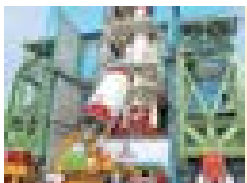




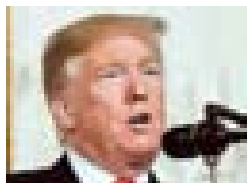
Congress will fight all seats in A.P. alone, says Oommen Chandy

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PSLV all set to launch defence imaging satellite today

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Donald Trump in no mood to postpone State of the Union address

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Kuldeep, Chahal and Shami set up India's big win in Napier ODI

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NEARBY



Hearing on CBI chief appointment today

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a petition to bring the CBI Director's entire appointment process under public scrutiny and make it accessible under the RTI Act. The petition, filed by NGO Common Cause and Anjali Bhardwaj, is coming up before the Bench led by Justice A.K. Sikri.

NEWS ► PAGE 10

Supreme Court denies bail to Unitech promoters

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to grant bail to Unitech Ltd. promoters Sanjay Chandra and his brother Ajay Chandra in a case relating to alleged siphoning off homebuyers' money.

DELHI METRO ► PAGE 1

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DELHI METRO ► 6 PAGES

## Rahul appoints Priyanka as Congress general secretary

In a major party reshuffle, she has been put in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress appointed Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as general secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh as part of a major reshuffle on Wednesday. The appointment not only gives a formal role to Ms. Vadra, it also makes her a member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party's highest decision-making body.

In an unprecedented move, Congress president Rahul Gandhi split the organisational responsibilities for Uttar Pradesh – a State with 80 Lok Sabha seats – between his sister and senior leader Jyotiraditya Scindia. Kerala MP K.C. Venugopal has been appointed to the key post of general secretary (organisation) in place of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and senior leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was looking after U.P., will now handle Haryana.

### Stronghold of BJP

Ms. Vadra's appointment came as a surprise to many within the party and was announced soon after the Congress was kept out of the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party alliance. Eastern Uttar Pradesh is known as a stronghold of the BJP, and both Prime Minister Na-



Into the arena, finally: With Wednesday's move, Priyanka Vadra also becomes a member of the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

rendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have contested from the area.

So far, Ms. Vadra used to manage her mother, Sonia Gandhi's Lok Sabha constituency, Raebareilly, even though she is known to have been consulted on key political issues. Party sources said the decision was taken by the family, with only a select few leaders kept in the loop. While Mr. Gandhi has been looking at feedback from workers via the Shakti App

run by the party, this particular decision was very much his own. "UP is central to building a new hope-filled & compassionate India. The new UP AICC team led by Priyanka & Jyotiraditya, will herald the dawn of a new kind of politics in the State. We will offer the youth in UP a dynamic new platform to transform the State," Mr. Gandhi tweeted.

TOUGH MESSAGE ► PAGE 11  
MORE REPORTS ► PAGE 11

### What's new, asks BJP

"Good luck to Priyanka. These kind of postings are nothing unusual in that party, except to say with a caveat as to why she has been given the limited role of Eastern U.P. Her persona merited a much wider role," said Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.

'FAMILY IS PARTY' ► PAGE 11

### Oral mentions in SC will soon be history

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is drafting new guidelines that would help ensure that urgent cases automatically come up before a Bench for hearing within four days of their being filed, obviating the need for lawyers to appear before the Chief Justice of India to orally mention their cases for urgent listing.

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Wednesday informed the crowded courtroom that new norms had been settled by which urgent cases would automatically come up before a Bench for hearing.

### 'Time gets lost'

"We are trying to get rid of urgent mentioning before the court, which unnecessarily takes away time," the Chief Justice said.

The CJI added that if such cases did not come up for hearing, the lawyers concerned could make a mention before the Registrar to have their cases listed.

Oral mentioning is a convention by which lawyers circumvent the long-winded filing procedures and make a direct appeal to the CJI, who is the court's administrative head and master of the roster, for early hearing.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

## Police bust plot to poison food, water

Maharashtra ATS arrests 8 suspects



**Shocking claim:** The terror suspects being produced in a court in Aurangabad on Wednesday. ■ YOGESH LONDHE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Questioning of the nine persons picked up over the last three days by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad has indicated that the terror suspects may have been planning to poison food and water sources at public gatherings, investigators claimed.

The ATS nabbed four suspects from Aurangabad and five from Mumbai, for allegedly planning terrorist activities in the State and elsewhere.

Eight of the accused were placed under arrest in the early hours of Wednesday.

A local court in Aurangabad later in the day remanded eight suspects to police custody till February 5, while one minor suspect was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board.

The arrested accused

have been identified as Mohseen Khan, Salman Khan, Taki Khan, Fahad Shah, Zamen Kutepadi, Mohammad Mazhar Shaikh, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Zahid Shaikh and a 17-year-old.

