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Ridip Saikia from Assam's Majuli eats burning 'charcoal' as he successfully attempts for an entry in the World Book of Records, in Guwahati

Fire breaks out at e-bike godown in Pune; none hurt

PUNE: Fire broke out in the godown of an electric bike company in the Katraj area of Pune on Tuesday, a fire official said. There was no report of injuries in the blaze that erupted in the afternoon, the official said. Thick plumes of smoke and flames could be seen billowing from the unit. He said seven water tankers were dispatched to the scene, and efforts are underway to douse the blaze. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, the official said.

Seven arrested in Odisha for smuggling ganja

BERHAMPUR (ODISHA): Excise department officials in Odisha on Tuesday arrested seven people, including three from Maharashtra, for allegedly trying to smuggle ganja from Gajapati district to Mumbai. Three cars, mobile phones and around 160 kg ganja were recovered from the accused, an official said. The estimated market value of the seized items, including the ganja, is Rs 50 lakh, said Srutikant Rout, Deputy Superintendent, Intelligence and Enforcement Bureau. Further investigation is underway.

NIDM holds workshop on earthquake risk reduction

NEW DELHI: A workshop on national capacity building programme for earthquake risk reduction was held here by the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) on Tuesday with experts discussing different ideas and mitigation solutions. The day-long session also marked the beginning of a year-long programme extending until 2026, featuring a series of events designed to enhance national and regional strategies for earthquake risk mitigation while fostering collaboration among policymakers, experts and stakeholders in disaster resilience, a statement said. The key topics discussed during the workshop include mitigation measures for critical infrastructure, urban resilience, recovery and reconstruction, regional issues and challenges in earthquake risk reduction and the way forward, it said.

CRPF jawan dies inside Srinagar camp

SRINAGAR: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan died inside a camp in the Wazirbagh area of the city on Tuesday, officials said here. Head constable Jeetendra Devidas was found unconscious at the CRPF camp at Wazirbagh in the early hours, the officials said. They said the jawan was rushed to the SMHS Hospital, where the doctors declared him dead on arrival. Police have started inquest proceedings to ascertain the cause of the jawan's death, they said.

Teenage girl abducted, raped in Punjab

HOSHIARPUR (PUNJAB): A 13-year-old daughter of a migrant labourer was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a man in a village here, police said on Tuesday. The girl and her family, originally from Uttar Pradesh, have been living in a rented house in the district for the past seven years. According to police, she was alone at home on February 10 when the accused, a resident of the same village, allegedly abducted her and took her to his house, where he raped her. The accused later kept her in hiding at multiple locations by threatening her, police said. Her father eventually traced her to a Dera in Nawanshahr district and brought her back. Upon returning home, she informed her mother about the ordeal. The accused's mother allegedly threatened the victim's family with dire consequences if they filed a complaint.

5 injured in firing between rival groups in northeast Delhi's Jyoti Nagar

NEW DELHI: Five people, including two bystanders, were injured in a firing incident between two groups in northeast Delhi's Jyoti Nagar area, an official said on Tuesday. According to the police, the incident was reported around 9 pm on Monday at Jyoti Nagar police station by a man who claimed that his son had been shot at by unknown assailants. Upon arrival, police found that multiple rounds had been fired during the clash, the official said, adding that the injured people were rushed to GTB Hospital for treatment. According to the police, those who received bullet injuries are identified as Akash (21), Abhishek (30), Vasu (22).

Two juveniles, 1 woman held for Rs 2 crore boutique heist in south Delhi

NEW DELHI: Two juveniles were apprehended and a woman arrested for allegedly robbing Rs 2 crore worth of bridal outfits and other items from a boutique in south Delhi's Fatehpur Beri, police said on Tuesday. One of the juveniles was a former sales assistant at the boutique, he said. According to Additional Deputy Superintendent of Police (South) Achin Garg, the incident occurred at around 11.15 pm on March 1. "On Saturday night, a woman, accompanied by two people, approached the security guard of the boutique operating inside a farmhouse. The woman, posing as a relative of the owner, requested entry to use the washroom," Garg said.

CBI busts rly exam scam; 26 officials arrested

Rs 1.17 crore seized during the raids

PTI, NEW DELHI: The CBI has arrested 26 railway officials including a senior divisional electrical engineer (DEE) of East Central Railway in Uttar Pradesh's Mughal Sarai for allegedly leaking papers of a departmental examination and seized Rs 1.17 crore cash during its raids.

Sushant Parashar, posted at DRM office, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction as DEE (operations), was arrested on Monday night along with other officials who had allegedly taken money for leaking papers of departmental examination for the elevation to posts of chief loco pilot at Mughal Sarai, CBI officials said on Tuesday.

Sources in the agency said that the examination, which was to be conducted on Tuesday, has now been cancelled.

