

TISS students seek clarity on closures

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Students from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) plan to write to the administration seeking clarity on the status of the institute's decision to shut down three UGC-sanctioned centres on the campus.

Up to 150 students and research scholars will be affected by the closure. The UGC is yet to give an official extension for the functioning of these centres in the next plan. With no extension from the UGC, the contract of 18 teachers and several administrative staff members working in these centres have been terminated as the posts will cease to exist after the completion of the tenure of the 12th Plan on March 31.

"The research work of MPhil and PhD students guided by these terminated professors will definitely suffer if these professors fail to get an extension. There is no clarity on how many teachers from each of the three centres have been given the termination notice," a research student said.

In the centre for study of social exclusion and inclusive policies, most teachers are permanent except for one. Half the teachers in the centre for women's studies have been given termination letters. The two centres, along with the centre for human rights, had been doing exceptionally well.

"There is no consolidated list, only the teachers were individually informed about it," said a student union member. Teachers in permanent positions will continue to work in the institute.

The director, S Parasuraman, is likely to meet central government officials to seek an extension on March 29, said an official.

METRO DIGEST

Harbour services hit

Two Harbour services were cancelled and others ran 15 minutes behind schedule during evening peak hours after a trespassing incident was reported between Wadala and Sewree stations, said an official.

Tax defaulters face heat

The Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation on Monday sealed two hospitals, a school, a college, 39 mobile towers and several shops for defaulting on property tax.

Corporators nominated

BJP nominated Ganesh Khankar and Shrinivas Tripathi as corporators in BMC on Monday, while Sena chose Arvind Bhosale and Trushna Vishwasrao. Congress nominated Sunil Narasale.

'Pay BEST salaries on time'

Mayor Vishwanath Mahadeshwar on Monday said that all attempts are being made to ensure that the employees of BEST get their March salaries on time.

Settle row: HC to couple

The HC has asked a couple to amicably settle a dispute after the man sought pre-arrest bail in a case where his wife accused him of cruelty and unnatural sex.

Crackdown on bikers

The police cracked down on youngsters racing and performing dangerous stunts on motorbikes in Kashmiria on Sunday. No arrests were made.

Special trains for Urs

For the convenience of passengers travelling to Ajmer for the 805th annual Urs festival, Western Railway will run special trains on special fare from Mumbai, Udhna Jn and Bhopal.

WEATHER

Colaba Santacruz
33.4°/ 38.4°/
25.26° 21.5°

Sunrise: Wednesday: 06:33hrs
Sunset: Tuesday: 18:49hrs
Forecast: Sky is likely to be clear. Max and min temperatures would be around 37°C and 22°C respectively.
Relative humidity: Colaba 67%, Santacruz 65%

SWACHH BHARAT		
AIR QUALITY INDEX		PM2.5
Delhi	93	Satisfactory
Tomorrow	87	Satisfactory
Pune	88	Satisfactory
Tomorrow	83	Satisfactory
Mumbai	197	Moderate
Tomorrow	193	Moderate
Source: SAFAR@MOES-IITM-IND (10 stations)		
Hyderabad	90	Satisfactory
Kolkata	31	Good
Chennai	124	Moderate
US Embassy data calculated as per Indian standards by SAFAR@MOES-IITM-IND Based on 1 Station Data Per City at 4pm		

NCPA installs city's largest pvt solar project

System To Save ₹55L, Yield 6.5L Units Of Power

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Mumbai: The iconic NCPA, the mecca of the city's art and culture lovers, is now holding a beacon for energy conservation measures as well. It has installed one of the city's largest private rooftop solar projects on its vast terraces.

The roofs of Tata Theatre, Jamshed Bhabha and Experimental Theatre buildings have been fitted with panels. These will help the institution save one-third of its annual electricity consumption. NCPA's chief engineer Nayan Kale estimates a saving of Rs 50-55 lakh



The rooftop solar panels will significantly reduce NCPA's power bills

a year. The system, which will yield 450KW of solar energy per annum, will be inaugurated by chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday.

Execution was by no means an easy task. "The complex is yards away from the sea front so that was our biggest

challenge. NCPA is an iconic structure after all," said Burgis Bulsara, whose Bandra-based firm Avesta Solar carried out the project. "We had to make sure the system does not suffer corrosion and they will not be displaced by heavy wind speeds. Nothing must go

wrong during the monsoon. This equipment has a life of 20-25 years." This contraption is designed to withstand wind speeds of up to 180 km per hour. Constructed on the build-own-operate model at a cost of Rs 3.2 crore, it will be maintained by Avesta for the next 25 years.

Freddy Talati, CEO of The Associated Building Co., the Tata firm that owns Bombay House, recommended Bulsara to NCPA, after the engineer successfully installed solar panels on Tata's Army and Navy Building, Central Archives and Elphinstone Building.

