

Pune top cop draws flak from legislators

Yogesh Naik | TNN

Mumbai: Pune police commissioner Dr Satyapal Singh came in for sharp criticism in the legislative council during a discussion on law-and-order in the state.

Leader of the Opposition in the council, Pandurang Phundkar (BJP) on Wednesday said that the Centre had repeatedly warned about the threat to Koregaon Park, Osho Ashram and Jewish places of worship in Pune. "International terrorist David Headley had stayed in Hotel Surya Leela and had also eaten at German Bakery. Why did the Pune police commissioner not take cognisance of these serious warnings? Instead, he increased his own security. He had four officers, 50 men armed with 20 self-loading rifles (SLRs), 10 AK-47s and 500 rounds of ammunition. If the same force was given to areas on the hit-list, the blast would not have occurred," Phundkar said.

“ Why did the Pune police commissioner not take cognisance of Centre's warnings? Instead, he increased his own security. If the same force was deployed at areas on the hit-list, the German Bakery blast wouldn't have occurred

Pandurang Phundkar | BJP

Phundkar said that Samajwadi Party leader and MLA Azmi had gone to express his sympathy with the family of a terrorist, arrested by the ATS for his plan to blow up the ONGC. "Such acts will put a demon to shame," he added. He criticised the state police for caning Vasai MLA Vivek Pandit and his aides for protesting against the inclusion of 53 villages in the Vasai Virar Municipal Corpo-

ration. According to him, the state government is yet to establish a disaster control mechanism. It has not woken up from its slumber even after the Pune blasts, he added.

The Opposition also slammed the state government for the heavy deployment of police during the recent release of a film and Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi's visit to Mumbai. Shiv Sena MLC Diwakar Raote showed pictures of how cops were used to fill the seats of cinema halls when the Shiv Sena agitated against the movie.

Sena MLC Ramdas Kadam said that then Mumbai police commissioner A N Roy and joint police chief Meeran Borwankar had withdrawn the AK-47 of deceased encounter specialist Vijay Salaskar. "They should be booked for snatching his AK-47 and for his death," added Kadam.

Home Minister R R Patil will reply to the debate on Thursday.



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WATCHING OVER THE CITY

Hemant Shirodkar

26/11 trial set many legal precedents in India

Kartikeya | tnn

Mumbai: In his bid to establish Ajmal Amir Kasab's guilt in the perpetration as well as conspiracy that went into planning and executing the daring sea-borne attack on India's financial hub in November 2008, special prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam examined a total of 653 witnesses, during the 26/11 trial that began on April 15, 2009. Nikam later said, "It was the quickest possible job that we could do in a trial of such magnitude."

The case saw several firsts. For the first time in India's legal history, forensic experts from the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) flew down to depose in the trial. Moreover, to save time, 357 witnesses gave their testimonies through affidavits and did not have to personally appear in court.

Kasab's flip-flops also added to the courtroom drama, with him giving a complete confession in July 2009, along with a request for a



speedy end to the trial. He went back on his word in December 2009, claiming he was an "innocent Pakistani framed by the police".

Judge Tahaliyani will now sit in his chamber and go through the voluminous evidence that has come up. He will dictate his findings and pronounce on May 3 whether he finds Kasab guilty or not. He will also pass judgment against the two Indian co-accused—Faheem Ansari and Sabauddin Shaikh—who have been charged with providing logistical support to carry out the attack.

If he finds any of the trio

guilty, Tahaliyani will hear arguments on the quantum of sentencing, and by May 10, declare their punishments. Given the nature of charges against him, Kasab faces the prospect of the death penalty if found guilty.

Kasab's advocate, K P Pawar, has put up a bold show, maintaining that his client was innocent. He argued that most of the evidence was fabricated and that witnesses had been tutored by the police. Nikam, however, has marshalled a considerable amount of evidence, including DNA reports, photographic proof and eyewitness accounts, to build up a strong case.

One of the more poignant chapters in the case was the testimony given by a 10-year-old eyewitness, who identified Kasab as the man who had shot at and maimed her for life.

On Wednesday, Kasab, dressed in a white kurta-pyjama, sat quietly during the proceedings and at times even looked disinterested in what was happening.

