



NEARBY



Chawri Bazar tense after scuffle over parking

NEW DELHI
 Tension prevailed at Chawri Bazar in central Delhi on Monday, a day after a scuffle between two men over parking took a communal turn and a temple was vandalised, the police said. Three FIRs have been registered but no arrests have been made in the case so far. The police said that they have obtained CCTV footage from the area to identify the miscreants. Security has been beefed up to avoid any untoward situation.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

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SC slaps contempt notice on Bengal in Mamata meme case

Court asks why BJP leader was not released on May 14 after being granted bail

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday issued a contempt notice to West Bengal for keeping BJP youth wing leader Priyanka Sharma behind bars overnight despite its order on May 14 to release her immediately on bail.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, issued the notice returnable in four weeks. It has thus carried out what a Vacation Bench, led by Justice Indira Banerjee, threatened on May 15 when the latter heard that Ms. Sharma had not yet been released by the State authorities despite the specific order of the court.

Ms. Sharma was arrested and sent to 14 days of custody for allegedly posting a morphed image of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on social media. The court called her ar-

Delay questioned

The chain of events leading to the contempt notice on Bengal

May 10: West Bengal police file a complaint against Priyanka Sharma, convenor of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, for allegedly posting a photo-shopped picture on her Facebook page of West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee

May 11: Priyanka Sharma is arrested and sent to custody

May 14: Supreme Court orders the State police to 'immediately release' Ms. Sharma

May 15: A vacation bench of the SC castigates the State police for not releasing Ms. Sharma. The BJYM leader is released after the censure

July 1: SC issues contempt of court notice to West Bengal



rest "prima facie arbitrary" in the first place. However, on May 14, while granting Ms. Sharma bail, the Vacation Bench asked her to apologise for the "meme".

The apology was not a condition for her release, though.

But the next day, senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul for Ms. Sharma informed the

Vacation Bench that the State chose to defy the judicial order of her release. He said Ms. Sharma was not released from jail on May 14. Her lawyers, who went to secure her release, were told off by the jail authorities. The latter had even asked them to either produce certified copies of the bail order or approach the local court

for her release.

Counsel for West Bengal tried to placate the court, saying the jail authorities were merely following the jail manual. "A Supreme Court order for immediate release has precedence over a jail manual," Justice Banerjee shot back at the lawyer.

Closure report

Mr. Kaul also informed the court that the police had filed a closure report in the case of criminal defamation foisted against Ms. Sharma. The report was filed on May 13, but the information was not disclosed to the Supreme Court by the government during the May 14 bail hearing.

Ms. Sharma had shared on Facebook a photo in which Ms. Banerjee's face was photoshopped on to actor Priyanka Chopra's picture from the MET Gala event in New York.

Coalition govt. shaken as two Cong. MLAs quit in Karnataka

Rebel members Anand Singh, Ramesh Jarkiholi resign

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In a fresh trouble for the Janata Dal (Secular)-Congress government in Karnataka, Congress MLAs Anand Singh and Ramesh Jarkiholi resigned from the Assembly on Monday, bringing the party's strength down to 77.

Mr. Singh represents Vijayanagara in Ballari district, while Mr. Jarkiholi was elected from Gokak in Belagavi district. Both have earlier been identified with the "rebel" camp that has threatened to destabilise the government.

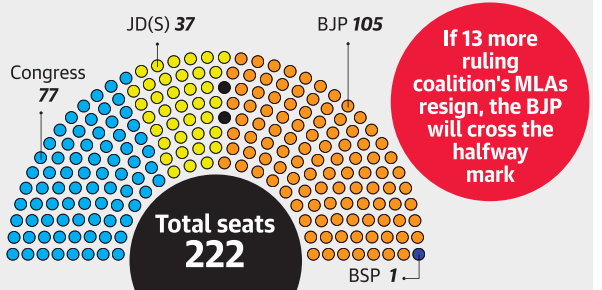
Exits contained?

Despite widespread speculation that more resignations would follow, the number stayed at two at the end of the day. The developments come even as Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy is in the U.S. on a private visit.

Mr. Singh submitted his resignation letter to Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar and la-

House of cards

Two Congress MLAs resigned on Monday bringing down the party's strength in the Karnataka State Assembly to 77. As a result, the number of MLAs in the Congress-JD(S) coalition fell to 116 (includes two independents). Diagram shows the Assembly strength if the resignations are accepted



ter met Governor Vajubhai Vala at the Raj Bhavan before announcing that he had resigned.