Khushroo Suntook, chairman of NCPA, said, "We have large terraces that cannot be used for events or parties as the structures are not equipped to take heavy load. In fact we had explored the possibi-

ty of going green a couple of years ago also, but this was the reason we could not do so. At that time solar equipment was very heavy. Now Burgis imported lightweight panels so we agreed to install them."

NCPA did not like the idea of puncturing its terrace to anchor the panels, so modern panels that eschew this need were imported from Germany. "NCPA uses around 18-20 lakh units of electricity each year. This solar panel system alone can generate 6.5 lakh units, so imagine the money saved. Most NCPA functions are in the evening. The electricity is generated during daytime. Yet, owing to the net metering policy of the state government, they can feed the excess energy generated by the panel back into the grid and get the set-off," said Burgis.

Govt wants illegal bldgs named in hoardings, media

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The urban development department has issued a circular directing civic bodies to publish a list of fly-by-night builders' illegal projects in newspapers or hoardings and vacate such structures if they are found to be dangerous or mandatorily structural audits.

The move aims to protect

operators, who sell and disappear. The order states that people would be evicted from illegal structures declared unsafe. It emphasizes that the quality of construction of such buildings be checked.

"If the construction of a building is poor, its residents have to be evicted immediately and the building demolished," said an official.

Potential homebuyers have welcomed the move. Naina Shah, who had recently sought details of a building, said such an initiative would help buyers reconfirm if the developer was into illegal construction. "We put our hard-earned money in buying homes. If an audit is done and a list is put out, we shall not invest in illegal constructions," she said.

There is a flip side to the initiative, though. Those investing in illegal structures would face the brunt. Residents of an illegal construction in a locality have protested after an eviction notice was issued. "We even got bank loans—one of the factors proving that a structure has followed all the norms. Yet, we are facing eviction," said a member, who has written to the region development authority concerned, seeking relief.

Credai, a builders' organisation, has supported the government's move. A member, Shantilal Kataria, said, "It will be a warning for fly-by-night operators. All stamp registration offices should display the list to alert customers."

Pressure on CM to act against builders

Pressure is building on chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, also in charge of the urban development department, to take action against errant builders, mainly regarding constructions in Pune. The demand is from urban planners, activists and developers' apex body Credai, following the high court's order chiding the state government over regularization of illegal structures. TNN

potential buyers from unknowingly going for such constructions which may be cheaper than the market rate. With many such projects mushrooming on city outskirts, the urban development department has asked all local bodies to survey such buildings. The list of such buildings would be displayed on hoardings and published in media so that buyers are not cheated. The circular states that most illegal buildings are constructed by fly-by-night devel-

BIKES, CARS SET ABLAZE IN BHANDUP

Sanjay Hadkar



NO CLUE ABOUT MISCREANTS: 12 motorcycles and two cars were set ablaze by unidentified persons at Trimurthi Nagar in Bhandup early on Monday. The police are checking if there are any CCTV cameras installed in nearby areas so that they can get some clues about the miscreants

Cash-strapped state to spend ₹4.6 crore on 24 cars for netas

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Mumbai: A cash-strapped Devendra Fadnavis government will purchase 24 swanky cars for Rs 4.65 crore for cabinet members and distinguished visitors on official visit to districts. Each car will cost around Rs 20 lakh and an order has been placed with a Latur dealer.

The cars will be at the disposal of district collectors. Five will be at the disposal of the collector, Nagpur, home town of the chief minister and Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari, while four each will be at the disposal of the Yavatmal and Aurangabad collectors, three each for Chandrapur and Jalgaon,

two for Beed and one each for Solapur, Latur and Gondia. "We have scrapped the 225 Ambassador cars at the disposal of the collectors. It has been proposed to replace these cars with seven-seater vehicles, each costing Rs 20 lakh," a senior bureaucrat said.

Expressing shock and surprise over the huge expenditure, the bureaucrat said at a juncture when the debt burden will cross the Rs 4.13 lakh crore mark, instead of embarking on a massive austerity drive, the government is purchasing swanky vehicles. "Certainly, it's avoidable expenditure, instead of purcha-

sing high value vehicles, the CM should have gone in for cheaper vehicles," he said.

The bureaucrat admitted that there is absolutely no control over gross misuse of cars by cabinet members and bureaucrats. "Besides official vehicles, every cabinet member has at least two to three cars for family members. While cabinet members flout rules, bureaucrats are not lagging behind. Besides official vehicles, most bureaucrats have two to three vehicles for family members. Wives of bureaucrats are either in government or private service, prefer to travel in red beacon vehicles. The chief secretary must stop this misuse of power," he said.

