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Politics destroys Maldives economy

Pratham Basu

Tourism in Maldives is all set to take a hit as the recent controversy is fanned further by several celebrities with many pegging the remarks of Maldivian ministers as outright racist. In 2023, Maldives witnessed 2.1 lakh Indian tourists on its islands, ranking first, followed by the Russians and Chinese. Tourism holds immense economic significance in the Maldives, contributing 20% directly and a substantial 79% indirectly to the GDP, as noted by Elizabetta Gentile of the Asian Development Bank. According to World Bank data, factors like the lack of fiscal reforms, high public debt, increasing national borrowing, and environmental threats amplify the challenges for long-term sustainability.

Recently, Maldivian Deputy Minister Mariam Shiuna's criticism of PM Modi's promotion of Lakshadweep triggered a social media storm on X. Maldivian citizens labelled India's "Atmanirbhar Tourism" move as "delusional," leading to a wave of tour cancellations by Indian tourists with calls of 'Boycott Maldives' and 'ExploreIndianIslands' on social media platform. The controversy prompted over 500,000 Google searches about Lakshadweep in a single day. While three Maldivian ministers faced suspension for making derogatory comments, the recent dispute raises concerns given the World Bank's caution about the nation's vulnerability due to heavy reliance on tourism.

The current dependence on tourism exacerbates these issues, and potential mass cancellations by Indian tourists pose a significant risk to economic stability.

Misinformation galore as Epstein case file unfolds

Kushal Varma J V

Jeffrey Epstein's case file has become one of the most sensational cases in recent American history. It is not without the typical badge of the modern social media era namely rampant misinformation and insinuations about celebs.

On 18 December 2023, District Court Judge Loretta A Preska ordered the unsealing of documents about the Giuffre v. Maxwell defamation lawsuit dating back to 21 September 2015. The plaintiff, Virginia Giuffre was one of the alleged sex trafficking victims of Ghislaine Maxwell (defendant) and her long-term partner Epstein. The court files were subsequently unsealed in batches from January 3-5 2024, now dubbed the 'Epstein list'. So far about 200 documents have been released with many more yet to be released. The documents outline how Epstein, an American financier,



Ghislaine Maxwell (left) and Jeffrey Epstein (right)

News Week

carried out his sex trafficking operations of underage girls both on the Little Saint James island and around the world.

Epstein was known to have connections with politicians, billionaires and academicians. High-profile names mentioned in the files included: Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and Prince Andrew. However, it

is important to note that the documents include no new names concerning Epstein's criminal activities. Some names remain redacted as it is currently under review.

The documents were rumoured to contain the names of Epstein's partners in crime. Due to this, many individuals have been wrongfully

implicated, including Stephen Hawking, Leonardo DiCaprio and Cate Blanchett.

Late physicist Hawking was an acquaintance of Epstein due to their shared academic background. While Jeffrey does mention in an email written to Maxwell about the late physicist participating in an 'underage orgy', it is

important to note that this allegation is not substantiated by any facts so far.

Similarly, the names of Hollywood stars DiCaprio and Blanchett were mentioned as a part of questioning during one of the testimonies. The victim was asked if she happened to have met the celebrities whilst giving a massage to Epstein as press reports suggested that the victim had met them.

Despite former US President Bill Clinton's infamous past, in the context of this case, there has been no concrete evidence incriminating him. It is known that he had visited Epstein's island on several occasions, however, no testimony has been made of him indulging in any 'sexual acts' with minors. The closest thing we have to a testimony is Johanna Sjoberg's (another victim of Epstein) deposition, according to which, Epstein told her, "Clinton likes them young, referring to girls."

JN. 1 variant may hamper metro finances

Dattarya Dutta

BENGALURU: Metro rail services across the metropolitan cities in India, barely one year out of the woods from the pandemic shock, are yet again staring at a loss, thanks to the JN.1 variant of Omicron Covid-19. After posting a modest profit in FY 22-23, they are experiencing sluggish growth in the current fiscal year.