**Chemicals seized**  
Mohseen, Salman and Taki are brothers, whose main task was to recruit and radicalise young men. They created a social media group called Ummat-e-Mohammadiya (followers/disciples of Prophet Muhammad) for the purpose.

The ATS seized several bottles of chemicals, including hydrogen peroxide, from the suspects. It said it wanted to question the accused if they were out to execute a chemical attack on the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj or Republic Day events.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

## CBI books ex-AI chief on corruption charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has booked Arvind Jadhav, a former Air India Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD), and others for allegedly promoting an official against rules and also favouring three other subordinates in getting pecuniary advantage.

Those named in the FIR are Mr. Jadhav, L.P. Nakhwa, the then general manager (Medical Services); Captain A. Kathpalia, then additional general manager (Operations); Captain Amitabh Singh, then additional general manager (Operations); and Captain Rohit Bhasin, the then additional general manager (Opera-

tions) of Air India. Mr. Jadhav showed "undue favour to Dr. (Ms.) L.P. Nakhwa by promoting her against the rules and including her name in the selection panel," says the FIR.

"Mr. Jadhav also entered into a criminal conspiracy with other unknown officers of Air India to favour three selected GMs – Capt. A. Kathpalia, Capt. Amitabh Singh and Capt. Rohit Bhasin – through which these members were able to get pecuniary advantage," the FIR said.

It was alleged that Mr. Jadhav constituted an illegal promotion panel to recommend candidates for promotion to the post of General Manager (Operations).

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

## Goyal gets additional charge of Finance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday announced it has given Railways and Coal Minister Piyush Goyal the additional charge of the Ministry of Finance while Arun Jaitley recovers his health.

"The President of India, as advised by the Prime Minister, hereby directed that during the period of indisposition of Shri Arun Jaitley, Minister, the portfolios of Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs held by him, be temporarily assigned to Shri Piyush Goyal, in addition to his existing portfolios," the government said in a statement. The statement added that, as advised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

Mr. Jaitley would be designated as a Minister without portfolio during the period of his indisposition or till the time he is able to resume work.

With just about a week left for the presentation of the Vote on Account on February 1, Mr. Goyal's appointment as the Finance Minister makes it extremely likely that he will present it.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jaitley, who is currently in the U.S. for medical treatment, has undergone surgery at a hospital in New York on Tuesday, sources said. He has been advised at least two weeks rest by the doctors, the sources added. This is the second time Mr. Goyal has taken over from Mr. Jaitley due to the latter's health.

## Collegium best system, but needs tweaking: Lokur

Ex-SC judge 'disappointed' over resolution on judges' elevation not being made public

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Retired Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur on Wednesday said he was disappointed that the Collegium's resolution to elevate Justice Pradeep Nandrajog and Justice Rajendra Menon as apex court judges was not put up in the public domain.

Justice Lokur was a member of the five-judge Supreme Court Collegium which had on December 12 last year recommended the names of the sitting Chief Justices of Delhi and Rajasthan High Courts for elevation to the Supreme Court.

### Supersession of judges

Ten days after his retirement on December 31, a newly constituted Collegium decided to drop the two names and instead elevated Delhi High Court judge Sanjiv Khanna and Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court Justice Dinesh Maheshwari by su-



Justice Madan B. Lokur

perseding over 30 senior judges.

"Once a resolution is passed, it is uploaded on the website. It does disappoint me that it (December 12 resolution) was not put up on the website," Justice Lokur said, but clarified that he was not "privy" to the additional material that led to change in the decision of the Collegium.

Justice Lokur was speaking at an interaction on 'State of the Indian Judiciary' organised by a legal opinion portal.

He pointed out that the

contentious Memorandum of Procedure, for appointment of higher court judges, was silent on many things, including details of eligibility criteria. He, however, supported the Collegium system saying that "in the existing circumstances, it was the best system. But it needs tweaking".

During the session, Justice Lokur was asked why judges whose names were rejected by the Collegium were not good enough to be promoted to the Supreme Court but were okay to continue as High Court Chief Justices.

Responding to the question, Justice Lokur said, "A person may be a good Chief Justice of a High Court, but not a good Supreme Court judge."

Referring to the row over delayed elevation of Justice K.M. Joseph to the Supreme Court, Justice Lokur said that the government may sit on a file if it does not want

the person to be elevated.

"Everybody knows the government has been sitting on some files. There has to be some mechanism by which timelines which are laid down are adhered to," he said.

### 'Nothing wrong'

Justice Lokur said there was "nothing wrong" in Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending a dinner hosted by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi in November last year as it was for a convention of judges from BIMSTEC countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Thailand.

Justice Lokur, who was part of the controversial presser held in January last year by four sitting judges of the apex court against the then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, said "it was worth it". "It has brought about some openness in the system," he said.

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