbohydrate, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, protein etc, that help in supporting a growing body. Milk and its products (i.e. curd and ghee) are three of the five elements of Panchagavya, which is used in Ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of various incurable diseases.

87% of cow's milk is water and the remaining 13 % consists of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and other minerals. Vitamins A and B are essential for eye and red blood cell formation, B12 for proper nerve function, Magnesium for muscle function, Phosphorus for energy supply, Protein for body growth and repair, Calcium and Vitamin D for bone's strength and security. Due to the low sodium and potassium content, milk maintains normal blood pressure. Milk neutralizes the cholesterol of the body. It reduces the risk of cancer by 35 percent. According to the National Institute of Medicine, the human body requires 1000 to 1200 mg of calcium per day and milk is the major source of calcium.

Many nutrients are available in milk, which is essential for glowing skin. While the lactic acid present in it keeps the skin soft, the anti-oxidants protect it from the toxic effects of the environment. Milk and its products are good sources of calcium, phosphorus and protein, which are essential for bone's strength

and growth. Consuming one glass of milk daily is beneficial for us. This reduces the risk of osteoporosis. There are two types of proteins in milk. 80 percent of the total protein is casein and 20 percent is whey. Casein is useful for teeth, as it forms a thin layer on the enamel of the teeth, which is helpful in keeping the teeth and gums healthy.

The protein present in milk makes the muscles strong. Drinking milk after exercise, gives the body the necessary energy to repair the wear and tear of body cells. Along with this, it also makes up for the lack of liquid in the body due to work-out.

Drinking milk before sleeping at night gives relief to the muscles and nerves and leads to good sleep. The calcium, potassium and proteins present in milk keep the blood pressure balanced, which reduces the chances of stroke. Milk reduces the risk of cardio vascular diseases. due to the abundance of Vitamin B12, it also maintains the functioning of the brain.

India is the largest producer as well as consumer of milk in the world contributing about 24 percent of the global milk production. The milk production in India has registered an increase of 51 percent during the last eight years. In the year 2022, India produced 221.06 million tonnes of milk. Milk plays an important role in the food of a healthy citizen in building a healthy nation and World Milk Day inspires the human society to take positive initiatives in this direction.

Letters to the Editor

Global bird populations steadily on the decline

Birds are facing a decline in their population due to various factors such as exposed electrical wires, mobile towers, and poor management by authorities in other parts of the world. In India, one of the primary reasons for bird fatalities is exposed electrical wires that can cause fatal injuries to birds due to high voltage and lack of protective measures. Additionally, mobile towers pose a significant threat to birds flying at high altitudes as they can collide with the high-voltage machinery near these towers.

Developed countries such as Germany and the Netherlands have implemented underground electrical systems, significantly reducing the risk of harm to any living creature. India must also take strict action against exposed wires, internet towers, and poor management by authorities. We must collectively work towards safeguarding nature's beauty and preserving the existence of these magnificent creatures. We can also help by keeping small pots filled with water outside our homes

and leaving out some grains daily on our terraces for birds flying long distances, especially during summer when the heat is unbearable. We can also keep pots for them to build small nests which will help in increasing the bird population.

Jubel D'Cruz

What will happen after ceasefire?

Earlier in the day, Hamas accused Israel of violating the terms of the truce, saying it had not allowed enough aid to reach northern Gaza and had not released Palestinian prisoners according to agreed-upon terms. If the ceasefire lasts longer than four days, Hamas which controlled all of the Gaza Strip until Israel invaded it last month, would have more time to regroup, allowing it to mount a fiercer defense when and if Israel renews its military campaign. An extended ceasefire could also create more opportunities for other countries particularly the United States to pressure Israel to scale back its military goals. The Israeli response to the Oct. 7 attack has killed more than 12,000 in Gaza, according to health officials there, leading to rising alarm among Israel's allies about the conduct of its campaign.

Tauqueer Rahmani

Growing concern

Nowadays kids are fond of using phones. Unlike the past, children were forced to use mobile phones, tabs and laptops for online studies during Covid and have now become addicts to it. There is a danger that excessive use of smartphones can have an adverse impact on their mental and physical health. It is high time that necessary steps are taken to tackle the problem before it is too late.

