



## NEARBY



### My resignation letter is with CM: Sidhu

**CHANDIGARH**  
In the wake of widespread criticism over submitting his resignation letter from the Punjab Cabinet to party leader Rahul Gandhi instead of Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu on Monday said his resignation has been delivered to the Chief Minister. Capt. Amarinder said if Mr. Sidhu did not want to do his job, there was nothing he could do about it.

NEWS PAGE 12

### Foreign national held hostage in cab, robbed

**NEW DELHI**  
A foreign national employed as a pilot with IndiGo airlines was allegedly held hostage for two hours in a private cab and robbed of over ₹1 lakh by three men before being dumped in the Delhi Cantt. area, the police said on Monday. DCP (IG) Sanjay Bhatia said the taxi has been identified and the accused will be arrested soon.

CITY PAGE 2

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## Moon mission launch aborted

ISRO stops Chandrayaan-2 countdown 56 minutes before scheduled lift-off

**T.K. ROHIT**  
SRIRIARIKOTA

India's ambitious second lunar mission, Chandrayaan-2, suffered a temporary setback in the early hours of Monday, with the launch of the rocket being aborted 56 minutes before the scheduled lift-off.

The mission was aimed at putting a rover on the moon's South Pole, where no country has gone before.

The countdown was stopped at 'T Minus 56 minutes' after Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientists found a glitch in the launch vehicle system. ISRO had completed filling of liquid hydrogen in the cryo-



**For a fresh start:** The countdown was stopped after a glitch in the launch vehicle GSVL MK-III-M1 on Monday. ■PTI

genic stage of the GSVL MK-III-M1, which is capable of carrying satellites of up to four tonnes, at 1.34 a.m. But 22 minutes later, the countdown clock stopped ticking

at 56.24 minutes to launch. "The launch is called off due to a snag. It is not possible to make the launch within the window. The launch schedule will be announced

later," a mission control official said on the public address system at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

### Kovind flies in

President Ram Nath Kovind had flown in by helicopter to witness the launch, after visiting Tirupati. Confusion prevailed in the media centre, as the announcement over the PA system was not heard indoors. With the clock stuck, ISRO officials at the auditorium scrambled to find out if the launch had been cancelled.

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WAITING FOR DAYBREAK  
EDITORIAL

## Babri Masjid case trial judge seeks more time

U.P. govt. asked to suggest a way out

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked Uttar Pradesh to suggest a way out after the session judge conducting the joint trial of the Babri Masjid cases sought six more months.

On April 19, 2017, the court gave the judge two years, reviving the criminal conspiracy charge against L.K. Advani, Murlidhar Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti.

The court had evoked the



maxim - 'Let justice be done though the heavens fall' - to flex its extraordinary constitutional powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to bring the cases to justice.

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## POTA repealed to save Cong. vote bank: Shah

LS debates changes to NIA Act

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Assuring the Lok Sabha that the Modi government will never misuse any anti-terror law on the basis of religion, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday accused the Congress-led UPA government of repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) to save its "vote bank and not misuse".

His remarks came during the debate on the National Investigation Agency (NIA)

(Amendment) Bill, 2019. The debate saw sharp exchanges between the Home Minister and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMM) leader Assaduddin Owaisi.

"The Modi government has no intention of misusing this law. Let me put this on record - the POTA was not repealed because of misuse, but to safeguard vote banks," Mr. Shah said.

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## Karnataka CM to seek trust vote on Thursday

Govt. facing a threat of withdrawal of support by 18 MLAs

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

The political uncertainty in Karnataka is headed for a climax with Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy set to face a trust vote on Thursday.

Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar informed the Assembly on Monday that Mr. Kumaraswamy would move the confidence motion at 11 a.m.

This is the second time that the Chief Minister is seeking a trust vote since the government was formed on May 23, 2018, following a fractured mandate.

The Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) coalition government is facing a threat of withdrawal of support by 18 MLAs, including two Independents.

On Friday, Mr. Kumaraswamy announced that he was not keen on hanging on to power in the current situation and would seek a vote of confidence. He appealed to the Speaker to fix a time for the vote.

