The police recovered 2.14 kg of charas, 1.79 kg of ganja, and other valuables worth ₹43.87 lakh from the suspect

According to the police, their team was on regular patrol. Meanwhile, constable Yogesh Mandhre got a tip-off about Arora. Acting on the tip-off, Assistant Inspector Nitin Kumar Nayak and his team from the Anti-Narcotics Cell laid a trap in the Bharati Vidyapeeth area and arrested him. The police said they recovered 2.14 kg of charas, 1.79 kg of ganja, and other valuables worth Rs43.87 lakh from Arora.

Regarding the matter, a case has been registered at the Bharati Vidyapeeth Police Station under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

dents and residents have to travel in jam-packed city buses with no space to even breathe, commuters allege. Rupesh Sarode, a resident of Kothrud, mostly takes bus no 99 (Kothrud-Vishrantwadi) on weekends. Speaking about the harrowing experience, Sarode told The Free Press Journal (FPJ) that he believes fewer buses plying on the route is the cause of overcrowding. "Due to a lot of stoppages, commuters experience jerking due to the brake being applied. More buses should be deployed, especially for long routes," Sarode said.

Expressing his frustration with overcrowding and ticketing issues, Chaitanya Ket, a Kothrud resident, said, "Commuting by bus has become nearly impossible. Today, I took a bus from Hinjawadi to PMC, and it was overcrowded." Highlighting the ticketing issue, Ket told the FPJ, "Passengers were

requesting online payment options, but the process was time-consuming for the visibly frustrated conductor. Most passengers were handing him Rs100, Rs200 or Rs500 notes, but what choice do they have when online payments have become the norm and cash circulation is minimal?"

"The bus was packed, with passengers crammed together. At each stop, people rushed to board the bus, some even hanging outside. It's especially challenging for women to get in and out of the buses, but it felt like navigating an obstacle course in a Takeshi's Castle game," he added. "The bus itself was in

poor condition, rattling with noise and jerking, as if it could break down at any moment. As I looked out at the roads lined with flex banners, the smiling faces of visionary leaders stared back at us. They were smiling at us," Ket further added. Another resident, Shubham Kshirsagar, pointed out, "Overcrowding has been the second name or synonym of public transport in our country for a long time. Two years ago, Delhi HC expressed concern about this and sought a report from the Union Government, but the situation remains the same."

PMPML officials acknowledge the issue and they

expect the induction of new buses by the end of the month will help increase frequency to curb overcrowding. Speaking to the FPJ, Santosh Gavhane, Chief Transport Manager (Operations), PMPML, said, "There is a shortage of buses. We have a population of around 75-80 lakh, including PMC, PMRDA, and PCMC areas. However, currently, we have around 2,000 buses and for a population of one lakh, we should have at least 50-60 buses. We are making a plan to increase the frequency of these buses and by the end of this month 400 new CNG buses will be inducted into the fleet."

Quick Heal Foundation impacts 64.78 lakh lives

Staff Reporter
PUNE

Quick Heal Foundation, the CSR arm of Quick Heal Technologies Limited, held the 2025 edition of the 'Cyber Shiksha for Cyber Suraksha Awards on Jan 12 in Pune. This event celebrated the exceptional contributions of volunteering institutions, teachers and students dedicated to promoting cyber safety and awareness across India. The event was graced by the presence of Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan, Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University's Vice-Chancellor Prakash Mahanwar, along with Anupama Katkar, the chief of operational excellence at Quick Heal and chairperson of Quick Heal Foundation. The occasion was also attended by Quick Heal's leadership team, including Kailash Katkar, the chairman and managing Director, Sanjay Katkar, joint managing director, and Vishal Salvi, CEO.

The initiative focuses on empowering youth with essential skills in leadership, presentation and digital edu-

cation while offering a platform to build confidence. Aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Digital India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', the programme provides marginalised communities with vital cyber safety knowledge. Through innovative outreach methods such as street plays, workshops and digital campaigns, the initiative has reached millions, establishing partnerships with over 120 institutions, training 4,600+ Cyber Warriors and sensitising more than 55.92 lakh students across schools and colleges. Its expansion into 12 states under the 'Earn and Learn' programme and efforts in 13 states via street plays highlight its growing impact. Aligned with the United

Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 17, the initiative works towards bridging the digital literacy gap and promoting responsible online behaviour.