Jahangir Ali

Life is precious & saving a few minutes proves fatal for many if they cross tracks!

Maximum number of deaths are caused due to track crossing which are avoidable if commuters take the trouble of using overhead bridges to cross tracks. Saving a few minutes proves fatal at times & education is the need of the hour to bring discipline. Hefty penalties on track crossing too will drive sense among commuters to follow safety guidelines to reduce accidents.

Life is precious & commuters should not risk their lives unnecessarily. Frequency of trains too needs to be increased during rush hours so that commuters can

travel in ease & comfort. Staggered office, schools & colleges timings too can balance crowd in train which is worth experimenting!

S.N.Kabra

One Rank One Pension

Around 250 ex-servicemen squatted on railway tracks in Punjab for nearly 12 hours on Saturday when they were stopped from heading to Delhi for a protest over alleged anomalies in "One Rank One Pension" scheme. After assuring by officials from district administration that the governor would meet them, the protest was lifted. Armed forces and veterans are the real heroes and defenders of the country and pride for the nation. They are shields against enemies. Instead of wasteful spending in political activities, the demands of those who are serving the country day and night should be fulfilled.

TKR. Noori

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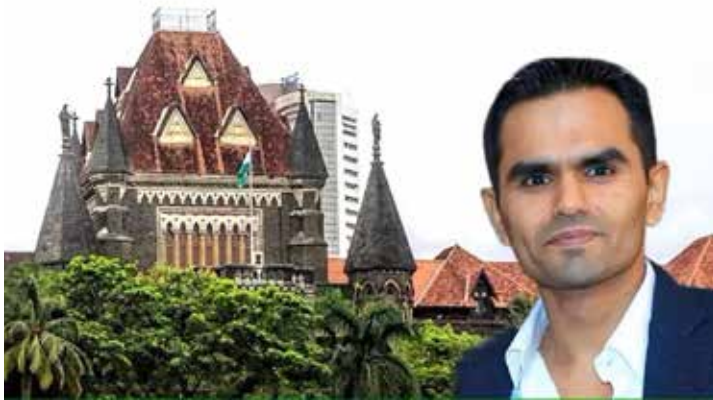
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No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own)

City

Bombay HC extended interim protection from arrest to Sameer Wankhede



The former zonal director of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), in the CBI's cruise drug bust bribery case. A division bench of Justice Prakash D Naik and Justice Nitin R Borkar was informed by advocate Kuldeep Patil that Solicitor General Tushar Mehta will appear for the central probe agency on January 10 and 11, after which the bench adjourned the hearing in the matter. Senior advocate Aabad Ponda will begin argu-

ments for Wankhede on January 10 and SG Mehta will respond thereafter.

Wankhede had told the High Court that the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) recently held that NCB Deputy Director General Gyaneshwar Singh was actively involved in the Cordelia cruise drug bust probe, and could not have been part of the Special Enquiry Team (SET). The Central Bureau of Investigation had filed a First Information Report (FIR)

against Wankhede and others, based on the report of SET headed by Singh, which was formed to inquire into alleged procedural lapses by NCB officials including Wankhede. Wankhede had told the HC the said SET sought to give a clean chit to actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan by "suppressing material information and evidence in violation of legal provisions".

The CBI FIR pertains to the Rs 25-crore bribe allegedly demanded by Wankhede and others from Aryan Khan and others arrested in the 2021 Cordelia drug bust case. The Bombay HC had granted interim protection to Wankhede in May this year and the same continued from time to time. The court had directed that Wankhede should not publish any material by way of WhatsApp or any other mode on the subject matter of petition or investigation or give press statements or tamper with evidence in any matter whatsoever.

Uddhav Thackeray calls Eknath Shinde 'useless'



Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray Tuesday launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Eknath Shinde over his visit to Telangana to campaign for the BJP at a time when Maharashtra's farmers are reeling from crop loss due to the unseasonal rain and hailstorm. Thackeray called Shinde, who heads the rival Sena faction and rules Maharashtra in alliance with the BJP and a faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), useless to run the government if he is going to an-

other state for campaigning when his home state and its farmers are facing natural calamities.