### BAC meeting

Before the House was reconvened on Monday after the weekend break, the Speaker chaired a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) to evolve a consensus on the day and timing for the confidence motion.

The meeting was attend-



**Crafting strategy:** H.D. Kumaraswamy talking to party leaders in the Assembly in Bengaluru on Monday. ■K. MURALI KUMAR

### 'Speaker not letting us quit'

Five dissident MLAs on Monday made an urgent mention in the Supreme Court against the Speaker's unwillingness to let them resign from the Assembly. They said they were being threatened into supporting the government in the floor test. ■PAGE 8

### MLAs see threat from Congress

The 14 rebel MLAs of the Congress and the JD(S), who are now in a Mumbai hotel, have again requested the Mumbai Police Commissioner for better security. They said they anticipated a "serious threat" from the Congress leadership. ■PAGE 8

## Use drones to identify waterlogging sites: HC

'File status report before July 24'



The city on Monday received 28.8 mm of rainfall, the first heavy shower of the season. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has suggested use of drones to aid civic authorities in identifying sites where waterlogging takes place so as to tackle traffic snarls in the city during the monsoon.

A Bench of Justices G.S. Sistani and Jyoti Singh further suggested setting up of a control room for quick reporting on traffic jams and waterlogging for remedial action to be taken as quickly as possible. "We have no hesitation in saying that all the departments would cooperate with each other to ensure that the citizens are not inconvenienced during the coming monsoon," the Bench said.

The High Court directed the city government to file a status report before July 24, the next date of hearing. The Bench also asked the authorities to look into the aspect of rainwater harvesting.

During the hearing, the Delhi government's counsel submitted a status report stating that they have identified problematic areas of waterlogging and highlighted the proposed long-term and short-term measures.

"We are informed that at

most of the sites, water pumps are installed and on the remaining sites they shall be installed shortly. We are also informed that in the past, the water pumps were not effective as desilting was not complete. Counsel submits that they are hopeful that this problem would not arise this year as desilting of drains has already been carried out and the water will be thrown into the drains," the High Court noted.

### Manning of pumps

The court also asked the authorities to ensure that the pumps are manned by operators every day during the monsoon season and the moment water starts collecting, the pumps should be put to use so that there is no waterlogging and the citizens are not inconvenienced by traffic jams.

The court, which has taken up the issue on its own, had earlier said the fallout of waterlogging was not only loss of man-hours with people unable to reach their destinations, including hospitals, on time but the idling engines of vehicular traffic would also add to air pollution in the city.

## High Court orders protection for MLA's daughter

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court on Monday granted police protection to BJP MLA Rajesh Misra's daughter Sakshi and her husband Ajitesh, who had last week alleged threat to their lives from the legislator over their inter-caste marriage.

The court directed the police and the administration to ensure that the family of Ms.

Sakshi, who married a Dalit against her father's wishes, "shall not interfere in the married life" of the couple. "The police should see that counsel for the petitioners and also the family members of the petitioners are not brought to any harm in any manner whatsoever," a Bench of Justice Siddhartha Varma said in its order.

The court directed Ms. Sakshi and Mr. Ajitesh to get



Sakshi Misra and her husband Ajitesh in a video clip that went viral.

their marriage registered under the U.P. Marriage Registration Rules, 2017 within

two weeks.

There were also reports that while appearing in court, Mr. Ajitesh was roughed up by unknown persons. However, there was no police confirmation of the incident.

The High Court witnessed high drama on Monday when another couple were allegedly abducted from outside its premises hours before it was to hear the case of Ms. Sakshi and Mr. Ajitesh. The couple -

a young man and a minor girl from Moradabad and Amroha districts respectively - were taken away in a black SUV. The vehicle was intercepted at a toll booth in neighbouring Fatehpur district.

Six persons, including the father of the girl, were taken into custody along with the couple, said Additional Director General, Prayagraj, S.N. Sabat.

## Solan building collapse toll mounts to 14

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHANDIGARH

The toll in Sunday's collapse of a building in Solan district of Himachal Pradesh rose to 14, with six more bodies being retrieved on Monday. Thirteen Army personnel are among the dead.

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