Kannada mayor for Belgaum upsets state

Team Toi

Mumbai: The Maharashtra legislative assembly on Wednesday denounced the alleged parochial attitude of the Karnataka government. Members unanimously took strong objection to the rejection of the nomination of six Marathi aspirants to the Belgaum mayor's post on Tuesday by the local administration. The assembly adjourned for 10 minutes to express its resentment.

Veteran Peasants and Workers' Party (PWP) leader Ganpatrao Deshmukh raised the issue of the ill-treatment meted out to the Marathi-speaking people of Belgaum and other areas in Karnataka. "Since it was certain that a Marathi would be elected as the mayor of Belgaum, the Karnataka administration rejected the nomination papers of Marathi candidates on technical grounds, like grammatical mistakes," said Deshmukh. He urged speaker Dilip-Walse-Patil to set aside the agenda for the day and permit a full-fledged discussion on the issue. The speaker did not accede to the request, but following consensus among the members, adjourned the assembly for 10 minutes.

On March 30, of the total seven candidates in the fray for the mayoral election, nomination forms of six candidates were rejected. Subsequently,

“ The Karnataka administration rejected the nomination papers of Marathi candidates on technical grounds, like grammatical mistakes, just to keep a Marathi from occupying the post

Ganpatrao Deshmukh | PEASANTS & WORKERS' PARTY

Kannada-speaking N B Nirvani was elected unopposed as the mayor of Belgaum.

Over the last few decades, many have devoted themselves to the struggle for inclusion Marathi-dominated areas of Karnataka in Maharashtra, said NCP legislator Jitendra Avadh. MNS leader Pravin Darekar asked chief minister Ashok Chavan to make statement on the issue.

Admitting that nomination forms of Marathi candidates were deliberately rejected, Chavan said that this was done to "keep a Marathi person from taking over the mayor's post". "A letter condemning the ill-treatment meted out to Marathi-people will be sent to the Karnataka chief minister," said Chavan, adding that he would have a word with the governor of Karnataka as well. "If the need be, I'll take an all-party delegation to the Prime Minister," he said.

Minister's feni plan exposes chinks in NCP

S Balakrishnan | TNN

Mumbai: There's trouble brewing within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

Excise minister Ganesh Naik is finding himself increasingly isolated within his own party. Naik's proposal to make liquor out of cashew fruit and jamun has drawn criticism from none other than his own party colleagues. Minister of state for housing and de-addiction Sachin Ahir had the approval of NCP president Sharad Pawar when he openly opposed Naik's proposal.

Naik, a senior NCP minister and a Supriya Sule-loyalist, had on Monday said that the government was planning to permit liquor production from these fruits. He reasoned that the neighbouring Goa was manufacturing liquor (feni) from cashew fruit in a big way. Pointing out that the Goa government was earning good revenue, Naik said that Maharashtra too could get good income if the produc-

tion was permitted.

The very next day, Ahir, a junior minister, openly opposed Naik's proposal. He told TOI, "As the minister in charge of de-addiction, it's my duty to oppose any move which will jeopardise people's health. Liquor addiction needs to be reduced. There's a huge social cost involved when alcohol consumption increases."

The question being asked in NCP circles is whether Ahir would have dared blatantly oppose Naik on his own. Sources in the NCP said that Pawar had given Ahir the go-ahead. Earlier, Naik had suggested the manufacture of liquor from grains like jowar. Apart from the Shiv Sena-BJP opposition, many NCP men had vehemently opposed the move. Home minister R R Patil had led the campaign against Naik's move.

Realising the political implications of this move, the NCP decided to drop the proposal.

Ex-CBI man forges loan papers, held

S Ahmed Ali | TNN

Mumbai: The CBI on Wednesday arrested its former inspector for submitting forged salary certificates to secure a housing loan of Rs 20 lakh. Arun Bansude, on deputation from central excise, was posted with the Nagpur branch of the CBI when he committed the crime. In 2008, he was repatriated to his parent department following adverse reports. He was remanded in police custody till April 6.

The case dates back to 2007-2008 when Bansude, along with wife Reena, submitted a joint application to the ICICI Bank seeking a Rs 20-lakh loan to purchase a flat in Airoli, Navi Mumbai. When the bank rejected his application, he approached the Navi Mumbai branch of Allahabad Bank. "He submitted forged salary certificates that showed his gross salary as Rs 50,128 when his salary was Rs 26,000," an official said. Bansude, who had also taken a loan of Rs 6.5 lakh from Allahabad Bank to buy another flat in Airoli, submitted a written undertaking that he would repay the first loan. Though he paid off the first loan, he failed to make timely payments for the second loan. Subsequently the bank filed a complaint and Bansude was arrested.