"The farmers of my state are in trouble due to the natural calamity of unseasonal rain and hailstorms. Suppose a person is careless about the situation in the state and goes to another state to campaign for the election of another party. In that case, such a person is useless to run the government. Such a person has no right to be in the government," said Thackeray during a press conference in Mumbai.

All 5-year PhD students to shift to shared hostel rooms

Gaurav (name changed), a research student at the Humanities and Social Science (HSS) department at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, is planning to go back to his hometown in rural Maharashtra; as the institute has asked him to vacate the hostel. Reason? He has completed six years of research. Last week, the institute asked all five-year PhD students to shift to shared hostel rooms from their single occupancy accommodation; all those who

have completed six years of research to move out of the campus by December 10. The senior PhD students have already stopped getting research fellowship after five years, making it more difficult for them to survive now in the city, especially out of campus. Since Thursday, the students, holding placards, have been on a silent protest mode on the campus. After a three-day holiday, the students gathered outside the main building on the campus on Tuesday evening to resume their strike.

Police held 2 people for possession of 65.25 gm of methaqualone of Rs 7.8 lakh in Navi Mumbai

Two persons have been arrested for alleged possession of 65.25 gm of methaqualone worth Rs 7.8 lakh in Navi Mumbai, police said on Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, a police team conducted a raid at Ekta Nagar slum colony in Vashi on Monday afternoon and seized the contraband, an official from

the APMC police station said. The accused, Dileep Rathod (33) and Tahir Ali (26), have been arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he said. The police are probing from where the banned substance was sourced and to whom the accused were planning to sell it, the official said. PTI

Navi Mumbai: Police registers case against 7 people for cheating overseas job seekers of Rs 81.75 lakh

Navi Mumbai Police has registered a case against seven persons for allegedly cheating overseas job seekers of Rs 81.75 lakh over the last four months, an official said on Tuesday. According to police, the accused had set up an office in the Kharghar area and advertised overseas jobs between

August and November this year. "They collected Rs 81.75 lakh from 113 victims and issued them fake plane tickets and other travel documents. None of them got any job," the official said, adding that nobody has been arrested so far.

Police suspect that many job-seekers might have fallen prey to the modus operandi used by

the accused persons, identified as Ravi Singh, SK Singh, Sonia Sharma, Ali Siraj, Sandeep, Samar Khan, and Aditya Singh.

A case has been registered under the charges of cheating, forgery, and criminal breach under various sections of the Indian Penal Code. Further investigation is underway. PTI

Indian Navy will be investigating suicide incident after Agniveer trainee dies by suicide

An inquiry has been ordered to investigate the alleged suicide incident of a 20-year-old woman who was undergoing Agniveer training at INS Hamla, an official statement issued by Defence PRO said on Tuesday. "The unfortunate incident of the unnatural death of Aparna V Nair, Agniveer Logistics(F&A), age 20, oc-



curred at INS Hamla, Mumbai on November 27. An inquiry has been ordered to investigate the incident by the Indian Navy," Defence PRO said.

Earlier today, Mumbai Po-

lice said that the woman was under training at INS Hamla at the time of the incident. "A 20-year-old woman, who was under training in the Navy for Agniveer, allegedly died by suicide by hanging herself. As per an official, Malvani Police registered an ADR and is carrying out further operations," police said. Further investigation is underway. ANI

Nation

Uttarakhand Silkyara tunnel incident: NDMA official says, "It would take 3-4 hours for the entire evacuation of workers"

National Disaster Management Authority Member, Lt General (Rtd) Syed Ata Hasnain on Tuesday said that the entire operation to evacuate workers from the Silkyara tunnel will take 3-4 hours adding that they are not in a "hurry." Addressing a press briefing in New Delhi, NDMA Member Syed Ata Hasnain said, "It is estimated that it will take 3-5 minutes to evacuate each of the 41 persons. The entire evacuation is expected to take 3-4 hours from the Silkyara tunnel after the breakthrough is achieved."

