



NEARBY



AAP sends legal notice to BJP, Gambhir

NEW DELHI
AAP has sent a legal notice to BJP and its East Delhi candidate Gautam Gambhir, threatening "legal proceedings" for allegedly circulating offensive pamphlets against Atishi.

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'Advan's threat stalled sacking of Modi in 2002'

BHOPAL
Yashwant Sinha on Friday claimed the then PM A.B. Vajpayee was set to dismiss Narendra Modi as Gujarat CM after the 2002 riots, but withheld the decision as L.K. Advani threatened to resign from the Cabinet.

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Ground Zero

Picking up the pieces

Cyclone Fani battered Bhubaneswar and Puri last week, leaving behind a trail of destruction. A report on the efforts of the government and relief teams to restore normalcy.

OP-ED PAGE

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Supreme Court extends Ayodhya mediation till Aug. 15

Panel claims 'progress' in talks; next meeting with stakeholders to be held in June

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A five-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, on Friday gave the Supreme Court-appointed mediation committee time till August 15 to continue with its efforts to resolve the prolonged and strife-ridden Ayodhya title dispute.

"We do not want to short-circuit the mediation process. We will extend the time in order to enable the committee to complete the task assigned to it," Chief Justice Gogoi addressed the parties in the courtroom.

Interim report

The committee filed an interim report, dated May 7, with the Constitution Bench.

Sources said the panel conveyed that "progress" was being made in the talks, and it was meeting with the parties. The next meeting is in June.

The panel of mediators comprises former Supreme Court Justice F.M.I. Kalifulla, as Chairman; spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar; and senior advocate Sriram Panchu, a pioneer in alternative dispute resolution, as members.

The court sent the dispute for mediation on March 8 in a bid to heal minds and hearts. It gave the panel an

For a negotiated solution



■ Ayodhya dispute sent by five-judge Bench for mediation on March 8, in a bid to heal minds and hearts. The initial deadline was eight weeks

■ Mediators comprise former SC judge F.M.I. Kalifulla, who is the Chairman, spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and

senior advocate Sriram Panchu, a pioneer in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms

■ Panel filed interim report dated May 7 with Constitution Bench, conveying "progress" in talks. It has held several meetings with stakeholders in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh, where the disputed site is located. Next meeting is in June

We do not want to short-circuit the mediation process. We will extend the time in order to enable the committee to complete the task assigned to it

— CHIEF JUSTICE
RANJAN
GOGOI



initial deadline of eight weeks.

The eight weeks was the time given to the Muslim parties to examine the accuracy and relevance of the Uttar Pradesh government's official translation of thousands of pages of oral depositions and exhibits in the title suit appeals pending since 2010 in the court. In fact, the court had invoked Section 89 of the Civil Procedure Code to propose mediation as an "effective utilisation of time" during the interregnum.

"The report says the mediation process is on... We are inclined to grant them [the panel] time," Chief Justice Gogoi remarked.

The committee held several rounds of mediation

with the stakeholders in Faizabad district, and the mediation proceedings were held in camera.

The court had stressed the need for "utmost confidentiality" in the mediation to ensure its success.

No reporting by media

It had gone to the extent of opining that the media should refrain from reporting the mediation proceedings. "We are of the further opinion that while the mediation proceedings are being carried out, there ought not to be any reporting of the said proceedings either in the print or in the electronic media," it said.

The CJJ had expressed the hope that mediation might spell a peaceful end to the

volatile dispute between the members of the two religious faiths.

The court took the step despite objections raised by some Hindu parties that their faith in Lord Ram's birthplace is "non-negotiable".

The Bench had explained that the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case "is not about the 1,500 sq ft of disputed land, but about religious sentiments. We know its impact on public sentiment, on body politic. We are looking at minds, hearts and healing if possible".

The court allowed the appellants to file objections in the translation of over 13,900 pages of documents that are part of the case as evidence.

Why no FIR on Rafale deal complaint: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Justice K.M. Joseph on Friday asked the government why there was still no FIR registered on a corruption complaint made to the CBI in October last year in connection with the 36 Rafale jets deal.

"Question here is whether you are obliged under the law to register an FIR when a complaint is made," Justice Joseph asked Attorney General K.K. Venugopal. The queries came during a two-hour hearing at the end of which the Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, reserved the Rafale review petitions for judgment.

The complaint was made in October under various provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act. Justice Joseph referred to a Constitution Bench judgment in the Lalithakumari case, which held that the police or a statutory authority like the CBI was duty-bound to file an FIR and investigate a complaint. If later no *prima facie* case was made out, the probe could be closed and a copy of the report given to the complainant.

However, the complaint filed by review petitioners with 70-odd pages of documents is yet to be acted upon.

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Karnataka law on SC/ST promotion quota upheld

Petitions lack substance, says Bench

Reservations are not an exception to the rule of equality of opportunity. They are rather the true fulfillment of effective and substantive equality by accounting for the structural conditions into which people are born

Establishing the position of the SCs and STs as worthy participants in affairs of governance is intrinsic to an equal citizenship

— Justice D.Y. CHANDRACHUD



LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday upheld a Karnataka law which grants reservation in promotion and consequential seniority to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in government services in the State.

A Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and D.Y. Chandrachud declared that the multiple petitions challenging the Karnataka Extension of Consequential Seniority to Government Servants Promoted on the Basis of Reservation (to the Posts in the Civil Services of the State) Act, 2018, "lack in substance".

