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Malad pipe burst: Rs 25L fine imposed on contractor



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The BMC will recover a fine of Rs 25 lakh from the contractor who has been held responsible for damaging the underground tunnel in Malad on February 12. The decision was taken by the civic standing committee on Tuesday. Committee members also slammed officials of the hydraulic department for carrying out the repair work shoddily. The BMC is estimated to have incurred Rs 25 lakh for the work on the 30-mm-diameter tunnel at Malad's Liberty Garden.

WEEK-LONG CUT STARTS

The civic body has temporarily resolved the problem by inserting a wooden plug to stop the leak. But it is not enough. A lot of water is still flowing out. The water gushing through the cracks—fear corporators—has started affecting the foundations of buildings in the vicinity. Standing committee chairman R Waikar said, "Such type of damages are expensive to fix." The 12-km tunnel supplies 600 million litres of water daily to Malad, Goregaon, Kandivli and Jogeshwari. Meanwhile, water supply to areas between Malad (W) and Borivli (W) will be affected for almost a week (till Sunday midnight) because of the repair work.

Don't pressure schoolphobic child, says HC

Swati Deshpande | TNN

Mumbai: A day before exams, butterflies are likely to flutter in the tummies of most 15-year-olds in Mumbai. But one student also had to contend with being denied a hall ticket by the ISCE board. In a case, that was both unique and moving, the Bombay high court gently instructed the parents of a boy studying in Jannabai Narsee School, Juhu, saying that they were "putting pressure" on their son to appear for the Std X board exams. "Let him gain confidence and then appear for the examination," said a bench headed by Justice J N Patel on Tuesday.

Why are you (parents) forcing your child to take the exam? Such pressure will only worsen his condition. Let him gain confidence and then appear for the examination

The bench was hearing a petition filed by the boy through his father challenging his disqualification by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CICSE) for the board exam that begins on Wednesday. The student was being treated for "major depression and school phobia" and was being treated by a child psychiatrist and a school counselor. He was denied a hall ticket as he had inadequate attendance.

Advocate Mukesh Vashi, counsel for the student, argued that treating his de-

pression as a 'disability', he ought to be given equal treatment and issued a hall ticket by condoning the lack of minimum attendance.

The judges at first asked the school and the board why they were denying the child a chance to sit for the exam. Vashi said the doctor treating him in November had asked the school to condone the student's absence from school as he was suffering from depression.

But observing that the doctors had said that just the thought of school would make him "nauseous and scared", the school said the student had only 41% attendance. Advocate Naushad Engineer, counsel for the board, added that "the ICSE board under the rules had discretionary power to condone shortage of attendance if it was between 60% and 75%". The minimum attendance required for any child is 75%. "In this case it was well below and the board had no authority to condone the student's absence from school."

Engineer also said that, "considering the student's illness, the interest of the student would be better served if he does not appear for the exam this year and takes time to recover."

Advocate Gaurav Joshi counsel for the school suggested that he could even appear for the open examination in October.

When the judges too then asked the parents why they were forcing their child, as such pressure "would only worsen his condition, the student's father who also wanted the school to allow the child a 'writer' as he had fractured his hand in January, then withdrew his petition.

Minister wants to drive out autos

Sanjeev Shivadekar | TNN



R Vikhe-Patil

Mumbai: If the state cabinet approves, rickshaws will soon be a thing of the past in the city and the rest of Maharashtra. The transport department has proposed to get rid of the ubiquitous three-wheelers and replace them with four-wheelers.

"Auto permits will not be renewed if the owners do not replace their vehicles with four-wheelers," said Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, the state transport minister. Reason: According to the minister, the move will reduce the number of fatal accidents and curb pollution. The proposal will soon be taken up before the state cabinet for its approval, Vikhe-Patil said. "Before amending the law to discourage the use of three-wheelers in the state, we will include suggestions by our cabinet colleagues," he added.

'REPLACE 3-WHEELERS WITH 4-WHEELERS'

WHY | According to state transport minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, three-wheelers are one of the main reasons for fatal mishaps. Also, this category of vehicles, he feels, adds to a lot of pollution

WHAT NEXT | The proposal will soon be taken up before the state cabinet for its approval

REACTION | Auto union up in arms

CARROT & STICK | Auto owners will be charged the existing three-wheeler permit fee and taxes for registering their new four-wheelers. Autos that are over seven years old will not be permitted to ply on the road

There are nearly **95,000** autos in Mumbai and another **5 lakh** in other parts of the state



To ensure that the rickshaw owners are not financially burdened, the minister said, "Those who upgrade their vehicles will not have to pay

anything extra. They will be charged the existing three-wheeler permit fee and taxes for registering their new four-wheelers."

Expectedly, the rickshaw union is unhappy with the phase-out proposal. "There is a hidden agenda behind this move. If autos can ply in Singapore and Bangkok, why should it be banned in Maharashtra? We will oppose the move," said Sharad Rao, president, Mumbai taxi and auto union.

Incidentally, the state transport department, which has imposed age restriction on taxis, now wants to impose similar curbs on autos too. "To control pollution, autorickshaws that are over seven years old will not be given permission to ply on the road. The permit will be renewed only after the vehicles are upgraded (to four-wheeler)," the minister said.