He further said that three teams of NDRF will go inside the tunnel to organise the evacuation. SDRF will provide support and



Paramedics will also go inside the tunnel at the time of evacuation. "All safety precautions will be implemented. No premature announcements are to be made, it will be against all principles. We

also have to take care of the safety and security of the people who are rescuing the workers...We are not in any hurry," he added. Ambulance and emergency vehicles are seen on standby near the en-

trance of the under-construction Silkyara tunnel during the rescue operation for trapped workers after a section of the tunnel collapsed around 17 days ago, he added. "30-bed facility is ready

in the District Hospital and 10-bed facility is also ready at the site. Chinook can fly in the night but the weather is not favourable for it and there is no urgency as such. If there is urgency, workers can be brought to Rishikesh in 1 or 2 ambulances," he said. A Chinook helicopter has been kept ready at the Chinyalisaur airstrip to airlift the workers after their rescue from the Silkyara tunnel, he said.

"Chinook helicopter is present at Chinyalisaur airstrip... The last time to fly the Chinook helicopter is 4:30 pm. We will not fly it during the night. Since there is a delay, the workers will be brought the next morning," he added. ANI

Delhi riots case: Court acquitted the accused giving them 'benefit of doubt'



The Delhi's Karkardooma Court has recently acquitted nine persons accused of rioting, and destroying property by fire during North East Delhi riots. The court acquitted the accused giving them the 'benefit of doubt'.

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Pulastya Pramachala, "I find that charges levelled against all the accused persons in this case are not proved beyond doubts." "Hence, accused Mohd Shahnawaz alias Shanu, Mohd Shoaib, Shahrukh, Rashid alias Raja, Azad, Ashraf Ali, Parvez, Md Faisal, and Rashid alias Monu, are acquitted of all the charges," the court ordered on November 25, 2023. The accused persons were identified by two police officials Constable Vipin and Head Constable Hari Babu.

The court said that it did not become clear in an unequivocal manner whether the witness (Vipin) had seen all the accused

persons in the mob throughout the period from 9 AM till all these incidents took place in the late evening or night. The court also raised questions on the testimony of Head Constable Hari Babu. The court said, "This witness had been examined in several cases against the same accused persons before his evidence was recorded in this case. Despite that, this witness stated that he did not know the names of other accused persons except Shahnawaz, Azad and Ashraf."

"According to him, he knew the names of Shahnawaz and Azad prior to the alleged incident. He came to know the name of Ashraf during his evidence being recorded in other cases," the court observed. "However, in his statement, it has been shown that he had mentioned names of nine accused persons, on the plea that he knew them since prior to the alleged incident," the court noted. ANI

Telangana newspaper ad issue: Karnataka govt says, "State govt advertisement related to the work does not violate rules"

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar on Tuesday said that the state government's advertisements about its work in newspapers in poll-bound Telangana do not violate any rules, as they did not ask for votes. Shivakumar said the government would respond to



the Election Commission's letter

on this. The BJP on Monday had lodged a complaint with the EC in the matter, alleging that the Congress violated the Representation of the People Act and the Model Code of Conduct, with its government in Karnataka publishing advertisements in Telangana media with an eye on the November 30 assembly polls there. PTI

Financial Services Secretary said, "Govt suspends 70 lakh mobile numbers due to suspicious transactions" due to increasing frauds

To check digital frauds, the government has suspended 70 lakh mobile numbers on account of suspicious transactions, Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi said on Tuesday. Emerging out of a meeting to discuss issues related to financial cyber security and increasing digital payment fraud, Joshi said banks have been asked to strengthen the system and processes in this regard. More such meetings would take place, he said, adding the next meeting is scheduled in January.

