

Cops: Netas spreading rumours about thieves

V Narayan | TNN

Mumbai: Tracking down hoax callers for spreading rumours about the “chaddi banian gang” has kept police personnel in the Ghatkopar-Mulund belt on their toes over the past week.

Investigators have found out that the calls are made by political party workers who spread rumours to take advantage of the “fear factor” to canvass for their parties in the locality. “These miscreants circulate MMS clips that show thieves being thrashed. They make locals believe that the ‘thieves’ have been apprehended in the city. However, after examining these clips we have found that the incident had occurred somewhere in rural Maharashtra,” said Jivajirao Jadhav, senior inspec-

Calling for Trouble

Area	Cases	Hoax calls
Mulund	2	25
Navghar	1	2
Bhandup	1	17
Kanjurmarg	2	5
Parksite	4	10
Vikhroli	1	9
Ghatkopar	3	18
Pant Nagar	0	1

Hoax calls received in the last 7 days

tor of Mulund police station.

The police control room received 87 hoax calls during the last seven days. “We find that the miscreants switch off their cellphone after making calls to the control room,” said Ravindra Javkar, senior inspector of Vikhroli police station.

“Prompt action taken against the accused for spreading rumours has brought the situation under control,” he added.

“We have asked locals not to unnecessarily venture out at night. If people are found loitering around in groups at night, then they will be put behind bars and stern action will be taken,” said Suresh Nirmal, senior inspector of Pant Nagar police station.

“After we took action against groups that assembled at night, the menace seems to have reduced,” a senior police officer said.

Lifestyles behind changing realty

Hemali Chhopia | TNN

Mumbai: Architect-cum-interior designer Anish Mistry says astute designers know well to fit big ambitions in small spaces, especially in a city like Mumbai which is starved of space. As Mistry says, “Earlier, the rich came to designers and we designed for luxury. Now, designing space is based on the need, on the utilitarian value of space.”

Dinesh Kargathara and Zeenal Chhedha, who run Hardlight Studio, say utility of space isn’t the only thing driving small homeowners to designers. “Their flat may be small, but the lifestyle of youngsters isn’t. They are ready to play with lights and colours and make their homes designer houses,” says Chhedha. And Kargathara has a point when he says that a lot of his clients buy a 1 BHK flat but ask him to rearrange space such that there is a second room for a child.

It’s pure economics. “A 1BHK flat in Mulund would cost Rs 70 lakh and a 2BHK would cost over Rs 1.3 crore. So, a lot of people buy the



Sanjay Hadkar

NEW IDEAS TO MEET TODAY’S CHALLENGES: A single room can have multiple purposes these days

1BHK flat, put in an additional Rs 10 lakh and convert the same space into a 2BHK house,” explains Kargathara.

‘This isn’t only the reality of new homes. Even those living in old localities of the city are turning to professionals to redesign space as their families grow. Interior designer Arif Khatri says he has worked on a lot of homes in areas in Bhandi Bazaar where a house was just one long room. ‘As they cannot afford a flat

anywhere else, owners want to break down that one large room into sections, for privacy,’ he says.

Prasad Badle, principal at Rachana Sansad’s School of Interior Design says that with the changing needs of people, his colleges have started teaching students to design loft homes and chawl houses with 250-sq-ft area. “Working with frugal space is one of the most important subjects at the institute today,” he says.

What renowned Swiss architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier, said in 1930 about the use of space has been guiding the interior designers of space-starved Mumbai: “Architecture is in space, in extent, in depth, in height; it is in volumes and in circulation.”

Moreover, space also happens to be the final frontier. And their economy of it doesn’t impair their desires for what they never had be-

fore—storage room, children’s studies or work dens.

These new needs have given birth to what the industry calls layout artists. These are young boys and girls who start out after graduation armed with the skills of an interior designer, but who are yet to land that first assignment they call their ‘break’. This is what they do: they visit the site once, understand the needs of the client and offer them a few design options they create on a computer.

While these layout artists may have the skill, they don’t have the labour to get the job done. But their ideas can be realized by a freelance contractor: “These people give about three options for a paltry sum of Rs 4,000-5,000. They give you the floor plan and the elevation and then any contractor can carry out the work,” says Mistry. This tribe of layout artists has only grown, pointing to the rising demand for their services, with clients across the city—from Bhandi Bazaar to Jogeshwari.

These days, everyone wants maximum returns in world that is shrinking.