Parashar is a 2014-batch officer of Indian Railway Service of Engineers.



Upon getting the information about the alleged compromise of the examination, the CBI teams raided three spots in Mughal Sarai where the aspirants were holed up cramming the answers to the question papers allegedly provided to them

"He (Parashar) himself had written the questions in English and allegedly gave it to one loco pilot who, in turn, translated it into Hindi and further gave it to another official. The said official allegedly gave it to the candidates through few other railway employees," a CBI spokesperson said.

Upon getting the information about the alleged compromise of the ex-

amination, the CBI teams raided three spots in Mughal Sarai where the aspirants were holed up cramming the answers to the question papers allegedly provided to them, the officials said.

"During the checks conducted by CBI, at three spots on the intervening night (March 3-4) at Mughal Sarai, a total of 17 candidates were found with photocopies of hand-writ-

ten question papers," the spokesperson said.

All 17 departmental candidates who are presently working as loco pilots had allegedly paid money for the question paper and were caught red-handed with the copies during the raid, he said.

"Overall, 26 railway officials (including the 17 aspirants) have been arrested in this case so far," the spokesperson said in a statement.

The agency has registered the FIR against Parashar who was given the responsibility for setting and preparing the question paper for the said examination.

"Searches were conducted at eight locations which resulted in recovery of Rs 1.17 crore in cash. The amount was reportedly collected from the candidates for leaking the question papers.

PASSING SEASONS



An elderly woman walks past leaves fallen amid the changing season, in Nadia, West Bengal

Punjab govt deploys anti-drone tech to stop drug inflow

PTI, CHANDIGARH: The Punjab government will take the help of anti-drone technology to check smuggling of narcotics and arms from across the border, Cabinet minister Harpal Singh Cheema said on Tuesday.

Cheema, who is leading a Cabinet sub-committee to monitor action against the drug menace, and his Cabinet colleague Aman Arora witnessed a demonstration of the anti-drone technology by three companies in Mohali.

Speaking to reporters, Arora said drugs, arms and ammunition are coming from Pakistan as he stressed upon the use of anti-drone technology to check the inflow from across the border.

"It is the primary responsibility of the government of India and the BSF to check smuggling of narcotics and arms and ammunition from across the border," Arora said, adding the Border Security Force (BSF) has 50 km of jurisdiction.

Rescue ops underway, damaged conveyor made operational

PTI, NAGARKURNOOL: The conveyor belt at the partially collapsed SLBC tunnel, under which eight persons are trapped for the past 11 days, was repaired and made operational on Tuesday. It will now make it easier for rescue personnel to shift muck and debris out, officials said.

TELANGANA TUNNEL COLLAPSE

The conveyor belt was damaged following the accident on February 22, they said.

The rescue operation was going on at a rapid pace on the 11th day of the accident on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a team of South Central Railway (SCR) comprising metal cutting experts cut the platform of the damaged Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) inside the tunnel, a SCR official said on Tuesday.

There was no breakthrough in the efforts to locate the eight trapped persons and rescuers are working in three shifts every day, an official told



Emergency teams gather for a rescue operation to trace workers trapped inside the partially collapsed Telangana's Srisailem Left Bank Canal tunnel, in Nagarkurnool, Telangana

PTI. The process of removing debris and dewatering was going on, he said.

Nagarkurnool district Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Gaikwad said on Monday evening that the government is exploring the option of deploying robots in the rescue operation to prevent any threat to the rescue personnel.

Large quantities of slush and water inside the tunnel posed a challenge to the teams involved in the rescue operation.

Eight persons - engineers and labourers - have been trapped in the Srisailem

HC stays students' suspension, says peaceful protests essential for civil society

PTI, NEW DELHI: While staying the suspension of Jamia Millia Islamia students barred from the university campus, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday said participation in such peaceful protests were the part of the "training to inculcate the basic principles and norms of civil society".

Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma also found the manner in which the university handled the protest worrisome.

"Without going into the veracity of the submissions of either of the parties, the perusal of the record itself made the court worry about the way the protest, being undertaken by the

The high court ordered the constitution of a peace committee of university officials under the supervision of the vice-chancellor to resolve the issue and calm the situation down, and said they should also involve student representatives in the discussions

students, is handled by the university. The court is not looking at the reason for the protest at the moment but the documents as shown by the petitioners prima facie show that it was a peaceful protest," the court said.

The high court ordered the constitution of a "peace"

committee of university officials under the supervision of the vice-chancellor to resolve the issue and calm the situation down, and said they should also involve student representatives in the discussions.

The suspensions were stayed till April 2 on four separate pleas of seven students who were suspended and barred from the campus by a February 12 order of the proctor. The university was directed to file a report in the matter within a week.

