



Godhra case accused
Yakub Patalia awarded
life imprisonment

Page 7



I turn abuses into
ornaments and move
forward, says Modi

Page 10



British PM Theresa May
requests three-month
extension for Brexit deal

Page 12

Chennai City FC
officially crowned
I-League champion

Page 16



NEARBY



Kejriwal mocks Modi over
chowkidar campaign

NEW DELHI

Reacting to the BJP's 'Main Bhi Chowkidar' campaign, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said on Wednesday that people should vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi if they want their children to become chowkidars or watchmen.

DELHI METRO ► PAGE 1

CRPF jawan kills three
colleagues in J&K

NEW DELHI

Three CRPF personnel were killed on Wednesday after a colleague allegedly fired at them after an altercation at their camp in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

NEWS ► PAGE 10

DELHI METRO ► 6 PAGES

Nirav Modi's free run ends, held without bail in London

Judge says there are substantial grounds to believe he will fail to surrender

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

Indian diamond businessman Nirav Modi, accused in the ₹13,000 crore Punjab National Bank fraud case, was denied bail here on Wednesday, despite offering the court assurances including ₹500,000 as security.

The hearing before district judge Marie Mallon took place a day after Modi was arrested at a bank branch in London by the Metropolitan Police.

Following a brief recess to consider matters, the judge said that she wasn't inclined to give Modi bail because of the "high value amount" involved in the allegations against him and the "substantial grounds" for believing he would "fail to surrender" before the court if bail were granted.

During the midday hearing, Modi told the court that he did not give his consent to India's efforts to extradite him. (As part of Britain's extradition process, the question had to be put to him formally.)

His legal team represented by George Hepburne Scott, an extradition barrister at Church Court Chambers, pointed to a number of factors to highlight his commitment to the U.K. including the fact that his son had been at school here for the



Closer to extradition: Diamantaire Nirav Modi, accused in the PNB fraud case, left India last January. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

past five years, as well as the fact that he was attending "education courses" in the U.K. and was a regular taxpayer.

He was working on a salary of £20,000 a month for Diamond Holdings — a private limited company listed in Harrow — and had a National Insurance number, the details of which were presented with payslips to the court.

Mr. Hepburne Scott said Modi strongly contested the allegations against him and had prepared comprehensive arguments to support his case, pointing to political motivations involved in the case against him and human rights considerations.

They had for months now expressed their willingness to cooperate and been in

touch with extradition authorities, it was also argued. They also noted he had no documents to travel on. It emerged that he had had three Indian passports, all revoked by India, as well as residency cards for the UAE, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Conspiracy charges

However, the Crown Prosecution Service — making representations on behalf of India as it did with the Vijay Mallya extradition — objected to the request for bail. Highlighting the U.K. domestic laws that would apply to him, the prosecution said that he would be liable on charges of conspiracy to defraud and a conspiracy to conceal here.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

Court issues NBW against Nirav's wife

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A special court in Mumbai on Wednesday issued a non-bailable warrant against diamond merchant Nirav Modi's wife Ami, against whom the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had recently filed a chargesheet alleging she had a role in money laundering, along with others, in the Punjab National Bank fraud case.

The court also allowed the auction of 68 paintings and 11 vehicles.

The proceeds will be deposited in the Enforcement Directorate's account.

"In all, 173 paintings belonging to Camelot Enterprises Private Limited (beneficially owned by Nirav Modi) were seized by the Income Tax authorities during the probe for recovery of tax dues to the tune of ₹95.91 crore.

The paintings, valued at ₹57.72 crore, were provisionally attached by the ED," said an official.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

Aseemanand, three others acquitted in Samjhauta case

NIA fails to prove charges against 2007 train blasts accused

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PANCHKULA

A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court on Wednesday acquitted four people, including main accused Swami Aseemanand, in the 2007 Samjhauta train bombing case.

Advocate Mukesh Garg, one of the counsel for Swami Aseemanand, told reporters that the court had acquitted all the accused as the prosecution was not able to prove the allegations.

"The court said that the NIA has not been able to establish any charges against the accused," said Mr. Garg.

68 passengers killed

The blasts on the Samjhauta Express, near Panipat, on February 18, 2007, and the subsequent fire in the coaches killed 68 passengers and injured a dozen. Those killed included Indian civilians and government officials, besides a large number of Pakistani nationals.

Apart from Aseemanand, a former Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) member, the others acquitted were Kamal Chauhan, Rajinder Chaudhary and Lokesh Sharma. All the accused were present when the order was passed by NIA special judge Jagdeep Singh.



Not guilty: A file photo of Swami Aseemanand, the prime accused in the Samjhauta train bombing case. •PTI

Earlier, the court dismissed an application filed by a Pakistani woman in connection with the case.

On March 11, Rahila Wakeel, a Pakistani national and daughter of one of the victims of the blasts, filed a petition through advocate Momin Malik, to get her statement recorded as witness in the 12-year-old case. NIA counsel Rajan Malhotra said the application was dismissed as the court ruled it "devoid of any merit."

Mr. Malik told *The Hindu*

that after discussions with his client, the next legal step would be taken. "If she wants to file an application in the High Court regarding getting her statement recorded as witness, I will do it," he said.

The initial investigation in the blast case was carried out by the Railway Police and the Haryana Police. Later, the Union Home Ministry handed over the probe to the NIA in July 2010.

MORE REPORTS ► PAGE 7

Bihar seat-sharing deal ready: Tejashwi Yadav

Announcement likely tomorrow

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

After hectic parleys among the 'mahagathbandhan' (Grand Alliance) constituents in Delhi for several days, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav said here on Wednesday that the seat-sharing deal would be announced after Holi.