Ex-staffer wins AI dues from UK court

Swati Deshpande | TNN

Mumbai: In a huge embarrassment for Air India (AI), the UK Supreme Court this week refused to grant the airline permission to appeal a stinging Queen’s Bench verdict to pay its former in-flight catering manager at Heathrow airport his overtime (OT) charges, which were stopped suddenly, six years before his retirement.

The English Court of Appeal had last July found no explanation other than “harassment by the local AI management” of Minoo Driver a “conscientious employee” who served AI for over three decades.

Driver (70) worked 2,792 hours overtime in 30 months between 2002 and 2006 in UK and made an “honest” claim for his unpaid dues worth around 57,000 pounds, the court said. Air India, now not only has to pay him his dues with interest but also the litigation costs, an amount expected to exceed 3,50,000 pounds (Rs 2.8 crore), said Driver’s lawyer. The AI management criticized the appeal court ruling which had overturned a trial court order that was in the airline’s favour.

It said its appeal now raised a “wider public interest” on the issue of contractual obligations. The appeal, however, also showcased perhaps the airline’s real fear that the ruling “will



be relied on to impose on employers, a duty to pay for overtime when that was not the true objective intention of the parties.”

Preventing AI’s appeal plans to even take off, the SC held that the application raised “no arguable point of law of general public importance which ought to be considered by the Supreme Court.” Thus slamming AI, the SC also directed the national carrier to pay Driver the “cost of application and litigation.”

The SC also noted that the case “has already been subject of judicial decision and reviewed on appeal and the case turns on its rather special facts.” In UK, for an appeal to be heard by the House of Lords, the would-be appellant must show why it merits the

court’s attention on legal aspects too.

Driver’s solicitor Sarosh Zaiwalla of Zaiwalla and Co, one of the oldest law firms set up by an Indian in UK, said the ruling is a setback for AI and has “exposed its aim of harassment against a hapless employee who brings a challenge in court to obtain his rightful dues.” The appeal was an oppressive move against Driver, he had told the court especially when the court had held that contract with AI had quite plainly contemplated payment for overtime, if such additional hours were ‘required’ to be worked. “I am happy now,” Driver told TOI from his UK home. His fight was “on matters of principle.” He had written nine letters to AI for his dues in three years. His letters were “ignored”, deliberately with-

out good reason,” the court said.

In 2005, then AI chief Thulasidas endorsed his claim after Driver’s superior approved it as genuine, but it was still not implemented, the court noted. AI argued that it has the “unilateral right to decide whether it would pay for overtime or shift work at all” but the court had held that the airline failed to exercise its contractual discretion and hence awarded Driver minimum rate for overtime as determined in AI’s overtime claim sheet. Driver, who went to London in 1999, retired as catering manager (Europe) in 2007. From December 31, 2001, AI stopped paying him for overtime and a year later for his shift allowance. It also withheld his car and telephone allowance of around 20,000 pounds.

He said he was entitled to OT as per guidelines. The airline made allegations of fraud against Driver which the English court found to be untrue. Undaunted, AI even sought a CBI probe against Driver. Driver earned 24,000 pounds annually could not be expected to have to work overtime beyond the normal 37.5 hours weekly without expectation of pay, the court had said, adding that in an airline staffer on the ground had the duty to decide if circumstances required extra hours without pre-authorization, which then would need to be paid for.

‘Surgeon in transplant team has backed out’

Rosy Sequeira & Malathy Iyer | TNN

Mumbai: Dr HL Chulani, the medico-legal consultant for Lilavati Hospital, told TOI on Saturday that immediately after the Bombay High Court order on the kidney transplant from a tribal sister to her brother at the earliest, the hospital had asked its staff to keep an operation theatre ready. “Nephrologist Dr Bharat Shah, who is the coordinator of this transplant, should be in a better position to answer (questions about the specific date for the operations),” he said.

When TOI contacted Shah, all he is said is that the

transplant should be conducted soon. TOI next contacted Sonia Vayklip, who will donate the kidney, and her brother Deepak’s advocate R A Shaikh. He said: “We have come to know that there is some problem among the doctors. Out of the two surgeons (in the transplant team), one has backed out.” According to the court documents, the medical team comprises nephrologist Dr Bharat V Shah and surgeons Dr Samir Desai and Dr Hemant Pathak.