According to the annual reports released by major metro rail corporations such as Delhi Metro, Bangalore Metro and Chennai Metro, they earned profits of 3,389.13 crores, 376.88 crores and

Metro Corporations	Revenue earned in crores			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Delhi Metro Corporation	3,389	632	1,597	682
Bangalore Metro Corporation	376.88	49.19	163.33	89.89
Chennai Metro Corporation	119.25	30.08	85.34	44.25
Kochi Metro Corporation	56.77	12.9	30.8	15.24

Revenue earned by Bengaluru, Delhi and Chennai from FY 2019-2023 PIB

119.25 crores respectively in the FY 2019-2020. However, during the Covid years, the earnings went into the red: The earnings dipped to 682.93 cr, 89.89 crores 44.25 crores in FY 2021-2022

for Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai Metro Corporations. This is primarily attributed to the shutting down of metro services for six months in FY 2020-2021 and two months in FY 2021-2022.

Post resumption of metro services, in FY 2021-2022

and 2022-2023 there was a slight increase in profits but the margin was significantly lower as compared to pre-Covid years. This was due to lower footfall which could be because of multiple factors like the cautious mood of the public during the Covid and various sectors switching to work from home.

Now with the JN.1 variant around, people could again be hesitant to travel in public transport, as jam-packed as metros. This could possibly further curb this slow recovery made by metro rail corporations across the country.

Psychologist advocates trauma awareness

Sadhika Das Gupta

Experts opine that schools can play a core role in mitigating the risks of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among children.

Speaking to The Beacon, Dr Alisha Lalljee, a specialist in counselling psychology and special education, emphasised the need for an open discussion to foster healing and support for those suffering from PTSD.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a trauma that deeply impacts the youth. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, nearly 48,994 Indian students tragically took their own lives between 2019-2022.

"Schools first need to explain the meaning of PTSD and also talk about the different traumatic events that a person can see in their lives," she stated.

Dr Lalljee strongly asserts that it is essentially important for school systems to implement active measures addressing PTSD in students by providing teachers with the necessary knowledge to identify signs or symptoms and bring them to the attention of the parents.

CKP to receive 50 lakh grant

Shoaib Shakeel

BENGALURU: At the inauguration of the 21st Chitra Santhe, CM Siddharamaiah announced a grant of 50 lakhs for Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (CKP) on Sunday. Speaking at the inauguration CM Siddharamaiah mentioned it was a pride to welcome all the 1600 artists from 22 states on behalf of Karnataka.

Chitra Santhe translates as "art market" is a platform for multiple artists to showcase their art and talents. First held in 2003 by CKP, it attracts near about 3-4 lakh art enthusiasts every year.



Representational Image

oneindiakannada.com

"The dedication of Chitra Santhe to space scientists this time shows the special respect paid to them," CM said. He stated that the government will provide all the necessary assistance required to establish museums and art galleries in all

districts of Karnataka

BL Shankar, president of Chitra Kala Parishad, Prabhakar vice president, Ministers HK Patil and Dr MC Sudhakar and MLAs Rizwan Arshad, and Ajay Singh were present at the occasion.

Culinary mass murder

Kessiah Joseph

Director Christo Tomy's, Curry and Cyanide is a crime documentary which unravels the mysteries of the deaths of several members of the Ponnammattom family. This documentary encapsulates the complexity of the case through the lens of those intimately connected to the tragedy. BA Aloor, the criminal lawyer is also a part of the piece to suggest the potential defense. It sparks discussions about the role of presumption of innocence and the importance of a

fair trial. The inclusion of journalists and other experts helps in navigating through the complexities of the issue. The dark atmospheric music aids in intensifying the scenes. The low-angle shots complemented by the dim colour grading add to the gloomy atmosphere. The excellent sound design also helps in immersion. The psychopath's story unveiled by the end leaves a bitter taste in your mouth. Deeds of the guilty permeate a rather misanthropic theme, making one lose faith in humanity.