

IN BRIEF



Actor Kushal Punjabi found dead

MUMBAI Actor Kushal Punjabi, 42, was found dead in his Bandra residence in Mumbai on Thursday night. He left a note saying that no one should be held responsible for his extreme step, said the police. (BMC Mental Health Helpline: 022-24131212)

IPS officer Rajeev Kumar shifted to IT Dept.

KOLKATA The West Bengal government has posted IPS officer Rajeev Kumar as Principal Secretary of the Information Technology and Electronics Department. Mr. Kumar, who was posted as Additional Director General, CID, West Bengal Police, will replace IAS officer Debasish Sen. Mr. Kumar has held key posts in the West Bengal police and the Kolkata police.

PMC scam: police file chargesheet against 5

MUMBAI The Mumbai police on Friday filed a 32,000-page chargesheet in the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank scam. It has named former MD Joy Thomas, former chairman Waryam Singh, former director Surjit Singh Arora, and Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited promoters Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan.

Centre to restore pension commutation

NEW DELHI The Labour Ministry will enforce the retirement fund body EPFO's decision to restore pension commutation from January 1, 2020 — a move which will benefit 6.3 lakh pensioners, a source said. These pensioners had opted for commutation and got a lump sum amount at the time of retirement from their pension accumulations before 2009. PTI

MiG-27 flies into the sunset in Jodhpur

With this, the IAF’s combat strength has fallen to 28 fighter squadrons, way below the authorised 42

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI “She was a great teacher so long as you respected her. She would talk to you - little sounds, indications, et al. and she appreciated a thoughtful response,” Sqn Ldr (retd.) Anshuman Manikar fondly recalls his experience of flying the MiG-27 swing-wing fighter jet. He was at the Jodhpur Air Force station on Friday for the ceremony of de-induction of the last squadron of the aircraft with the Indian Air Force (IAF).

This also means that the IAF’s combat strength has now fallen to 28 fighter squadrons, way below the authorised strength of 42. Sqn Ldr Manikar said his best recollection of the fighter jet was low-level, high-speed runs over range, “optimum mix of fun and watchfulness and a complete

adrenaline rush.” “Not a drawback really, but fighter trips were so much better, ergonomics-wise. But that was a small cost to pay, given the diverse variants she serviced,” he told *The Hindu*.

End of an era At the ‘winding down’ ceremony, the aircraft from the No. 29 Squadron (SCORPIOS), the only unit in the IAF operating the MiG-27 Upgrades, flew for the last time, marking the end of the variable sweep (Swing Wing) era of the IAF. To commemorate the historic occasion, the squadron flew in a five aircraft ‘Arrowhead’ formation, flanked by the Sukhoi 30 aircraft. The No. 29 Squadron was raised on March 10, 1958 at the Air Force Station Halwara with ‘Ouragan’ (Toofani) aircraft.



Last flight: The MiG-27 fighter jet at the de-induction ceremony in Jodhpur on Friday. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

“The squadron is now slated to be number-plated on March 31, 2020, with December 27, 2019 being its last flying day, thereby making the swing wing fleet a part of the IAFs glorious past,” the IAF stated.

“MiG 27 swing-wing fighter aircraft has been the backbone of the ground attack fleet of the IAF for the past four decades,” the Air Force said in a statement. The fleet earned its glory in the historic Kargil conflict,

when it delivered rockets and bombs with accuracy on enemy positions, it added. From 1985 onwards, the IAF has flown about 165 MiG-27 fighters, licence-manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. This marks the end of another Russian MiG series in the Indian inventory. All the other MiG-variants, such as MiG-23 BN & MiG-23 MF and the pure MiG 27 have already been retired from the IAF. The upgraded MiG-21 Bison and MiG-29s now remain in service of which the MiG-21s are scheduled to be phased out very soon. The IAF will continue to operate three squadrons of the upgraded MiG-29UPG for sometime, while it is also negotiating for another squadron from Russia. The Navy operates two squadrons of the MiG-29K/ KUB off its aircraft carriers.

Negatives of ‘lost’ 1985 Somali epic found at NFAI

‘The Somali Dervish’ is a masterpiece by Said Salah Ahmed and was last seen in 1985

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE In an event of great import to the preservation of African cinematic heritage, the negatives of an epic Somali film thought to have been lost were “discovered” in the vaults of the Pune-based National Film Archive of India (NFAI).