With regard to Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) fraud, he said states have been asked to look into the issue and ensure data protection. He also said that there was a discussion with regard to KYC standardisation of merchants. The meeting chaired by the Financial Services Secretary also deliberated on how to ensure better coordination among various agencies to check cyber fraud. Joshi said there was a need to create awareness about cyber fraud in society to protect gullible customers from being duped. During the meeting, the

Indian Cyber Crime Co-ordination Centre made a presentation on the latest statistics of digital payment frauds as reported in National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP), including challenges and issues faced in countering such issues. The meeting was attended by senior officials of the Department of Economic Affairs, Department of Revenue, Department of Telecom, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Telecom Regulatory Authority of India and National Payments Corporation of India. PTI

World

Afghanistan: WFP director says, "Deep concern regarding the forced deportation of refugees from Pakistan at harsh times"



World Food Program (WFP) Director in Afghanistan, Hsiao-Wei Lee, has expressed deep concern regarding the forced deportation of refugees from Pakistan ahead of the harsh winter season, Khaama Press reported. Lee highlighted that more than one million people are expected to leave Pakistan, with over 3,70,000 already arriving in Afghanistan.

These refugees are being compelled to return to Afghanistan during what is considered the "most challenging time of the year". Lee emphasized the grim prospects for these families, stating that they are uncertain about their survival in the upcoming freezing winter. Notably, Afghanistan faces an unforgiving winter, making it extremely challenging for the returnees. Unfor-

tunately, there are no welcoming arms awaiting these families in their home country, according to Khaama Press.

The returnees have also voiced their dissatisfaction with the behaviour of Pakistani forces and are requesting that the deportations be halted or that they be allowed to take their belongings with them. Meanwhile, despite calls from the UN and human rights groups to stop the deportations, Pakistani authorities are planning to complete the process by January, further intensifying the dire situation, Khaama Press reported.

Experts as well as international aid organisations have raised concerns about the lack of transparency highlighting the risk of foreigners entering Afghanistan under the guise of nationals and raised alarm over the harsh conditions faced by Afghan returnees in the country, especially during the severe winter. ANI

US: Anthony Blinken has scheduled talks with Azerbaijani President and Armenian PM over peace treaty between two states



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has held talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the possibility of concluding a peace treaty between the two states. Blinken "welcomed President Aliyev's commitment to conclude a durable and dignified peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia," reported TASS, citing one of the statements distributed by State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller.

The US Secretary of State said

that the conflict "underscored the benefits that peace would bring to everyone in the region." He also discussed US-Azerbaijan bilateral relations with Aliyev, "noted recent points of concern," and touched on "opportunities to strengthen cooperation." Armenia and their neighbour, Azerbaijan, have been in constant opposition over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. When Armenia took control of the Azeri region in 1993, the region was mostly inhabited by ethnic Armenians until 2023. ANI

Ukraine: Around 10 people were killed and 23 injured due to severe storm

At least 10 people were killed while 23 more including two children were left injured in Ukraine on Tuesday morning as the country was battered by severe storms, Kyiv Independent reported citing Ukraine Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko. Among the casualties, five deaths and 15 injuries were reported in Odesa Oblast, one of the worst-hit regions of Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the emergency services provided assistance to 2,498 people in the oblast, including 162 children, Klymenko said. Two people died and two were injured in Mykolaiv Oblast, according to the minister. The remaining dead victims were reported in Kyiv and Kharkiv Oblast, Kyiv Independent reported. The Russian authorities also reported one person dead in Crimea due to the weather condi-

tions on November 27.

Notably, heavy storms, wind, rain, and snowfall hit much of Ukraine on November 26-27, leading to floods, damages to buildings, power outages, and traffic problems, Kyiv Independent reported.

Earlier on Monday, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed gratitude to the rescuers, utility workers and local authorities for carrying out the rescue operation around the clock. "Bad weather has caused power outages in more than 2,000 towns and villages in 16 regions of Ukraine and has also blocked road traffic. I am grateful to all rescuers, utility workers, the National Police, local authorities, and engineers working around the clock to help people," Zelenskyy posted on X (formerly Twitter). ANI

France: Six teenagers are on trial for their alleged involvement in the 2020 beheading of teacher

Six teenagers are on trial behind closed doors in Paris for their alleged involvement in the 2020 beheading of French history teacher Samuel Paty, Al Jazeera has reported. The murder of the history teacher occurred after the teacher showed his pupils caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in a class on freedom of expression.