"The 'mahagathbandhan' is intact. Everything is fine," Mr. Yadav told the media after reaching Patna from Delhi.

Party leaders told *The Hindu* that he may announce the seat-sharing deal on March 22. Mr. Yadav was camping in Delhi for the last several days and meeting leaders of the constituent partners to reach a final agreement



Tejashwi Yadav

RJD leaders said his talks with Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday night finally broke the stalemate, and the numbers for each alliance partner were settled.

RJD LIKELY TO CONTEST 20 SEATS, CONGRESS 9 ► PAGE 10

Congress refuses to give up 11 Bengal seats

Prospects of deal with Left disappear

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Prospects of an electoral understanding between the Left Front and the Congress in West Bengal disappeared on Wednesday, with the latter refusing to compromise on 11 seats for which it has announced candidates.

'No scope'

"From our end there is no scope for rethinking," Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Pradip Bhattacharya said here.

Earlier this week, the Congress announced candidates for the 11 seats, including Raiganj and Murshidabad that were won by the Left Front in 2014.

In a last-ditch attempt to salvage a deal, the Left Front on Tuesday did not



Pradip Bhattacharya

announce candidates for four seats won by the Congress in 2014 — Bahrampur, Jangipur, Malda North and Malda South.

However, it announced candidates for 38 out of the 42 seats in the State.

CPI(M) FAULTS CONG. ► PAGE 10

Celebrating colours



Festive fervour: Welcoming the spring season, people celebrate Holi, the festival of colours, at the historic Govind Devji Temple in Jaipur on Wednesday. In most parts of India, Holi will be celebrated on Thursday. •ROHIT JAIN PARAS

Mayawati not to contest Lok Sabha poll

'Sacrifice for larger goal of uprooting arrogant, despotic, communal, casteist BJP govt.'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VARANASI

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati said here on Wednesday that she would not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha election as a "sacrifice" for the larger goal of uprooting the "arrogant, despotic, communal and casteist" BJP government.

She said if she were in the fray, the party workers would lose their focus.

"Therefore, more important than me winning is to win each and every seat in the State, which will provide force to our party's mission of social justice and economic liberation," Ms. Mayawati told the media.

The former UP Chief Minister said the decision was taken in the interest of the nation and the people, and keeping in mind the long-



More important than me winning is to win each and every seat in Uttar Pradesh, says Mayawati

term goals of the BSP movement run on the ideals of B.R. Ambedkar and Kanshiram.

Workers disappointed

Her announcement came as a disappointment to the BSP workers and her supporters

who had hoped that with her contesting, the party's campaign would get galvanised, unlike in 2014 when the BSP paid the price of not having a clear goal. Ms. Mayawati, a former MP and MLA as well, said she expected her workers to honour the "farsight-

edness and sacrifice" made by "apni behenji."

She tweeted appealing to the workers to not get disheartened. "When I became UP CM [for the] first time in 1995 I was not a member of either the UP Assembly or Council. Similarly [there] is [a] provision at the Centre where a person has to be an LS/RS member within 6 months of holding office of minister/PM," she said.

Ms. Mayawati also hinted that she could get elected to Parliament after the elections and claimed that she could contest from any seat she liked after getting it vacated.

"It is certain that I would only have to go there to file the nomination, and the responsibility of the victory will be borne by the people," she said.

Consumer panel junks suicide theory, asks insurance firm to pay over ₹5 cr.

'Onus on insurer to prove that the person died by suicide'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

After finding that a man, who had insured himself for ₹5 crore, did not die of suicide, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has directed Birla Sun Life Insurance company to pay the insured amount plus 8% interest to his family.

Ajay Gupta had taken a life insurance policy from Birla Sun Life in 2008 for an assured sum of ₹5 crore. The policy lapsed, but was later reinstated in June 2010. He died on December 1, 2010.

A post-mortem on his body was conducted at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital and his viscera was sent to Forensic Science Laboratory. An FIR was registered at the Adarsh Nagar police station

against two persons for culpable homicide not amounting to murder. However, the two persons were acquitted by the trial court.

Claim for payment

The family of Mr. Gupta, who is survived by his wife, two children and mother, lodged a claim for payment of the benefit under the policy taken by him.

Birla Sun Life declined the insurance claim saying that Mr. Gupta had died by suicide within one year of reinstatement of the policy. The company argued that the insurance policy contains a clause which states that if a person dies by suicide within one year of renewal of the policy, no benefit in terms of the insurance policy would

be payable.

The Commission noted that since it was the insurer that sought to bring the case under the exception contained in the insurance policy, the onus was upon it to prove that the person concerned had died by suicide.

While the case of the insurer is that Mr. Gupta had died by suicide by consuming poison, the Commission remarked that "there is no suicide note. There is no witness who may have seen the deceased consuming poison".

The Commission relied upon the viscera report issued by FSL and the final opinion given by the Department of Forensic Medicine at DDU Hospital that there was no evidence of consumption of cyanide by Mr. Gupta.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The harried pilots of Jet Airways, which is on the brink of shuttering operations, have now approached SpiceJet seeking employment.

Jet Airways pilots had earlier been wooed by IndiGo with compensation for their pending salaries and other benefits, leading to murmurs of protests from its own pilots. The airline has been facing acute shortage of cockpit crew, leading to cancellation of hundreds of its flights last month. The Gurugram-based SpiceJet, which has all its 12 Boeing Max planes grounded following the crash of an Ethiopian Airline plane early this month, is looking to hire pilots for its expansion plans.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 7