The awards this year celebrated the remarkable contributions of teachers, club officers and institutions who have shown exceptional leadership and commitment to promoting cyber safety. These efforts reiterate the initiative's ongoing dedication to empowering youth as catalysts of change and creating a safer digital environment. Volunteering teachers were recognised under categories such as the Best Principal Award, which honours visionary leaders who foster stakeholder engagement and

impactful outreach, and the Best Teacher Award, which celebrates coordinators guiding students with exemplary dedication. Club officers (students) were celebrated for their leadership and contributions, with accolades like the Best Performing Team Award for outstanding outreach and engagement, the Best President Award for driving innovation and effective leadership, and the Best Community Director Award for impactful community activities. Likewise volunteering institutions were also honoured for their contributions, including the Best New Club Award for outstanding performance by recently joined institutions and the Cyber Smart Club Award for excellence in educating commu-

nities through a mix of online and offline efforts. The Best Club Overall Award was presented to a top-performing institution that demonstrated exceptional leadership and exceeded expectations in its outreach initiatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Anupama Katkar emphasised, "Our journey of fostering a cyber-safe environment continues to grow stronger, with youth empowerment and development at the core. Today's achievements highlight the dedication, resilience, and creativity of our participants—who represent the future leaders of our country, committed to creating a cyber-safe India. It fills me with immense pride and gratitude to witness the unwavering commitment of students, teachers and institutions in spreading the message of cyber safety. Their efforts not only protect individuals but also strengthen the very fabric of our digital society. Together, we are shaping tomorrow's cyber guardians, inspiring change, and empowering communities with knowledge and hope for a more secure and prosperous future."

TEENAGER CRASHES CAR INTO SHOP

Staff Reporter
PUNE

A 19-year-old, without a driving licence, drove a car at high speed and crashed into a shop, breaking through its shutter and damaging 28 fridges and laptops inside, resulting in a loss of Rs11.52 lakh. As the shop was closed, there were no casualties.

The incident occurred at around 3.30am on Sunday at the Maharashtra Electronic on Tilak Road. Manmit Singh Harbansingh Chhabra (47) filed a complaint at Vishrambaug Police Station. Based on this complaint, the police have registered a case against Shivputra Kamlakar Bel (19), a resident of Kalepadal.

According to the police, Bel was driving at a high speed from Alka Cinema Hall towards SP College. After crossing Sahitya Parishad

Maha Cyber Dept prevents two suicides

Poonam Apraj
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Cyber Department, the state's nodal agency for cybercrime and security, recently intervened in two alarming incidents involving cyber harassment and blackmail through loan applications in the Pune district. In both cases, swift action by cyber analysts and

local police saved the victims from attempting suicide.

In the first case, a 22-year-old man from Pune borrowed Rs2,800 through a loan app and repaid it, yet continued to face extortion calls demanding more money. When he refused, the perpetrators shared explicit, morphed photos of a female relative with his family via WhatsApp. The traumatised victim called

the Maharashtra Cyber Helpline 14407, expressing suicidal thoughts. Cyber analysts immediately contacted the local police station, leading to prompt action that ensured his safety.

In a separate incident, a 35-year-old man borrowed Rs5,060 for medical expenses. Despite agreeing to a monthly EMI of Rs1,700, the loan app doubled the repay-

ment demand. Upon his refusal, the fraudsters threatened to circulate explicit photos. The victim contacted the helpline, sharing his distress and suicidal intentions. Cyber analysts flagged the case as "severe blackmailing" and alerted both the police station and control room, resulting in immediate intervention and protection for the victim.

┤ **focus on SDGs** ├

Countdown to 'I Love Panchgani Fe

Rambhau Jagtap
SATARA

The countdown for the "I Love Panchgani Festival", a celebration showcasing various artistic expressions, has officially begun. This year, the festival, which will take place from Jan 17 to 19, has garnered significant enthusiasm as students from local

High School, in collaboration with the Panchgani festival, this annual event aims to promote tourism, boost local businesses, and increase the visibility of Panchgani.

Since its inception in 2015, the people of Panchgani have celebrated the "I Love Panchgani Festival" as a way to bring together creativity, culture, and the community.