The history teacher, 47, was killed outside his school in a Paris suburb by Abdoullakh Anzorov, an 18-year-old assailant of Chechen origin who was shot dead by police soon afterwards. Five of the six, who were 14 to 15 years old at the time, face up to 2.5 years in prison for criminal conspiracy with intent to cause violence. They are accused of identifying the teacher with the killer in exchange for money; the names of the six youths cannot be revealed due to their age, reported Al Jazeera. During questioning, the teenagers swore that



at most they thought Paty would be "flagged up on social media," "humiliated," or maybe "roughed up," but they never imagined "it would go as far as murder."

The accused arrived at the courthouse in hoodies and masks to hide their identities. A girl, who was 13 at the time of the murder, allegedly told her parents that Paty had asked Muslim pupils to leave the room before showing the caricatures. "He is consumed with regret and is very fearful of the confrontation with Paty's fam-

ily," Antoine Ory, lawyer for one of the accused, said on Monday before the hearing started. Paty's sister, Mickaëlle, said in a statement through lawyer Louis Cailiez that her brother would still be alive without a "fatal association of small cowardices, big lies." "The role of the minors was fundamental in the sequence of events that led to his assassination," a lawyer for Paty's family said. The hearings are due to last until December 8, with the trial being held behind closed doors throughout. ANI

Expression

Is Artificial Intelligence a danger to humanity?



Vijay Garg

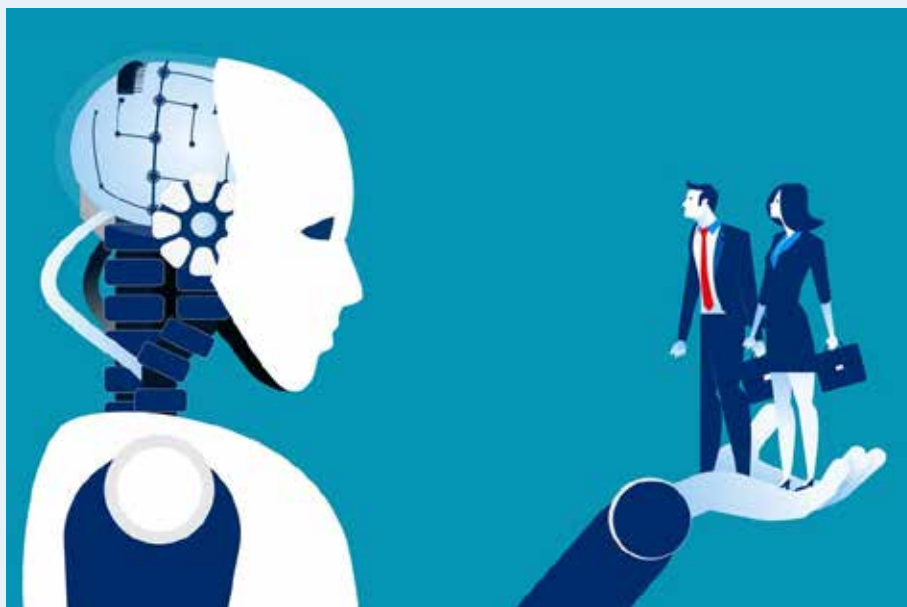
Retired Principal Educational
Columnist Malout Punjab

If you are not inundated with articles on Artificial Intelligence (AI), you have probably been living under a rock. Several of these articles raise images of a dystopian future based on machines taking over mankind. If you are sufficiently apprehensive about the future awaiting mankind, let me try to offer my analysis of what AI is and is not, and how it might shape our world in the foreseeable future.

AI is not a recent phenomenon, although it has assumed greater currency of late in terms of specific hardware and software such as ChatGPT. The term was first coined in 1956 by John McCarthy, a computer scientist at Stanford University. He defined it as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines." Since then, several scientists and engineers have worked in this area and we have seen many periods of hectic activity as well as dry spells due to lack of funding for research.

The other term I wish to briefly introduce is the Turing test, named after Alan Turing, who postulated that if a machine can engage in a conversation with a human without being detected as a machine, it has demonstrated human intelligence. The development of devices like Alexa and software such as ChatGPT are probably a result of researchers trying to meet the criteria for the Turing test.