ROUGH RIDE

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Complete Sion-Panvel Highway tender scam probe in 3 months, HC tells ACB

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Mumbai: The Bombay high court on Monday directed the anti-corruption bureau (ACB) to complete its open inquiry into the alleged Sion-Panvel Highway tender scam within three months. A division bench of Justices Ranjit More and Anuja Prabhudesai also restrained the state from paying the toll operator Rs 390 crore due as viability gap fund without its permission.

The HC was hearing a criminal PIL by activist Pravin Wategaonkar, who had sought a probe into the alleged corrupt practices in the tendering process. He claimed the IVRCL-Kakade Infrastructure Pvt Ltd (KIPL) joint venture wins contract by offering lowest viability gap fund of ₹390 crore.

KIPL is owned by BJP MP Sanjay Kakade

> Sept 2014 | The 10-lane highway built at ₹1,705cr

'OTHER FIRMS NOT ALLOWED TO BID'

> 2006 | State gives in-principal approval for Sion-Panvel Highway

> 2008 | PWD proposes to widen the 20-km highway with a new toll naka at Kamothe

> June 2009 | IVRCL-Kakade Infrastructure Pvt Ltd (KIPL) joint venture wins contract by offering lowest viability gap fund of ₹390 crore.

> Sept 2014 | The 10-lane highway built at ₹1,705cr

fund of Rs 390 crore. KIPL is owned by BJP MP Sanjay Kakade. Wategaonkar alleged that four eligible bidders were denied tender forms and a firm with no experience in such



THE ALLEGATIONS

> Other eligible firms were not allowed to bid for the project
> Irregularities in bid process
> KIPL increased its equity in the venture and then made a windfall gain by selling off its equity to a third company

projects was awarded the bid. At the last hearing, the court had questioned the state over the delay in filing an FIR. Additional public prosecutor Sultana Sonawane said the

Prevention of Corruption Act provided for an open inquiry. The prosecutor submitted the ACB report and said the agency wanted to probe the tendering process. The ACB sought six months' time to complete the open inquiry to decide whether an FIR was warranted, but the HC directed it to wrap up the probe in three months.

Last September, the ACB said it had conducted a discreet inquiry and sought permission for an open inquiry. Wategaonkar alleged that since people close to the ruling party were involved, the state seems to be delaying the matter. He claimed the state was planning to pay the Rs 390-crore VGF to the firm by March 31, 2017. When the prosecutor said there was no such plan yet, the HC said the state would have to take its approval before deciding to make the payment.

Land for 2nd Doppler radar this week: BMC

Mumbai: The BMC on Monday told the Bombay high court that it will hand over land for installation of the second Doppler weather radar for the city this week.

The court, while hearing a PIL on March 14, was told by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) that it cannot take possession unless the one-time premium issue is settled. The BMC fixed a one-time allotment premium of Rs 56 lakh and annual lease rent of Rs 900. Advocate Anil Sakhare, appearing for BMC, said possession can be taken by IMD before the month-end and the state government can consider whether or not to waive off the premium. The court had summoned the municipal commissioner to ensure that the process to hand over the site at Veravali reservoir in Jogeshwari was completed. TNN

IIT-B study links local pollution to intensity of rain

'Aerosols Inhibit Weak Monsoon, Boost Good One'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

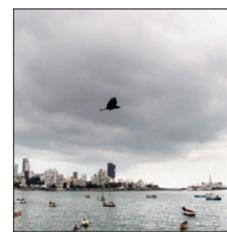
Mumbai: Small particles of air pollution and dust may play a role in enhancing a good monsoon while aggravating a poor one.

That is one implication of a new IIT-Bombay study that found a link between the amount of aerosols in the atmosphere and cloud formation during the monsoon. Aerosols refer to small particles of dust and pollutants like soot.

For the study, scientists analysed observational data on aerosols and clouds over central and north India between 2000-2009 monsoons. They were surprised by what they found: high levels of aerosols were correlated with modifications in cloud formation — but in diametrically opposite ways in good and bad monsoon years.

In deficient monsoon years, scientists found, dust and pollutant particles built up in the atmosphere during frequent breaks in rainfall. This accumulation of aerosols coincided with the formation of smaller cloud droplets and shallower clouds. When clouds are shallow, they drain out quickly.

The opposite trend was seen in good monsoon years. During these years, high levels of aerosols coincided with bigger cloud droplets. Clouds also grew much taller resulting in greater ice formation. "Taller clouds and greater ice formation are linked respectively to more intense rainfall and cold rain," said IIT professor and study co-author Chandra Ven-



kataraman.

The findings imply that aerosols inhibit cloud development during a deficient monsoon while invigorating cloud formation during a good monsoon, he added.

The mechanisms underlying these processes need to be studied further, scientists said. And while this paper only looked at links to changes in cloud properties, the investigation of actual rainfall changes is also underway, said Venkataraman.