All students, who were of tender age, went to the university to "certainly make an endeavour" to raise their voice within the framework of the law, the court said.

Kerala HC to constitute special bench to deal with plea against ragging

PTI, KOCHI: The Kerala High Court on Tuesday directed that a special bench be constituted for hearing a plea moved by the state's legal services authority KelSA seeking effective implementation of anti-ragging laws and the establishment of a mechanism to monitor instances of ragging.

The plea came up for hearing before a bench of Chief Justice Nitin Jamdar and Justice S Manu which placed the matter on the administrative side of the High Court for constituting a special bench.

KelSA in its plea has said that ragging was "a deeply entrenched social menace that continues to plague educational institutions, causing severe psychological, emotional, and even physical harm to students".

It has claimed that despite the existence of laws, regulations, and judicial directives aimed at eradicating ragging, such incidents are occurring which highlights the presence of "significant gaps in enforce-

ment and accountability". It has further said that the prevalence of ragging not only undermines the safety and security of students but also reflects systemic failures in the implementation of preventive measures.

"Addressing this issue requires a well-structured legal and monitoring framework that ensures strict adherence to anti-ragging laws while providing victims with immediate support and redressal mechanisms," KelSA has said in its petition.

It has claimed that it has consistently endeavoured to create awareness and sensitisation among students, educational institutions, and the general public about the consequences of ragging.

"However, despite these sustained efforts, recent incidents have demonstrated the limited effectiveness of awareness campaigns in curbing ragging, thereby necessitating stronger enforcement mechanisms," it has said.

Policy decisions by states needed to protect patients from being fleeced by pharmacies at private hospitals: SC

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday left it to the states to take appropriate policy decisions to protect patients and their attendants from being "fleeced" and taken "undue advantage" of after a PIL alleged that they are compelled to purchase medicines and medical devices at a higher rate from pharmacies run at private hospitals.

The apex court also stressed that any manda-

tory direction by it may hamper the functioning of private hospitals and have a cascading effect.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh disposed of a PIL filed by a law student Siddharth Dalmia and his advocate father Vijay Pal Dalmia that alleged that the private hospitals compel the patients and their attendants to purchase medicines from in-house pharmacies or those with which they have

collaboration, and they are charged higher rates for medicines, implants and medical devices.

The bench said, "We dispose of this petition with direction to all state governments to consider this issue and take appropriate policy decisions as they deem fit." Noting that health is a state subject, the bench said relevant regulatory measures can be taken by the state governments keeping their local conditions in mind.

Highlighting that the issue falls in the policy domain, the bench said it is for the policymakers to take a holistic view of the matter and frame appropriate guidelines ensuring there is no exploitation of the patients and their attendants and, at the same time, there is no discouragement and an unreasonable restriction for the private entities to enter the health sector.

The top court said it would not be advisable

for the court to issue any mandatory directions on the PIL to private hospitals but emphasised the need to sensitise the state governments about the alleged problem of fleecing and exploitation of patients and their attendants by private hospitals taking undue advantage of their conditions.

The bench said under the Constitution, the state is obligated to provide better health facilities to its citizenry but due to the rise in population,

it had to take the help of private hospitals to cater to the needs of its people.

It said citizens' right to better health facilities is a right traceable to Article 21 of the Constitution.

Lauding the contribution made by private hospitals in the health sector which are well-known across the world, the bench said any mandatory direction by the court may hamper their functioning and may have a cascading effect.



SC: Calling someone miyan-tiyan or Pakistani not a religious offense

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has held using terms such as "miyan-tiyan" and "Pakistani" was not an offence of hurting religious sentiments though made in poor taste.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma therefore discharged a man in a criminal case filed by an Urdu translator and acting clerk Right to Information (RTI) in the sub-divisional office, Chas in Jharkhand.

The February 11 court order said, "The appellant is accused of hurting the religious feelings of the informant by calling him 'miyan-tiyan' and 'Pakistani'. Undoubtedly, the statements made are poor taste. However, it does not amount to hurting the religious sentiments of the informant. Hence, we are of the opinion that the appellant shall also be discharged under Section 298 IPC." Section 298 of IPC deals with words or gestures made with a deliberate intent to wound religious feelings.

It came on record that accused, Hari Nandan Singh,

sought information under the RTI Act from additional collector-cum-first appellate authority, Bokaro, and the information was dispatched to him.

However, he filed an appeal before the appellate authority, allegedly after manipulating the documents sent to him by the office through the registered post and making false allegations of manipulation in the documents.

The appellate authority directed the translator to personally serve the information to the appellant.

On November 18, 2020, the informant, accompanied by the messenger of the sub-divisional office, Chas, went to the accused's home to hand over the information.

The accused initially refused to accept the documents but upon insistence by the informant, accepted it.