Also to ensure the safety of passengers, especially those rickshaws ferrying schoolkids, the department has made it mandatory for such vehicles to have fibre or steel body, instead of the existing rexine cover on the top. This suggestion has been mentioned in the school bus policy of the state, the minister said.

CST IN MAKEOVER MODE

Prashant Nakwe



STANDING TALL: Restoration work of Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus is on in full swing

S Korean molested, robbed on local

Nitasha Natu | TNN

Mumbai: A 22-year-old South Korean national was allegedly molested and robbed in a running local train on Monday, while she was travelling alone on Holi. The victim has been in Mumbai since October on a tourist visa. GRP officials arrested the culprit, within six hours of the crime.

ACCUSED HELD IN SIX HOURS

According to the police, after playing Holi, the victim boarded a fast local to travel to Bandra where she had more friends waiting. The train left from Churchgate station around 11.35 am.

"The victim was seated in the second-class ladies compartment. When the train pulled into Mumbai Central, there was a man (later identified as Ketan Upadhyaya)

waiting on the platform with a black bag. Finding no other commuters in the ladies compartment except the victim, he barged in," a GRP official said. The victim told him in English that men weren't allowed in the compartment and that he should leave.

But as the train left the station, Upadhyaya moved closer to her. He grabbed her by the throat and pushed her back, asking her to empty her pockets. The victim bit his hand but Upadhyaya managed to steal her cellphone and money, before jumping off the train at Dadar station.

The victim later came to the Mumbai Central railway police station. The police prepared a sketch of the culprit and accompanied her back to the station for making a *panchnama*. Incidentally, Upadhyaya was hanging around at the same spot. As soon as the victim identified him, the police caught him.

Traffic diversion? Info on handbills

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The BMC will now spend money on awareness campaigns whenever a major thoroughfare is being repaired and traffic has to be diverted. The decision was taken after elected representatives in the civic standing committee refused to foot the expenses that the administration had in-

commodate local sentiment for the much-needed repair.

From arranging meetings with residents before coming up with alternative routes, putting up banners to inform them about the traffic arrangements, providing them with 3,000 identification stickers, the corporation had pulled out all stops to create awareness.

"It is evident that this money was spent to please residents of the posh neighbourhood as the BMC never makes similar efforts for other repair jobs. If this bill has to be cleared, the administration should assure us that in similar awareness campaigns will undertaken whenever a major thoroughfare is being repaired in the suburbs too," said Shiv Sena leader and committee member Sunil Prabh. Members, though finally cleared the bills on condition that such arrangements will be made for other works too, said it should also be traffic cops' responsibility to inform people about any inconvenience.

PEDDER RD MESS PAVES THE WAY

currer for an awareness campaign during the Pedder Road mess last year in March.

The BMC had spent Rs 2.3 lakh on handouts, bills and distributing over 3,000 stickers to Pedder Road residents to guide them on alternative vehicular movements when the road was shut down to carry out repairs on the 100-year-old drainage system. But members of the committee blamed BMC officials for 'bending over backwards' to ac-

Poor results for many engineering students

Shreya Bhandary & Hemali Chhapla | TNN

Mumbai: Seventh semester (Electronics & Electronics Telecommunication) results for several students of various engineering colleges in the city have come as a disappointment. The pass percentage has come down drastically with more than a third of the students failing in two different subjects, an official said.

Even though officials say that questions asked in the paper were from the syllabus, most of the students of Electronics Telecommunication have failed in Microwave Devices and Circuits (MDC), whereas those studying for Electronics & Electrical Engineering (ELEX) branch have failed in VLSI Engineering & Design Automation. Incidentally, most of the students have already secured jobs or got admissions for further studies.

Students have, by and large, accepted the result, but they have also requested university officials to expedite the process of reevaluation of the papers.

"Usually, this (reevaluation) process takes almost five months. However, in this case, if the students still get an ATKT, their final results will show pass class, irrespective of what they score," said the official.

Sandeep Sahare, dean (engineering) at the University of Mumbai, acknowledged that the pass percentage in the two papers was extremely low as compared to previous years and even in contrast to other papers this year. "In fact, we even allotted a lot of grace marks in these two papers," a senior university official said. "Many students and their parents met us for help. But unfortunately nothing can be done now," he added.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

CAN THE PAST BE WIPED AWAY WITH A HANKERCHIEF?

PERHAPS NOT, BUT THERE'S ONE SMALL THING IT COULD DO. IT COULD CLEAN UP A SMALL SPACE IN THE MINDS OF OUR CHILDREN.

A LITTLE SQUARE SPACE WHERE PEACE CAN BLOOM, SURVIVE AND GROW IN A WORLD LESS HOSTILE FOR THE COMING GENERATION TO LIVE IN, AND LAUGH IN, AND PLAY IN, AND LOVE IN. ALL IT TAKES IS A MINUTE'S BREAK, A SIMPLE HANKERCHIEF AND SOMETHING TO WRITE OR DRAW A PEACE MESSAGE WITH.

THE AMAN KI ASHA PEACE CHAIN IS A NATIONWIDE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE THAT WILL JOIN HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF PEACE HANKERCHIEFS IN A CHAIN OF FRIENDSHIP THAT WILL STRETCH ALL THE WAY FROM BHIMTAR TO LADAKH.

aman ki ash
INDO-PAK PEACE PROJECT
THE FIRST STEP