The law protects consequential seniority from April 24, 1978.

Countering arguments that reservation in promo-

tion would affect administrative efficiency and erode merit, Justice Chandrachud, who wrote the judgment, observed that "establishing the position of the SCs and STs as worthy participants in the affairs of governance is intrinsic to an equal citizenship."

Selection method

The judge said "administrative efficiency is an outcome of the actions taken by officials after they are appointed or promoted. It is not tied to the selection method itself."

The argument that one selection method produced officials capable of taking better actions than a second method must be empirically proven, he said.

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High-voltage campaign ends in Capital

Polling for seven Lok Sabha seats tomorrow; stage set for a triangular contest

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ
NEW DELHI

The back and forth between the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress on whether or not to form an alliance ahead of the Lok Sabha election delayed the start of campaigning in the Capital, but since April 26, the last day for withdrawal of nomination, the city has witnessed high-voltage political canvassing.

The BJP and Congress organised big rallies and roadshows with senior leaders such as Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra trying to sway voters with their words and presence.

AAP, on the other hand, said its internal surveys had shown that big rallies did not have much of an impact and therefore, it did not organise



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during a roadshow in New Delhi •PTI

any major public rallies.

Star campaigners

The BJP with the help of star campaigners projected Mr. Modi as the only option for the post of Prime Minister and its campaign focused on "nationalism" and schemes like Ayushman Bharat that the Centre had introduced.

The Congress focused its

campaign on the benefits of NYAY (minimum income guarantee scheme), which it had promised to implement if elected to power. It attacked the BJP over its economic policies like demonetisation and GST that it claimed had broken the back of small businessmen in the city. The party targeted both AAP and BJP for not doing enough to prevent the sealing drive in the city.

AAP built its campaign around full statehood for Delhi. It was the first to launch its campaign in the city and announced the names of six candidates on March 2 and the last one on March 17. The BJP and Congress announced their candidates only a day before the last date of nomination to cover for the possibility of a Con-

gress-AAP alliance, which didn't materialise.

AAP divided its campaign into three phases. The first phase from March 10 to 17 included jan sabhas in which Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched the party's statehood campaign. In the second phase, between April 10 and 25, the party conducted door-to-door campaigns at the block level with an aim of reaching out to 35 lakh voters. In the last two weeks, the party organised about a dozen roadshows in all seven constituencies.

A roadshow on May 4 during which a man from the crowd climbed onto the vehicle of Mr. Kejriwal and slapped him created a major controversy, after which the security cordon around the CM was tightened.

AI to cut rates for last-minute passengers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Air India will offer a heavy discount to passengers booking a domestic flight for last-minute travel, the national carrier announced on Friday.

Air India said travellers buying a ticket within three hours of departure could benefit from its offer.

"The last-minute traveller... is often faced with very high ticket prices... The national carrier has, therefore, decided that for the domestic sector, the "very last moment inventory", i.e., the seats available within three hours of departure, would be sold at a hefty discount," according to a statement.

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Wrote to SC seeking 'different' panel in CJI case: A-G

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal on Friday told *The Hindu* that he had written to

Supreme Court judges about the constitution of a committee quite "different" from the one which was eventually formed under Justice S.A.

Bobde to examine the sexual harassment allegation against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 8

Etihad bids for minority stake in Jet Airways

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Etihad Airways on Friday submitted a binding bid to acquire additional minority stake in Jet Airways under the bank-led resolution plan to bring the Indian carrier back to life. Lenders had put 75% stake of Jet Airways on sale. The bid from Etihad, which already has 24% stake in Jet, came just before the end of the deadline for receipt of bids invited by SBI Caps.

An Etihad spokesperson said, "Etihad Airways today confirmed its interest to re-invest in a minority stake in India's Jet Airways, subject to conditions."

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IAF jets intercept Georgian plane

An-12 flying to Delhi from Karachi deviated from flight path over north Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR / NEW DELHI

A Georgian An-12 transport aircraft flying to New Delhi from Karachi was intercepted by Indian Air Force fighters as it entered Indian airspace through an unscheduled point over north Gujarat at 3.15 p.m. on Friday.

The fighter jets forced the plane to land at the Saganer International Airport, the IAF said.

However, late in the evening, IAF sources said it was a minor route violation, and the plane was allowed to take off for Delhi at 11.10 p.m.

"The aircraft neither responded on international distress frequency nor to visual



The plane intercepted by the IAF. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

signals during interception. However, when challenged, the aircraft responded and informed that it was a non-scheduled An-12 aircraft that had got airborne from Tbilisi in Georgia for Delhi, via Karachi," the IAF said in a statement. The Jaipur police

joined the investigation along with IAF and airport authorities and Central Industrial Security Force personnel.

The aircraft was parked near the State hangar for several hours. Additional Commissioner of Police Laksh-

man Gaur said "nothing incriminating" was found on the plane. He said it was not a serious violation.

The aircraft entered Indian air space with its IFF (Identification, Friend or Foe) on, but did not follow the authorised route, the IAF said.

Since Air Traffic Services routes in the area were closed due to the "current geopolitical situation" and the aircraft entered Indian air space from an unscheduled point, the IAF said, Su-30MKI jets were scrambled.

An IAF source said the commercial aircraft was operated by Motor Sich airlines of Ukraine.