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Bid to prevent accidents: Barricades to be erected on road dividers at Marine Drive

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, MAY 9

THE BRIHANMUMBAI Municipal Corporation (BMC) is planning to erect barricades on dividers on the road stretch at Mumbai's iconic Marine Drive to prevent accidents. At present there is only one divider that separates the north and south-bound carriageway in Marine Drive.

However, since the height of the dividers are not very high, pedestrians often cross the roads without going through the Zebra crossing, leading to road accidents. To prevent such incidents, the BMC has now decided to set up plastic barricades on the dividers. The BMC's move comes a week after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the promenade and instructed the BMC officials to upgrade the existing civic amenities.

The civic body has floated Rs 82 lakh tender for setting up these barricades and civic officials said that the entire stretch between NCPA and Princess Street Flyover will have these barricades. "The Traffic Police has already carried out a survey to identify some of the accident prone zones near the Marine Drive. Once the barricades are set up, people can't cross roads randomly, but only through the Zebra crossing," said a civic official.

BORIVALI-THANE TWIN TUNNEL

HC dismisses two petitions by L&T to quash rejection of its bids

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, MAY 9

THE BOMBAY High Court dismissed two pleas of Mumbai-based engineering firm Larsen & Toubro (L&T) whose bids for the construction of Borivali-Thane underground twin tube tunnel beneath the Sanjay Gandhi National Park was rejected by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

The Rs 11,000-crore six-lane road project, which includes a nearly 11km-long twin tube tunnel, is expected to reduce travel time between Thane and Borivali to 15-20 minutes from 1.5 hours

for L&T told the bench that on January 14, the authorities issued a request for proposal (RFP) for package 1 and 2 of the project. The L&T submitted technical bids for both packages on April 6.

On April 19, the MMRDA sought additional documents from L&T to demonstrate project experience and to check whether it is qualified to undertake both phases of the twin tunnel project. Two days later, the L&T, to establish its technical capacity for both the packages, responded that it had earlier undertaken TBM tunnelling of 5.1 km worth Rs 3, 978 crore.

Dwarkadas said on April 25, the day the financial bids were opened, L&T received an email which said that its bid had been rejected during technical evaluation and that it was 'non eligible' to undertake the project.

On April 26, L&T wrote to the respondent authorities to withdraw its decision. However, as the respondents did not accept the petitioner's request, L&T was forced to approach the high court.

Through another plea, the L&T said that with regard to package-2 of the project, the firm realised on April 25 that

it had inadvertently submitted a bid amount inclusive of taxes in a certain column. It wrote to the MMRDA clarifying that the bid price they submitted (Rs. 6,625 crore for package 2) was inclusive of all taxes and GST and it should be considered the lowest bidder.

Dwarkadas submitted that the petitioner did not accept a new condition imposed by the MMRDA on April 21 which said that if L&T was held technically responsive for package-1, only then the authority would consider it for the package-2.

He also submitted that the authorities had opened financial bid of successful bidder within two minutes of declaration of outcome of technical bid. The decision making process was "malafide" or intended to benefit the successful bidder, the pleas stated. Senior advocate Milind Sathe and advocate Saket Mone, representing the MMRDA, opposed the pleas stating that two separate work experience certificates were required to be submitted by the petitioner firm, a condition which L&T did not meet.

The MMRDA also submitted that L&T's request to rectify its error after the financial bid was opened could not be allowed as per norms and sought dismissal of both the pleas.

After perusing the submissions and material on record, the bench noted that L&T should have been made the successful bidder for the project as MEIL would have been "seriously prejudiced," and that pleas can be rejected on this ground itself.

The court accepted MMRDA's contentions and held there was 'no merit' in L&T's submissions and dismissed the firm's petitions.

Summer break coming, students from Manipur say can't return home

PALLAVISMART
MUMBAI, MAY 9

SEENA KIMHOICHING from Manipur, a second year Master of Social Work student at the Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) in Mumbai, will now have to stay back in the city during the summer break. Her parents have advised Seena to stay put.

"My parents are currently safe, but my extended family is really hit badly. They are currently in a camp after being injured in the riot," says the native of Churachandpur district of Manipur. Several students like Seena from the riot-hit Manipur, studying at various institutions in Maharashtra, especially in Mumbai and Pune, are worried as they cannot return home.

For many of them summer break is starting. While some of them are contemplating extending their stay in respective hostels, others are also looking at possibilities of staying with friends or relatives for support.

Seena's hostel accommodation will end in a few days. Even as she is positive that the institute may allow her to continue owing to the conditions back home, she plans to stay at a relative's place.

Another student from TISS, who hails from Tengenoupal district of Manipur, was hoping to return home this summer break as her research topic is about the tribal community woman in Manipur. But now there is no way for her to return home.

Shonkholen Mate, president of Kuki (Community from Manipur)

Students Organisation, Mumbai, says, "We held a condolence meeting recently after knowing that one of our friends who is pursuing medicine in Mumbai lost his pregnant sister in the riot at Manipur. He wanted to go home but that is not an option. We are coming together to provide emotional support to each other." Mate, who is pursuing PhD in IIT Bombay, also shared how it is becoming difficult to focus on academics here after knowing about situations back home.

Apart from helping each other here, many collectives are working to generate funds to be used for relief of persons stranded in camps in Manipur.

The North Eastern Students' Forum at the TISS has started a fund-raising movement on Monday. A QR code is being circulated on social media with

an appeal to donation. A core committee member of the group, Shaan Kumar Narzary, says, "Current students as well as alumni and others too are contributing to the fund. We have identified organisations who are working for relief in Manipur where we will send the money."

The North East Community Organisation of Pune is going to hold an activity of coming together this week. The idea is to connect with others who are here and to generate funds for relief work.

President of the organisation, S K Sourio Hitler, says, "It is not possible to go to Manipur right now. The flight tickets are very costly and additionally it will be unsafe. An NGO in Pune has arranged accommodation for those from Manipur who are in the city."

ANTILIA TERROR SCARE

Dismissed cop withdraws plea seeking pardon

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, MAY 9

THREE MONTHS after seeking pardon, "repenting some mistakes" in connection with the Antilia terror scare and Mansukh Hiran murder case, dismissed Mumbai police inspector Sunil Mane on Tuesday said that he wanted to withdraw the plea, without giving any reasons.

Saying that he was not pressing the application he moved in February, Mane, who was present in the court, added that since he has knowledge of law and hence wants to represent himself in the case. The court granted him the permission. In his plea, Mane, who was arrested in May 2021, had stated said that "after 'deeply thinking' during his incarceration, he 'realised' that he had committed 'some mistakes',



In February, 2022, a Scorpio laden with explosives was found parked near Antilia, businessman Mukesh Ambani's residence. File

which he was repenting of and sought pardon under section 307 of the Criminal Procedure Code. If allowed, he would become a prosecution witness and his testimony could be used by other accused in the trial.

In March, the NIA opposed Mane's plea stating that he was "directly in-

volved in the commission of the offence". After Mane's plea, his co-accused and dismissed cop Sachin Waze, had also written to his lawyers stating that he is contemplating seeking pardon. While Waze did not move the plea, he gave no-objection to Mane's plea.

Meanwhile, the special court received a report from Talaja jail about Waze who has been kept in a high-security cell. It states that on April 23, the medical officer of the jail directed Waze to be shifted to the hospital ward of the prison but he refused and also did not cooperate with medical treatment. The report states that on the day, Waze was feeling giddy and was vomiting. He called for the medical officer, who examined him and directed him to be taken to the jail hospital for a check-up.

The complaint said that an ECG test

conducted on him was normal but as a precaution he was asked to remain at the hospital. The jail authorities told the court that since Waze is highly diabetic and had undergone a bypass surgery, he was required to take medical treatment at the hospital if he was feeling unwell. The jail said that his refusal could be because he expects to be treated at a hospital outside the jail premises. It said by refusing treatment, he had violated prison rules and the report was to bring this to the notice of the court. Waze, through his lawyer, Raunak Naik, denied the prison's report and submitted that no checks or diagnosis was done before suggesting that he be admitted to the jail hospital.

On Tuesday, Waze opposed an adjournment sought by the NIA in filing a reply to his bail plea. The court directed the agency to file the reply by June 1.

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Table 1: Rate of Interest per annum valid up to ₹5 Crores per deposit (w.e.f. 10th May 2023). Table 2: Rate of Interest per annum valid up to ₹5 Crores per deposit (w.e.f. 10th May 2023). Financial Statements: Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss, and Cash Flow. Particulars of the management of the Company.

Student develops AI model that translates sign language into text

PALLAVISMART
MUMBAI, MAY 9

IN AN attempt to bring inclusivity in the society using technology, a 19-year-old B.Tech student has created an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model, which can translate sign language into text, making it easier to communicate with hearing and speech impaired individuals.

The model created by Preeyaj Safary, a student of Mumbai's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS), would request access to the camera to capture the signs before translating it into words to be displayed on the connected screen.

Sign language, which is widely used for communication by individuals with hearing and speech impairment, is limited for those who have knowledge of the same. Safary hopes to change this through his AI model.

For the model, Safary collected signs from online as well as from people working in NGOs for the speech and hearing impaired individuals. "Once an individual captures a sign on camera, it is detected by the algorithm by creating a rectangular box around it. The detected sign is then

the translation," said Safary. "The technology currently uses pre-filled images to compare the signs. I am working on creating a bigger database... This will ensure complete accuracy," he said.

The technology started taking shape when Safary learnt about the difficulties faced by individuals living with hearing and speech impairment with communicating with the public at large who do not know sign language. "It was during a visit to an eating joint run by the staff who are all hearing and speech impaired. It was commendable how inclusivity is taking shape in society but ensuring smooth communication was a practical challenge. I started thinking on how the technology can be put to use here and began working on this during lockdown," he said.

Safary also visited NGOs and organisations working for individuals with speech and hearing impairment to understand more about communication challenges and also to check the functioning of his model.

Safary, a Mumbai resident who spends most of his time on computer, had earlier created a computer program to help individuals book vaccine slots on CoWIN during the Covid-19 pandemic.



The model created by Preeyaj Safary, a B.Tech student

compared with the database available with the AI and its meaning is shown on the box. Apart from giving words to what a particular sign means, the screen also shows the accuracy level of



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