Shaikh said Shah has arranged for alternative surgeon(s), but the hospital’s procedures are holding up the transplant. Shaikh said each day is trying for Deepak and

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his family. “He is undergoing dialysis which is a costly affair,” he added.

Shaikh claimed there is resentment among the administration as to why Shah went before the court against the hospital committee’s decision to reject Sonia as a donor on the grounds of her low IQ. “There is a discussion on how

to implement the order of the court. The patient has not been told anything so far. It is more than three weeks now. The court had directed that the transplant be done without any loss of time,” said Shaikh.

But the buzz in Lilavati Hospital is that Sonia too has problems with her kidneys.

She underwent a long treatment in a city hospital for stones in one of her kidneys and even had a stent placed to clear the path. A recent diagnostic test done to check her kidneys revealed worsening function. “Even six months after the stone’s removal, her kidney function hasn’t improved. This is an area of concern,” said the source. It is this kidney that will be given to her brother.

In its January 18 order, a division bench of Chief Justice Mohit Shah and Justice Roshan Dalvi had rejected the contention that Sonia is “mentally-retarded”. Earlier, both Lilavati Hospital and the state authorization commit-

tee (which had been directed by the High Court to look into the case) had rejected Sonia’s application. The HC bench had said: “After considering the answers given by petitioner No.1 (Sonia) to the questions put by us, and after considering the fact that Petitioner No.1 is a tribal lady who has studied up to 6th standard, it is not possible to consider petitioner No.1 as a mentally retarded person.”

The court had also considered the deposition of Shah (who has been involved in over 500 transplants) that that there is a 100% matching of tissue type of the donor and recipient who are brother and sister.

When 5-yr-old kids read about rainforests

Tareq Zahir | TNN

What are kids reading these days? While some continue to read favourites like *Hardy Boys*, Enid Blyton and Roald Dahl, there are five-year-olds who read whatever they find on topical issues like rainforests and nature. Some 10-year-olds “do not remember the names of books”. Then there are those who are hooked on titles by Indian authors like Chetan Bhagat.

Besides the old favourites, there are a lot of takers for relatively new authors as well.

Diary of A Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney is a favourite with Armaan Sharma, a Class 4 student at Navy Children School, Colaba. The series on Greg Hefley and his struggles in middle school appeals to Armaan’s brother Aryan, who studies in Class VII.

The elder sibling also reads Enid Blyton and Roald Dahl and “funny books” like *The Ad-*

Khan (13) of Bombay Cambridge School in Andheri reads only those books that she gets from the school library. Studies leave her with little time, so she gets only one book a month. She prefers reading *Nancy Drew* and Enid Blyton.

Then there are those like Siddhant Kohli (5) of Ashok Academy in Andheri (W), who reads fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen, fables, *The Little Mermaid* and *Rapunzel*. He also reads interactive books and, helped by parents, learns about rainforests and nature.

Zaid Shaikh, a Class VI student at St John’s Universal School in Goregaon, loves to read *Goosebumps*, a series of horror novels by R L Stine. He devotes an hour on stories any time after school, but “preferably before it gets dark and scary”. His neighbour Noorain Naushad Maredia, who studies in Class V at City International School in Andheri (W), likes reading ghost stories any time

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READ ON: Kids love books on topical issues and popular fiction alike

ventures of Captain Underpants by Dav Pilkey.

The brothers spend almost two and a half hours after school every day reading fiction, books on general knowledge and encyclopaedia.

Five-year-old Mihika Layak of Sr KG at Podar Jumbo Kids in Santa Cruz (W) is already

of the day. He is also a fan of *Tenali Rama*, *Jataka Tales* and *Nancy Drew*. Musharafa Alam, a Class VII student at City International School in Andheri (W), has read the ever-green *Gulliver’s Travels* and *Little Women* from her school library as well as the contemporary *The 3 Mistakes of My*

Life by Chetan Bhagat. She also likes reading newspapers.

Despite the grouse among parents that children do not read enough, stores see a rise in the number of young readers. Employees at bookshops like Crossword and Landmark say the *Ceronimo Stilton* series is a hit among 5-8 year-olds. Equally sought-after are the *Magic Tree House*, *Magic School Bus* and *Junie B Jones* series. Enid Blyton’s *Famous Five* remains a favourite in the 5-8 age group. Boys aged 8-12 love reading *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and Lincoln Peirce’s comic strip *Big Nate*. Girls in the same age group love books by Cathy Cassidy and *Diary of Amos Lee* by Adeline Foo.

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