City's numbersmiths upbeat about int'l maths congress

Shreya Bhandary | TNN

Mumbai: The country's entire mathematicians' community is eagerly waiting for August, when some of the world's best rains will descend on Hyderabad to participate in the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM). This is the first time the event is being held in India. So far, it has only taken place twice in Asia. Held for the first time in Zurich in 1897, ICM takes place every four years.

Said S G Dani from the School of Mathematics, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), "The entire community is excited. We'll finally have the platform to reach out to the common man and build their interest in this field. Also, we hope the ICM

Between August 19 and August 27, Hyderabad would host the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM). This is the first time the event is being held in India. So far, it has only taken place twice in Asia. Held for the first time in Zurich in 1897, ICM takes place every four years

would help more and more people appreciate mathematics."

ICM will be held at the Hyderabad International Convention Center from August 19-27. "Like every year, we'll have awards being given out

in various categories. This year, there's a new entry—the Chern Prize. Satellite conferences would also be introduced this year," said Dani. The ICM will incorporate lectures, discussions, interactive programs and various other cultural events for the participants.

This year's ICM would see for the first time the International Congress of Women Mathematicians. This will focus attention on women in this field and more than 500 women are expected to participate. "More than 5,500 mathematicians from all over the world have already registered with us," he added.

"We have Vishwanathan Anand coming in for the conference. He will play chess with 40 interested participants simultaneously at the event," said Dani.

Naushad was aware of risks of not making a will

Bella Jaisinghani | TNN

Mumbai: Of Naushad's three daughters who have dragged their siblings to court in a battle for inheritance, Sayeeda Khan and Waheeda Soomro are married and live abroad.

Meanwhile, the brothers Rahman, Raju and Iqbal Naushad all attended Wednesday's hearing but refused to comment on the litigation. "This is a family matter and we will deal with it," they said. Interestingly, sources say that Naushad was aware of the consequences of not signing a will during his lifetime, but allowed the formality to pass, given his disillusionment with filial relationships.

After Naushad's passing, leading advocate Majeed Memon, who has been a friend of the family since his college days, was consulted for a solution along with musician Uttam Singh and a businessman named Bipinbhai. All nine siblings had promised to abide by the trio's recommendations but

eventually did not.

Memon said it was unfortunate that the name of the legendary composer was being sullied because of a property dispute among his children. "I wish the daughters who have gone to court had tried to come to an amicable settlement and avoided this embarrassing litigation," he said.

Recalling the case of actors Suraiya and Parveen Babi who died intestate (without making a will) and the recent case involving the heirs of film-maker Kamal Amrohi, the advocate said he could not overemphasise the importance of a will. "Artists from the film industry are not known for their asset management. It is essential to make provisions for the future in order to avoid a situation like this," Memon said. "I wish more people were like Dilip Kumar, who has prepared a registered will, or Dharmendra and the late Rajendra Kumar who ensured their assets were in safe hands."

'Indian writers are widely read in US universities'

Shreya Bhandary | TNN

Mumbai: "American studies is today at a stage where it can flourish only by engaging internationally," said Donald Pease, Chair of the Dartmouth Liberal Studies Program at the University of Dartmouth, Massachusetts. On his first visit to India, he has already interacted with a host of professors from various educational institutions in order to discuss American studies. He also said that works of Indian writers like Salman Rushdie are widely read in American universities.

An authority in nineteenth and twentieth century American literature, Pease observed that more and more students in America are now opting for classic literature. On being

asked if the younger generation still reads, his quick response was, "They might not read from a book in hand, but they definitely keep in touch with what is going on around the world with a click on the internet."

Pease also said that one cannot do away with classic literature to make space for contemporary literature. "One needs to know the past to understand contemporary works of writing," he added.

In America, Pease said, Cultural Studies has been introduced as a subject in which popular and contemporary literature is taught. Encouraging a mix of Indo-American literature in Indian universities, Pease added, "The real excitement for students lies in the fact that they can make a critical comparative study of both literatures."



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