There has been relatively little research looking at the effect of local factors like land use or air pollution on monsoon cloud formation. Monsoon studies have traditionally focused on the impact of large-scale factors like El Nino or La Nina. Some studies have looked at the effect of aerosols on the overall monsoon through temperature changes since aerosols can both cool and warm the atmosphere. Those studies have linked aerosols to short-term increases in rainfall as well as longer-term drying out of some regions.

"We have to understand local processes along with larger-scale monsoon dynamics," said Venkataraman.

The study, by PhD students Nitin Patil and Prashant Dave and Venkataraman, was published in the journal Scientific Reports this month.

Cattle transported in car for slaughter rescued after mishap



The cows were put in the rear of the car after removing the seat

Pradeep Gupta

Bhiwandi: A car transporting three cows, including a calf, illegally to a slaughterhouse met with an accident while overtaking a dumper here on Monday.

The cows, covered with a blanket, were forced to sit in the car, where the rear seat was modified.

After the accident, locals gheraoed the car on seeing the cows but the accused fled. Cops suspect the accused were transporting the cows to a slaughterhouse in Bhiwandi.

Slaughter of cows and bulls is banned in Maharashtra. Police have booked the car driver for negligence, rash driving and under the wildlife protection Act and have launched a manhunt for the accused.

The Ford car was going towards Bhiwandi from Kaly-

an, near Ranjnoli naka, when it turned turtle. A mob informed the Kogaon police, who rescued the cows and took them to a shelter in Aangao.

A doctor at the shelter told police the cows were healthy. R L Shele said the police have got details about the car owner through the RTO.

Virar police had rescued a sedated cow and bull being transported in a car for slaughter last October. They were kept with their limbs tied. Police had arrested Irfan Sayed (33), a resident of Kalyan who was driving the car, and Murtuza Shah (20), an alaburder from Bhiwandi who was with him. The HC had upheld the beef ban imposed by the state government after enactment of the Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Act, which bans slaughter of bulls and bullocks.

Doctor booked for extortion, goes absconding

Mumbai: The police are on the lookout for a Vasai-based government doctor, Anil Yadav, who has been booked for extorting money from a builder. The accused's accomplice has been arrested.

Yadav had sought information under the RTI Act about illegal constructions undertaken by a Vasai-based builder. On obtaining the information, Yadav allegedly began blackmailing the builder and demanded Rs 1.50 lakh from him. On Saturday, Yadav's aide, Amol Patil, was caught collecting a part of the payment from the builder. TNN

Will continue Mundhe's work: New Navi Mum civic chief

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Navi Mumbai: Former Navi Mumbai municipal commissioner Tukaram Mundhe's successor Ramaswami N, who took charge on Monday, plans to follow in the controversial outgoing civic chief's footsteps. Ramaswami, a 2004 batch IAS officer, was earlier inspector general of registration and controller of stamps.

Mundhe, who withstood political pressure to crack down on land encroachers and illegal constructions in the region, was abruptly transferred by the chief minister last week, without being assigned a post. His tenure



Outgoing Navi Mumbai municipal commissioner Tukaram Mundhe (left) with his successor Ramaswami N at civic headquarters

had lasted less than a year. Commending Mundhe's policy measures during a brief visit to the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation's he-

adquarters on Monday, Ramaswami told the media, "Whatever measures were implemented during Mundhe's tenure will continue. Al-

so, to know the city and its problems, I am interacting with him," Ramaswami said.

"I have just completed the formality of taking charge and I will return to Pune to wind up my role as inspector general of registration. I am yet to learn about the city of Navi Mumbai and its issues... but whatever be the case, every decision will be as per law," he added.

Ramaswami, like Mundhe, has had 'face-offs' with politicians, resulting in untimely transfers. Known as a tough bureaucrat, he too had been abruptly transferred from the post of chief officer of the Mumbai Building Repairs and Re-

construction Board in 2015 after a tenure that lasted just four months. He had cracked down on contractors carrying out shoddy repair work in buildings, said sources.

During his stint as inspector general of registration, he had suspended two officials in Thane for undervaluing stamp duty, leading to losses of over Rs 127 crore to the exchequer. Over his 13-year administrative service, Ramaswami, who holds a masters in veterinary science (animal husbandry), has held several prestigious posts, including assistant collector of Ratnagiri district, chief executive officer of Jalgaon, and collector of Buldhana as well as Satara.

Fake passport: Kerala man moves bail plea

Mumbai: A Kerala resident, Moosakutty Cheruvvara (38), who was arrested at international airport Friday for travelling on a fake passport, has moved a bail application with the Andhri court on Monday.

Sahar police found out that the passport Cheruvvara was holding was actually issued to one Shiriyu Abdulla Areef from Kasargod district in Kerala. Cheruvvara hails from Mallapuram district of Kerala and he had surrendered his passport to his employer for money. He told the police that he had mortgaged his original Indian passport to a UAE national for Rs 5 lakh. TNN