First, a little understanding of AI is in order. AI, in its current avatar, is nothing more than sophisticated pattern recognition. The programs look for patterns in consumer behaviour, in speech, in text, in photographs, in medical diagnostic scans, etc. The software is "trained" to recognise patterns using a very large database of words, pictures, numbers, and scans. For example, if a customer tends to purchase certain products from a retail outlet on a regular basis, AI will be able to detect this purchasing pattern and the customer can be sent



customize mailings/ ads that match his/her preferences. When it comes to facial recognition, the picture is divided into a number of dots or pixels. The software analyses the pixels to determine patterns which give information about facial features. Then the software would compare the pattern it has been trained on with the pattern on a photograph to determine if the two photographs are of the same individual.

The accuracy, or correctness of the answers developed by AI is dependent on the data used to train it. Training is done by feeding a large amount of data into the software, then letting the software answer the question that is being asked. By providing human feedback regarding the accuracy of the answer, the software gets "trained" so that it can improve its ability to decipher the pattern on its next attempt. There is ample evidence of AI making mistakes due to gaps and shortcomings in the data used in the training. These mistakes have occurred in facial recognition in the US where the program has incorrectly identified an individual as a suspect in a crime not committed by him/her. There are several examples of AI programs showing clear bias based on race, gender, age, etc. when the database used to train the software has been deficient or biased.

Irrespective of the sophistication of the software, none of them are 100% reliable. Some people may say that neither are humans. There are two major dangers in letting a

software make decisions. First, most AI software is like a black box. It is not possible to question the logic used by the program. This does not allow us to have an audit trail. Second, people place very great faith in output from software and do not question it, assuming that computers cannot make mistakes like humans. But as I have mentioned, there have been several instances where AI has made an error. It would be incorrect to completely hand over the responsibility of an entire human task to a computer program, especially when we are not sure of the reliability of the program. If the error results in a wrong conviction of a person, the consequences are huge from a human perspective.

What we can, and probably should do, is to automate the repetitive component of the human task. This would free the human to add greater value by providing inputs that computers cannot. A good example of this is the use of auto pilot in airplanes. The longest, and the most boring part of flying an aircraft is when it is flying at its cruising altitude. It is the take-off and landing that requires the expertise of a human pilot. Therefore, a plane can be put on auto pilot at cruising altitude as constant attention by the pilot is not needed. But we do not eliminate the pilot. We let the auto pilot relieve the stress in a long-haul flight. The pilot can override the auto pilot if the situation demands it.

Any technological development

has led to reduction in human labour. Whether it was the steam engine, the tractor, the automobile, or even the computer. Each innovation has resulted in the elimination of the drudgery of repetitive human tasks, whether physical, or mental. In 1870, agricultural workers comprised half of all workers in the US; in 1900, about one-third of all workers; and in 1950, less than a fifth of all workers. Today the number of agricultural workers is around one percent of all workers. The reason for this reduction is an increase in mechanisation and farm sizes over this period.

The question that ought to be asked is not whether technology displaced people; it certainly did. Rather we should be asking whether people would like to do the work being done by machines today for what consumers would be willing to pay for it. The answer, arguably, would be a no. Similar scenarios have been observed in non-physical work situations such as calculating, accounting, etc. where computers have effectively replaced humans, and rightly so. How many people today would enjoy adding numbers all day long?

There are several human jobs that are ripe for automation. One of the most denigrating and dangerous jobs in India is that of manual scavenging. Would an AI powered solution not be a great way to eliminate the risk of death that manual scavengers face today. There can be many other such jobs which should not be done by humans. The rule that Japanese companies, such as Toyota, use is if a task is dirty, difficult, or dangerous, it is a good candidate for automation. To this list we can also add boring and repetitive, with no value added.

In conclusion, I feel that both the hype and the fear attributed to AI is overdone. If the test of AI is that it should be able to mimic a human, we need to remember that humans can make mistakes and computers cannot. At the same time humans can find an opportunity failure or mistake, such as the discovery of penicillin. A computer cannot do that because it has to be told what to look for. Ultimately, humans decide what AI should be used for, not the other way around. Let us do this judiciously.