The Somali Dervish, a four-hour-long 1985 masterpiece by eminent Somali poet, playwright and filmmaker Said Salah Ahmed, chronicles the revolutionary Somali Dervish movement under the leadership of the legendary anti-colonial fighter Mohamed Abdullah Hassan. Hassan is revered as the ‘Father of Somali National



Lost treasure: Film-maker Said Salah Ahmed, centre, with NFAI director Prakash Magdum. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ism’ and known by the sobriquet ‘Mad Mullah’. Shooting of the 280-minute film (also known as *The Somalia Dervishes*) began in 1983 and was completed in 1985. It was produced by an Indian company. In fact, the film is believed to be the only feature-length narrative motion picture pro-

duced in the country as Somalia’s cinematic heritage was buried under the ravages of a bitter civil war, which commenced in the 1980s. “The importance of the ‘discovery’ of this film in the NFAI vaults is hard to overstate, given that there is precious little information on Somali film heritage,” said Prakash Magdum, Director, NFAI, speaking to *The Hindu*. Mr. Ahmed, who moved to the United States as the Somali Civil War raged across his country in the 1980s, had last seen the film in 1985 in Abu Dhabi, after which it was considered “lost”. Subsequently, he made a string of inquiries in film archives across the globe, including the Washington-based Library of Congress and film vaults in Paris. **Director delighted** Mr. Ahmed was speechless on learning that the NFAI did have the negatives. “It is like finding your own child back after so many years,” said the 74-year-old Mr. Ahmed, following his visit to the NFAI on Thursday, where Mr. Magdum, along with Ujwal Nirgudkar, consultant, NFAI, handed the reels to him. Another Somali film, an hour-long documentary titled *A future for Somalia* (1978), too, was found in the NFAI vaults during the search for *The Somali Dervish*.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Severe cold day conditions and fog likely in most pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over north Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3.5	18.0	14.0	Kozhikode	.....	34.0	25.0
Ahmedabad	.....	26.0	9.0	Kurnool	.....	32.0	21.0
Aizawl	3.0	19.0	9.0	Lucknow	.....	15.0	7.0
Allahabad	.....	17.0	6.0	Madurai	.....	32.0	21.0
Bengaluru	.....	29.0	18.0	Mangaluru	.....	35.0	24.0
Bhopal	.....	22.0	5.0	Mumbai	.....	30.0	19.0
Bhubaneswar	.....	24.0	12.0	Mysuru	.....	29.0	18.0
Chandigarh	.....	10.0	7.0	New Delhi	.....	14.0	4.0
Chennai	.....	30.0	21.0	Patna	.....	16.0	9.0
Coimbatore	6.5	30.0	22.0	Port Blair	.....	29.0	21.0
Dehradun	.....	19.0	7.0	Puducherry	.....	30.0	20.0
Gangtok	.....	10.0	2.0	Pune	.....	28.0	18.0
Goa	.....	33.0	24.0	Raipur	.....	0.5	25.0
Guwahati	.....	24.0	11.0	Ranchi	.....	1.0	17.0
Hubballi	.....	30.0	22.0	Shillong	.....	14.0	6.0
Hyderabad	.....	29.0	20.0	Shimla	.....	13.0	3.0
Imphal	0.1	21.0	5.0	Srinagar	.....	9.0	-6.0
Jaipur	.....	22.0	4.0	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	33.0	24.0
Kochi	.....	31.0	25.0	Tiruchi	.....	30.0	22.0
Kohima	.....	16.0	5.0	Vijayawada	.....	30.0	22.0
Kolkata	11.8	19.0	11.0	Visakhapatnam	.....	29.0	23.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing						Yesterday
CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	55	61	27	85	86	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Bengaluru	12	66	50	78	98	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Chennai	58	41	20	85	85	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Delhi	13	14	56	414	350	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Hyderabad	2	68	48	128	113	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Kolkata	13	57	44	211	136	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Lucknow	4	29	47	312	.....	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Mumbai	14	49	58	227	172	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Pune	69	16	105	154	116	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Visakhapatnam	10	59	45	103	.....	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Noida, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 496 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 50.

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease