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PUNE

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# Social Harmony in Shambles in UP's Sambhal

**SAMBHAL VIOLENCE** The Shahi Jama Masjid violence in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh left five people dead; over 30 injured; next SC hearing in January 2025

By Shubhangi Chauhan & Krishika Rathod

PUNE: The Sambhal mosque violence began when the civil court in Sambhal, hearing a petition that the mosque was built over a temple, ordered on November 19, 2024 an advocate commissioner to survey the Shahi Jama Masjid in Chandausi. The Hindu petitioners had claimed that the Shahi Jama Masjid was built on the ruins of "Harihar Temple".

The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) team visited the mosque on November 24 accompanied with the police when the situation quickly escalated as the mob started pelting stones at police and started burning vehicles. The police responded with tear gas. The violence left five people, including three local youths, dead.

Advocate Rajesh Sharma, a practicing lawyer from Uttar Pradesh says, "The incident reminded us of the Places of Worship Act, 1991 which aims to control violence and maintain the status of places of worship as it was in 1947. Any act that goes out of this law not only brings legal consequences but also persecution of the society."

On November 29, the Supreme Court intervened while the bench led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna stressed on the need for harmony and instructed the lower court not to proceed with any operation until the Allahabad High Court hears the mosque commit-



SC will hear the Sambhal violence in January 2025. Credit: The Hindu

tee's petition and also made an order to seal the survey report which was done by the advocate commissioner.

The legal framework meant to protect religious sites is also under scrutiny as per legal authorities. A lawyer from the Allahabad High Court, under the condition of anonymity, said: "The Babri Masjid incident was the beginning, and now places like those in Sambhal, Budaun, and Jaunpur are at risk."

The Jama Masjid Committee said that the survey order was passed quickly without hearing from both parties.

The violence has drawn criticism from political leaders and activists. Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi expressed disappointment and criticized the police actions, sharing a video allegedly showing officers firing during the clashes which has led to growing disbelief between the local citizens and authorities.

It has led the UP gov-

ernment to deploy additional security forces in the area. Schools in the district were shut till November 25 and a high alert was put out in other districts.

A three-member inquiry committee consisting of former Allahabad High Court judge Devendra Kumar Arora has been set up to look into the matter while the district administration has appealed to residents to maintain peace. Sambhal District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya assured the people that they are committed to ensuring law and order and urged everyone to offer prayers at local mosques to prevent further unrest.

The next hearing in the Sambhal case is due in the Supreme Court from January 6, 2025. The court has called on the district administration to form mediation committees with an aim of solving people's disputes..

(Inputs by Kashifa Wisal)

Violence has deeply impacted the communities in the region, eroding the bonds once existed

By Kashifa Wisal & Disha Gupta

PUNE: Post five deaths and dozens arrests in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal violence, the rising tension is affecting the public in the districts and nearby areas. The violence has deeply impacted the bonds between communities in the region, eroding the harmony that once existed.

Sheeraz Ansari, a physician from Budaun, highlights how this growing divide has strained friendships. "A few years ago, my non-Muslim friends would visit my home and share meals with me. Now, they hesitate to meet me, but the feelings are made obvious by their actions. This is seriously affecting our relationships and the love between our religions and families, and it's mentally very disturbing," he said.

Aslam Khan, a resident of Sambhal, says: "It is unfortunate and should not have happened here. The survey created a lot of avoidable tension in the community that we call home. The loss of young lives is a tragedy we will never forget. There is pain everywhere and what we need is peace and not any actions that spread differences amongst the people."

Locals in Sambhal and nearby areas say that they sense a fear among Muslims in the region and feel that their safety is no longer guaranteed. Affan Ali, a civil engineer from Sambhal, says the news of survey

"Since this is a Hindu neighborhood, Muslim families no longer send their children here. The loss is borne by both us and them."  
~ Shashi Kala, a tuition teacher

at the mosque and ensuing violence devastated him. "I have grown up seeing the Jama Masjid, and I used to visit it often. It feels very sad and devastating to hear that some people claim that it's their place of worship and not ours," Ali says. Abbas Akbar, a college student from Moradabad, says that he fears for his safety living in the violence-affected area. "I feel like I could be lynched anytime, and neither the police nor the judicial system would help," he says.

The violence has also taken a toll on local's livelihoods in the region. Affan Ali, says that communal tensions are affecting business opportunities. "People are more inclined to buy and sell within their own communities. This is affecting my business," he says. Shashi Kala, a tuition teacher from Bareilly, adds that Muslim children no longer come to her classes. "Since this is a Hindu neighborhood, Muslim families no longer send their children here. The loss is borne by both us and them."

The locals feel with a more closed-off and segregated market, their opportunities are limited by communal affiliations. (Inputs by Shubhangi Chauhan)

**INKuilab**  
By Shubhangi Chauhan

**Nation's  
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## 'Experience Economy' Booms in India

As per the recent Bank of Baroda report, India's concert economy is expected to be Rs 6000-8000 crore industry

By Somya Panwar,  
Ira Deshpande &  
Sucheta Roy

PUNE: The emergence of India's "Experience Economy", especially the boom and advancement in live events such as concerts, has significant effects on the economy. The shift represents its popularity for the experiences as the concerts and events are the key players.

As per the latest report by Bank of Baroda, India's concert economy is expected to be Rs 6000-8000 crore industry. This reflects the growing financial capacity of the middle and upper classes, who are willing to allocate their disposable income towards experiences than in material goods. The concert ticket prices range from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 10 Lakhs.

This growth in the concert

economy highlights the diversification of India's economic situation and the fundamental shift in consumer behaviour. Be it any international artist or home-grown talent, India is not only expanding into entertainment sectors by being a hotspot for grand scale live performances. It is also on the verge of becoming the powerhouse of the industry.

These concerts are rapidly growing in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru where the young population is eager to explore and spend money to engage in the global experiential trends for visuals and exclusive gatherings to watch their favourite artists play.

"I feel live events are experiences of unmatched value; the energy, connection and memories made are worth every penny. For certain bands and artists I truly con-

nect with, I'm willing to pay a premium, knowing those moments are irreplaceable," said Rehan Ahmad, a consumer who got the tickets for the Coldplay concert in December.

Another consumer who managed to get the tickets for the concert, Som Dutt Vyas said "The communal experience the live events create are unparalleled. The symphony of excitement and echoes of laughter, create a euphoric ethos and the same can only be achieved at live events. The value of art can never be quantified and people like me, who are willing to experience the magic of live events, surely go over budget to witness the allurements, as money can be earned again, but experiences are gained few and far between."

The concerts and live events have not just made a far-reaching impact on the entertainment indus-

try and the consumers but has also created a huge job market for artists, performers, sound engineers and stage managers, with a rise in demand for the additional services such as videographers, photographers, security personnel and technicians.

All these events strengthen the economy and provide new opportunities and avenues for investments from which even the investors are directly benefiting. It curates a way for brands to engage with the audience through sponsorships, advertisements and brand activations.

Moreover, the success of these global events is a testament of the changing values of the expanding Indian consumer market. These concerts have created a new world where the entertainment industry will play a significant role in cultural growth and in the economic fabric of India.



## INK Briefs

### 13 Dead, 99 Rescued in Mumbai Ferry Crash

"Thirteen people died and 99 others were rescued after a Navy craft undergoing engine trials lost control and collided with the passenger ferry, Neel Kamal, off Karanja near Mumbai at around 4 pm on Wednesday", the Navy said. The ferry was carrying passengers from the Gateway of India to Elephanta Island, a popular tourist destination. (PTI)

### Ashwin announces Retirement from International Cricket

Ashwin, 38, owner of 765 international wickets, returned home on Thursday after his shocking international retirement in the middle of a Test series in Australia, insisting that he made an "instinctive" decision and is walking away with "zero regrets". (PTI)

Compiled by Prachi & Janhvi

## Cab Drivers' Strike Halts but Issues with Ola, Uber License Remains

*Pune Awaits Verdict on Ride-Hailing Services Amid Driver Strikes and Licensing issues against the operators.*

By Nethra Sailesh & Vidhi Thacker

PUNE: On 11th December 2024, cab drivers working with Ola and Uber called a strike at Pune's Aeromall, demanding to revoke the licenses for the aggregator platforms and upgrade the rates. However, a day before the strike, the State Transport Appellate Tribunal (STAT) issued a stay order granting permits to these ride-hailing companies.

INK reporters visited the Aeromall, but the strike was called off after the stay order emphasized that the passengers should not face any inconvenience.

According to the Indian Express, the order was issued by the precision officer of the STAT, N.K. Brahme. The final hearing is scheduled on 19th of December, 2024 which will determine if these app-based services can continue to function in the city or operations will be halted altogether.



Ola and Uber autos around Aeromall, Pune. | Credit: Vidhi Thacker

The strike was organized by the drivers as the companies were operating without active licenses. In January, The Times of India reported that the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) re-jected licenses for Ola and Uber because of their non-compliance with the regulations issued in the Central Aggregator Policy.

Dr. Keshav Kshirsagar, president of the Indian Gig Workers Front (IGF) stated that "the current protests will be on hold until the hearing". Another member of the IGF, Vaibhav Patil, further ex-

plained the motive of the strikes by stating, "We want the apps to either accept updated rates or cease operations altogether". The debate over fare structures has been ongoing for years. The 2017 Khatua Committee report offered a revised fare fixation framework, based on changing cost factors such as fuel. According to The Times of India, the Pune RTO recommended rates for AC cabs based on the report, but the aggregators have still not complied. Commuters have expressed concerns over potential fare hikes. "Ola already

charges more than its competitors, a new price hike will be a disadvantage for the commuters," said Palak Kulshrestha.

But there's also room for other alternatives. Aslam Sayeed, who works part-time for Uber highlighted the challenges faced by the drivers, "In the beginning the incentives Uber offered to the drivers seemed profitable, however, the per km rate has stayed the same since 2015. It becomes difficult to run a household with this income," he said.

To make ends meet, Sayeed, has now started working for GrEL, a Pune-based EV cab company that offers a potential substitute to Uber and Ola. He also noted that GrEL offers their drivers a monthly salary, with a weekly off, and is not dependent on the number of daily trips for earnings.

The upcoming hearing on 19th December, will serve as a pivotal moment for commuters and drivers.

## Pigeon chaos causes Health Concerns in Pune

*PMC takes stringent actions against those who feed pigeons in public*



A person captured while feeding pigeons in Pune. | Source: The Indian

By Prachi Mishra & Anushka Rajvedi

PUNE: Since the spread of diseases caused by feathers and droppings of pigeons, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has decided to take strict action against those who feed the pigeons in open areas or public spaces in different parts of the city.

Ananda Bansode, a cab driver in Pune said, "People are well aware of the fines imposed by the PMC. But, they still engage in these practices because of their cultural beliefs. The Marwadi community, which is mostly associated with trade and commerce, believe that feeding pigeons will help in the prosperity of their business."

With people feeding pigeons openly, it has not just contributed to littering the streets, but has also affected and endangered people's health. The droppings and feathers of pigeons spread harmful germs resulting in many respiratory diseases. Feeding pigeons has also led to an increase in the population of the pigeons, which in turn is causing more harm to people.

Concerns surrounding public health and safety have been raised by medical experts. In a recent telephonic interview, Dr. Mandeep, Doctorate of Medicine in Critical Care, at MAX Super Speciality Hospital, Delhi, emphasized on the importance of responsible interaction with pigeons and highlighted potential health risks associated with their droppings.

Dr Mandeep stressed on the need for regular consultation with veterinary doctors on monitoring the health of the pigeon population. "Frequent sampling from the pigeon population is crucial. This allows us to check for the presence of diseases and take preventive measures," he stated.

Anyone who engages with the pigeons, whether feeding them or cleaning their droppings off the monuments, must wash their hands thoroughly afterwards," Dr. Mandeep advised. He strongly cautioned against consuming food without proper handwashing, as this could lead to various health problems. Pigeon droppings can harbor bacteria like Salmonella,

which can cause diarrhea and other pathogens that can lead to serious conditions like lung infections. The bacteria and fungal spores present in these droppings can be extremely dangerous and may severely affect the health of people.

The duration of treatment for these health issues varies significantly. Dr. Mandeep explained that a minor issue like diarrhea caused by Salmonella can typically be resolved within a week. However, severe conditions like lung infections resulting from exposure to pigeon droppings, may require months of treatment.

Beyond health concerns, Dr. Mandeep also addressed the issue of public safety related to pigeon feeding. He advocated for the use of designated feeding spots recognized by governing bodies. "Sudden flights of pigeons can startle drivers and lead to road accidents, particularly for motorcyclists." By confining feeding to designated areas, the risk of such incidents can be significantly reduced. This also helps in better management of pigeon population and reduces the accumulation of droppings in public spaces.

With this rising issue in the city, the PMC has started spreading awareness by displaying banners all over the city and urging the citizens not to feed the pigeons. The PMC has also warned the citizens that strict actions will be taken if they do not adhere to the norms.

Many of the PMC officials are sent to specific areas in Pune to educate people regarding the health and hygiene issues caused by feeding the pigeons.

In case the citizens do not follow the instructions, the government will be issuing a warning along with imposing fines on them ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5000.

## Cyber Crime is Spreading Across India like a Wildfire

*A steady increase in the rate of digital scams every*

By Thamanna Sadique & R. Rakendu

PUNE: A 44-year-old woman from Baner in Pune was scammed by cyber thieves earlier this month. She was extorted for 34 lakh rupees. The cybercrooks pretended to be officers from the Telecom Authority of India and claimed that her mobile number and data were used for a crime in Mumbai.

Her call was then transferred to a man who claimed to be an IPS officer where he explained the details of the case. After being afraid of an immediate arrest, she shared the details of her bank account.

This is just one of the numerous cases that takes place every year in India. Fear being their main weapon against innocent people. From homemakers to businessmen, from teachers to lawyers, from young adults to senior citizens, all have been victims of cyber-crime. Earlier this year, a leading criminal lawyer Ajith Kumar from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala also lost 93 lakhs, through cyber trading scam.

The Circle Inspector of Cyber Cell, Thiruvananthapuram, Prakash Yohan says "Nowadays, currency trading scam is the new trend in cyberworld. People are asked to join websites or apps through which they can invest their money

and get back huge returns in a short period of time. After the first few installments, the app will start to show that if they invest a certain amount, they can make it to crores within a month. By the time the investors understand the app is not working, they go to check the website only to find that the site does not exist. Many people tried to contact the cyber thieves who made them invest in the first place, but everything was in vain. There are people who lost more than 6 crore rupees through such currency trading apps."

Digital scammers dressed like police officers use WhatsApp video calls as a medium to commit digital arrest. They call to claim that the number and bank account of the person on the receiving end has been used by someone for a cyber-crime.

A month ago, one of those scammers called an on duty cyber cell officer of Trissur, Kerala and tried to use the fear factor against him, asking him to share his bank account details soon. However, the officer understood that the phone call was a scam and soon revealed himself through the camera only to shock the scammer.

Cyber Cell Offices across the country are taking initiatives to make people aware of such frequent scams..



Increasing Cyber-crime cases in India | Source: National Herald



## ‘Chalo Delhi’ Protest: Farmers Across the Northern Belt Unite for Conducting Rallies

*Farmers Demand Justice as the Government Blocks their March at Chandigarh*



Farmers united against policy changes | Source: Bhatkallys

By Krishika Rathod & Shubhangi Chauhan

PUNE: Farmers from Uttar Pradesh have launched a determined protest, marching from Noida to Delhi to highlight long-standing grievances which require urgent government action. This protest, led by the farmers' unions, focuses on pressing issues such as fair crop prices, adequate land compensation, and justice for rural communities.

Their primary requirements included, legal guarantee of

Minimum Support Price (MSP). In order to shield themselves from being taken advantage of in open markets, farmers demand a regulation that ensures MSP. According to a Trolley Times member, Gurdeep Dhaliwal, "MSP is the main cause of the farmers' protests. Farmers have spoken with the government about this matter and received assurances that it will be investigated. But as of now, nothing meaningful has been done."

Demanding fair compensation for acquired land purchased under previous legislation, farmers are requesting up to 64.7% higher compensation. Many believe they have little financial stability since their lands have been discounted for government initiatives.

This issue along with the displacement of jobs are the main demands that the farmers have posed in front of the government. All they want is to have a piece of developed land and possibilities for work. Those who have lost their main source of income are intended to have their liveli-

hoods secured by these methods. Farmers and their families from Uttar Pradesh have joined the march. Women and children are a part of this agitation. For many, this is a battle for survival as much as for fair rates. Raju Kumar, a farmer from Bulandshahr, said, "We are having financial difficulties and are heavily indebted. We don't think our children will have a future in farming if the government doesn't take action right away."

In the Delhi-NCR area, the protest has had a major impact on local economies, supply networks, and traffic. Political parties are preparing for elections at the same time as the protests. According to experts, the increasing dissatisfaction among farmers may have an impact on voting patterns and compel legislators to give rural issues greater attention.

This protest is part of a longer history of farmer tensions in India, which stems from decades of institutional neglect. As protests intensify, the administration is under increasing pressure to take quick action to address these challenges.

## Indo-Bangladesh Border: Navigating Challenges and Building Cooperation



BSF instructs BGB to prevent illegal immigration and activities near the border regions

By Janhvi Ahuja & Ishita Malakar

PUNE: The Indo-Bangladesh border has been subjected to years of tension and scrutiny due to illegal immigration, smuggling and many other disputes. India has over 4000 km of land borders with Bangladesh. This distance includes five Indian states, namely; West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and Meghalaya.

In 2015, the Government of India had done an enclave exchange with Bangladesh which settled centuries old territorial anomalies. However, with the exile of the former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, the rift between the countries has seen a rise. The border regions are facing persistent challenges such as smuggling, public protests and mass gatherings while bearing witness to many human rights concerns.

When the INK Reporters asked Comdt. Raj Kumar, CO BSF Battalion about how the border forces are engaging with the local communities during this time of crisis, he stated that, "To gain local support for enhanced security measures and to combat illegal activities, the BSF is conducting 'village coordination meetings' in the border communities. The BSF Company Commanders go to the border villages and discuss the current situation in Bangladesh and emphasise the need for villagers' cooperation in maintaining security and preventing illegal activities."

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand

Rai made a visit to the BSF Frontier HQ in Guwahati and noted all the preparations that the BSF troops had made along the Indo-Bangladesh border. Not only that but regarding the issue of illegal immigration, Rai stated that, "2399 Bangladeshi nationals had been found using fraudulently obtained Indian documents in the past five years." He further added, "The states had also been advised to share the details of those illegal migrants who had wrongfully obtained Aadhar cards for appropriate legal action."

Despite the multifaceted challenges at the Indo-Bangladesh border, the BSF and BGB have held around 643 meetings to address the political unrest and security concerns.

When asked about what long-term goals these meetings aim to achieve, Comdt Raj Kumar mentioned that "These meetings are part of the policy of inclusive growth, stability and prosperity. The local residents could contribute to border security by remaining vigilant and reporting suspicious activities. Once it's part of the culture, it can lead to everlasting peace in the border. These meetings also build trust and cooperation with border residents with the border guarding forces."

The Indo-Bangladesh region is in a complex state however with the help of proactive measures taken by the BSF and its counterpart in Bangladesh.

The border will soon witness a resolution including security measures and an overall socio-economic betterment.

## Indian Women Win Three-Match Series Against West Indies

By Rounak Khare

PUNE: "Watching Smriti Mandhana play is always exciting!" says Goutam Rauth, an athletics coach at DY Patil University, Navi Mumbai.

The West Indies' tour of India commenced on 15th December 2024, with the match taking place at Dr. DY Patil University Sports Ground. Team India, led by captain Harmanpreet Kaur, won the first match by 49 runs, with both Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues securing half centuries.

The second match took place on 17th December, and witnessed the win of the West Indies team led by Hayley Mathews, by



nine wickets, making the series score tied to 1-1. Indian fans were left silenced by the West Indies' skipper's performance in the match, as she hit the boundary with a finishing four, to secure the win for her team.

The decider match of the series took place on 19 December. Sm-

riti Mandhana was awarded as player of the series as she scored 77 runs. .

"There were two moments in the first match when the crowd went crazy with cheering: when Smriti Mandhana hit a half century, and when Jemimah Rodrigues was awarded the player of the match", says Goutam Rauth.

He also mentioned how the match saw a huge turnout due to free tickets given to university students. "Although the entry was free, a lot of the audience still chose to stay for the entire match because of the performance of the team." He further concluded by saying, "Indians will always support the team in blue, be it men or women!"

## The Silent Pandemic: Delhi's Toxic Air and its Toll on the Marginalised

*Delhi witnesses unhealthy AQI levels, leading to the imposition of GRAP Stages III and IV, affecting the marginalised communities*

By Disha Gupta & Shweta Jena

PUNE: The National Capital recorded the highest smog levels this year, entering the severe plus domain with an Air Quality Index of 484 during November. Amid severe air pollution, the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) activated the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stages III and IV in Delhi-NCR. The GRAP restricts older diesel and petrol vehicles and transport trucks from operating in and around Delhi, halting non-essential constructions and shifting classes to online mode.

After the implementation of GRAP plans, the limited access

of trucks to Delhi-NCR has created panic within the drivers regarding their livelihoods, as most of them sustain themselves through transport services. Ramesh Kumar, who transports hospital goods in and out of Delhi, raised his concerns saying, "We will face many problems related to livelihood if our vehicles won't be allowed to enter Delhi. Where will we bear our expenses from? We have EMIs to pay for our vehicles, from where we will get the money?"

Sanjay Kumar, a middle-class businessman said, "We face a lot of problems as my business is selling material related to cleaning items of hospitals and our trucks or vehicles are not allowed to enter Delhi to drop off



goods which eventually makes it difficult for us to fulfil the order within the given time limit."

Strict pollution laws are affecting students who had to take classes in online mode. Shubham Pal, undergrad student from Delhi University said, "Attentiveness is

highly impacted in online mode as the face-to-face classes are more viable and promote better understanding. Even the teachers ensure that students are physically as well as mentally present in the class. Also, the speaker, audio and microphone connectivity, the sudden power cuts

and the network problems in between classes further creates listening and understanding barriers, making it difficult for us to get the crux of what the teacher is explaining."

When the air quality deteriorated and the AQI was over 450, the CAQM took action for Delhi NCR and its surrounding territories. The agency activated Stage IV of the GRAP plan, implementing emergency measures to mitigate the pollution crisis. While these measures are important to resist pollution, their social outcomes cannot be ignored. A balanced approach should be integrated for both environmental health and social equity, leading towards a sustainable future.



# From Fisherfolk to Farmers : Cyclone Fengal Creates Chaos

*After loss of staple crops like Paddy and Pulses, livelihood of farmers is ruined; stricter action and accountability needed*

By Anushka Rajvedi & Chanakya Ch



AP farmers face crop loss as a result of cyclone Fengal | Source: MSN

PUNE: Farmers of Andhra Pradesh have faced severe crop loss due to the heavy rains and flooding as an effect of cyclone Fengal, that struck the coasts of Tamil Nadu in late November.

After hitting the Coromandel coast, the cyclone also affected the coasts of many other regions of Southern India like Karnataka, Kerala and had a major impact on Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh. Strong winds and heavy rainfall caused by the cyclone has damaged the environment and has also affected the livelihood of many, especially the farmers of Andhra Pradesh.

Vellanki Sreeya, an environmentalist, from Street Cause Organization, mentioned how the farmers of Andhra Pradesh have faced severe crop damage. "Andhra Pradesh has suffered massive losses. Paddy fields, the state's lifeline, are submerged, and other crops like vegetables and pulses are de-

stroyed. What's worse is that this isn't just about losing crops for one season, it's about long-term damage to the soil and the farmers' morale."

She further stated that this damage will not just affect the life of a single farmer but the entire agricultural sector. "When one region suffers, the pressure to meet demand shifts to other parts of the country, straining resources there. Food prices will go up, farmers will struggle to recover, and some may give up farming altogether. It's like watching a chain reaction where one disaster triggers multiple crises."

She continued on how this will affect the entire economy of the country, "Crop losses mean higher prices, inflation, and maybe even shortages. For rural economies, where farming is the backbone, this cyclone is a disaster. When farmers earn less, they spend less, af-

fecting businesses in those areas."

Industrialization is one of the main reasons behind the occurrence of the cyclone. She elaborated, "The way we've expanded cities, cleared forests, and ignored the importance of wetlands has left us vulnerable. Adding to that is climate change, fuelled by our industrial emissions, and you get stronger, more frequent cyclones."

After cyclone Dana that hit the coasts of Odisha during October 2024, it is cyclone Fengal that has caused great damage to people.

Although the farmers are expecting a relief package from the government, the cyclone has deeply affected the livelihoods of those living in coastal regions.

The unpredictability of rains and natural disasters leads to severe irrigation struggles that affect the lives of farmers.

Air currents emerging from the low pressure areas of Bay of Bengal pose severe, life threatening conditions in South Indian States

By R. Rakendu & Thamanna Sadique

PUNE: Originating from a depression at Bay of Bengal on 30th November 2024, Cyclone Fengal has moved to the southern part of India, posing threat to the lives of many. So far, 16 are reported dead and a large number of people have lost their lands to the sea.

Even though Tamil Nadu is the most affected out of all the coastal regions, Kerala and Southern Karnataka are also experiencing strong winds followed by heavy rainfall.

Red Alerts are issued in different districts throughout the three states. Tamil Nadu Chief minister M.K. Stalin, in his letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stated that nearly 7 million families were affected, with Puducherry experiencing the highest amount of rainfall in its history.

Strong winds ranging up to 60 km/hr have been causing the destruction to a number of vehicles and buildings.

As of 29th November, the Disaster Management Centre states that, more than four lakh individuals have been directly and indirectly affected by the

cyclone, with farmers and fishermen being the major victims.

John Bosco, a 72-year-old fisherman from Cherthala, in Kerala, explains how he lost 14-cent of land as a result of the cyclone, "The area yielded more than 400 coconuts every year. It was a source of income for my family which now lies under the sea, because of the absence of a seawall"

"We suffered a lot. We can easily sail the boat through the rains but the strong wind is causing a threat. Five boats were destroyed in the district of Alappuzha. After this incident, our people have decided not to go during such adverse weather conditions.", says Thilakan, an elderly fisherman from Kerala.

In the last three years, South India has witnessed over twenty cyclones, with people living in the coasts being majorly affected.

"I have lived 78 years here, never have I seen such heavy rainfall during the month of December. We are unable to meet the ends without going to the sea but no one seems to care about people like us. Yet again nature won over mankind. All we can do is pray for better weather", says Joseph representing the fisherfolks of Kerala.

## Noisy Streets, Polluted Air: Pune Fighting the Dual Menace Sparks Protests

*Pune grapples with rising noise and air pollution as residents demand stricter action and accountability from the govt.*

By Naysa Shrivastava, Prachi Mishra & Sidhima Choudhary

PUNE: Noise and air pollution have yet again sparked protests, raising concerns among the residents of Pune, particularly in the neighbourhoods of Kalyani Nagar and Koregaon Park. On December 4, 2024, the residents of Kalyani Nagar held a protest, claiming that despite their repetitive complaints and pleas, the issue of Noise Pollution remains unheard.

A complaint was lodged against the Westin Hotel, in Koregaon Park Annexe. Residents claimed, even when permissions are taken from the regulatory bodies for late-night parties, the music exceeds the permissible decibel levels.

A security guard at God's Blessings, a residential society, adjacent to the Westin Hotel, said, "This is a posh area. Parties happen daily, not just at the Westin but also at KOPA Mall and the penthouse of Onyx. The Police come here every time a complaint is raised and action is taken, but these matters are usually settled with fines. The problem persists."

Earlier in the year 2023,



Team Swachh Kalyani Nagar (TSKN) and Koregaon Park Residents Welfare Association (KPRWA) associated themselves with a youth volunteer group, to raise awareness campaigns and gave invites to government officials. Out of 21 officials who RSVPed, only three attended, which shows their neglect towards the issue. The event which initially gained attention, soon lost its vigor.

Rise in air pollution is another concerning issue in Pune. Garbage burning being one of the reasons behind the poor air quality. Areas like Pashan, Sus-gaon,

Baner, have reported more incidents. "Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has issued a fine of 5000 rs on garbage burning, that's why people burn garbage at night when nobody can see them. As winters are approaching people burn garbage to keep their hands warm. Even police also ignore this because who has the time to search in the small lanes and waste their time? Government is at fault because rules are not strictly enforced, and the police are neglecting its role", said Ananda Bansode, a cab driver. In a telephonic interview with The

INK reporters, Dighe Mangesh Samptrao, Environmental Officer of the PMC, asserted that the city is taking steps to combat pollution. He highlighted Pune's initiatives: "Around 480 electric buses have been deployed, and more CNG buses are expected to join the fleet soon."

However, research done by INK reporters, found no increase in the number of electric buses in 2024. Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited's (PMPML) has not made any progress beyond its existing plans, continuing to delay the introduction of

500 CNG buses until June 2024.

Samptrao also spoke about Pune's recently launched Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to improve air quality. This initiative, using real-time weather monitoring, focuses on systematic measures to reduce pollution levels.

Despite these efforts, a report titled "Five Years of the National Clean Air Programme" by climate-tech startup Respirer Living Sciences sheds light on gaps in fund utilisation. The report reveals that under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), launched in 2019 to tackle air pollution in 131 cities, Pune was allocated ₹271.3 crore. However, as of 2024, the city has utilized only ₹70.5 crore of the funds.

The findings raise concerns about the effective implementation of pollution control strategies. They highlight the need for efficient resource utilisation to address the growing environmental crisis. People of Pune are in constant hope, demanding for better implementation of rules and regulations in the rising air and noise pollution problems in Pune with a more stricter and effective fine imposed with effective monitoring strategies, as soon as possible.