Entertainment

Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan makes her debut in singing

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan is all set to make her acting debut with Zoya Akhtar's upcoming film 'The Archies'. On Monday, Suhana surprised all her fans as she announced that she has also made her singing debut with the song 'Jab Tum Na Theen' from 'The Archies'.

Taking to Instagram, Suhana shared a post, which she captioned, "I sang my first song!! Thank you @zoieakhtar & @shankar.mahadevan for being so patient with me please listen with kindness." Soon after she shared the post, her friends and fans swamped down the comment section with red hearts and fire emoticons. Replying to her followers reaction, Ananya Panday commented, "Suzie you're sooooo good." Director Zoya Akhtar commented, "Suhana Shine On." Shanaya Kapoor commented, "too good."

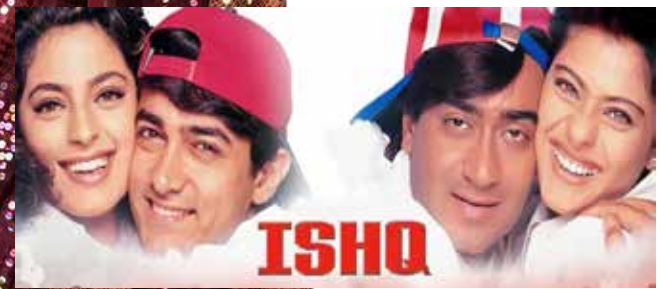
Helmed by Zoya Akhtar, the film marks the acting debut of Amitabh Bachchan's grandson Agastya Nanda, Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan and producer Boney Kapoor's Khushi Kapoor. 'The Archies', a coming-of-age musical, follows the lives of Archie, Betty, Veronica, Jughead, Reggie, Ethel and Dilton who will take audiences to the fictional hilly town of Riverdale. The film explores friendship, freedom love, heartbreak and rebellion.

ANI



Actor Kajol shares throwback pictures from movie 'Ishq', says "fab actors"

Actor Kajol on Tuesday celebrated 26 years of the romantic drama film 'Ishq'. Taking to Instagram, Kajol shared a throwback picture which she captioned, "This picture was taken once we had finished stomping on the hills of Switzerland for the day.. You can't see how zapped we were or how we were like 'Why does the sun set so late damnit?'. What fab actors we were na ;) #hillsofswitzerland #ishq #workhardplaybetter #26yearsofishq." In the picture, Kajol could be seen posing with her 'Ishq' co-stars Ajay Devgn, Aamir Khan and Juhi Chawla. ANI



Actor Mahesh Babu praises Ranbir Kapoor, says "Best actor.." ahead of Animal release

Actor Ranbir Kapoor is currently busy promoting his upcoming action thriller film 'Animal'. On Monday, team 'Animal' including Ranbir, Bobby Deol, Rashmika Mandanna and Anil Kapoor headed to Hyderabad for a special event to promote their film where south superstar Mahesh Babu and ace director SS Rajamouli also joined the cast.

During the event, Mahesh Babu showered praises on Ranbir and called him the "best actor in India." At the event Mahesh Babu said, "I have told him this before also when I met him but I don't think he took me seriously. So today, on this stage, I'm saying that I'm a huge Ranbir Kapoor fan and in my opinion, he is the best actor in India."

The 'RRR' director Rajamouli also declared Ranbir as his favorite actor, confidently stating, "Without hesitation, I'll tell you, my favorite actor is Ranbir Kapoor." He also playfully challenged him to choose between working with Sandeep Reddy Vanga and himself.

'Animal' is helmed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. The film stars Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Bobby Deol, and Rashmika Mandanna in the lead roles. Recently, during the promotional event in Chennai, Ranbir opened up on why Sandeep Reddy Vanga's next directorial has been titled 'Animal'. Ranbir said, "Once you see the film, you will understand."

He elaborated on the reason and said, "I think the reason why Sandeep Reddy Vanga called this film Animal is because animal behaves out of instinct. They don't behave out of thought. So this character that I'm playing, he behaves out of instinct to protect his family. He is not thinking he is behaving out of instinct, he is impulsive, and I think that's where the title Animal came and once you see the film you'll realize that this film suits this title." ANI