He cited the Kumaraswamy government's decision to sell 3,667.31 acres to JSW Steel in Ballari and the "injustice" meted out to the district as the prime reasons for his resignation.

Ramesh Jarkiholi, who had faxed his resignation letter to the Speaker, has been

threatening to quit the party ever since he was dropped from the Cabinet in December 2018. He has also been leading a group of disgruntled Congress legislators.

The Congress has been fighting disidence since the formation of the coalition government.

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CABINET RESHUFFLE LIKELY TO TIDE OVER CRISIS ▶ PAGE 8

35 killed as overloaded minibus falls into gorge in Jammu and Kashmir

27-seater vehicle was carrying 52 persons; helicopters shift injured

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Thirty-five passengers died and 17 were injured when an overloaded minibus failed to negotiate a curve on the Keshwan-Thakrai road and fell into a gorge at Sorgwari in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

"The minibus was overloaded. Initial reports suggest the driver was driving fast," said Deputy Commissioner of Kishtwar Angrez Singh Rana.

A case was registered and investigation ordered, he added.

The 27-seater bus, with 52 passengers, was heading to Kishtwar from Keshwan when the accident took place

at 7.30 a.m., an official said.

Helicopters were pressed into service to rush the injured to hospital in Jammu and to retrieve the bodies. The victim include 13 women, a 45-day-old infant and three teenagers.

Governor Satya Pal Malik announced ₹5 lakh in ex gratia to the next of the kin. "Most accidents take place due to careless and untrained drivers who drive without any regard for rules and regulations and become the reason for the loss of so many precious lives," he said.

(With PTI inputs)

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THREE KILLED IN SHIMLA ▶ PAGE 9



Help at hand: A rescue operation under way after the accident in Kishtwar on Monday. • ANI

Hong Kong protesters storm legislature in a challenge to China

Police fire tear-gas shells and retake the building

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Hundreds of protesters in Hong Kong stormed the legislature on Monday – the anniversary of the city's 1997 return to China – destroying pictures and daubing walls with graffiti, in a direct challenge to Beijing as anger over an extradition Bill spiralled out of control.

Some carried road signs, others corrugated iron sheets and pieces of scaffolding as about thousand people gathered around the Legislative Council building in the heart of the former British colony's financial district. Some sat at legislators' desks, while others scrawled "anti-extradition" on the chamber's walls.

Work on Bill stopped

The government called for an immediate end to the violence, saying it had stopped all work on extradition Bill amendments and the legislation would automatically lapse in July next year.

"Some radical protesters stormed the Legislative



Under siege: Protesters trying to smash a glass door at the government headquarters in Hong Kong on Monday. • AFP

Council Complex with extreme violence," a government spokesman said in a statement.

A small group, comprising largely of students wearing hard hats and masks, had used a metal trolley, poles and scaffolding to charge again and again at the compound's reinforced glass doors, which eventually gave in. The Council issued a red alert, ordering the protesters to leave immediately.

The Legislative Council

Secretariat released a statement cancelling business for Tuesday. The central government offices said they would close on Tuesday "owing to security consideration".

Banners hanging over flyovers at the protest site read: "Free Hong Kong." The police retook the legislature from protesters early on Tuesday after firing tear-gas shells.

THOUSANDS JOIN RALLY IN HONG KONG ▶ PAGE 14

GST collection dips below ₹1 lakh crore

April, May receipts stood at ₹1.13 lakh cr. and ₹1 lakh cr. respectively

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections narrowly missed crossing the ₹1 lakh crore mark in June 2019, coming in at ₹99,939 crore, according to data released by the government on Monday.

"Total gross GST revenue collected in June 2019 is ₹99,939 crore, of which CGST is ₹18,366 crore, SGST is ₹25,343 crore, IGST is

₹47,772 crore and Cess is ₹8,457 crore," the government said.

While the collections in June 2019 are 4.5% higher than the collections in June 2018, they are still below collections in the first two months (April & May) of this financial year, and in the last month (March) of the previous financial year.

The government collected ₹1.06 lakh crore in March, ₹1.13 lakh crore in

April – the highest-ever collection – and ₹1 lakh crore in May.

"The marginal dip in collections reinforces the point there is very little headroom at present for any further rate reductions," M.S. Mani, partner at Deloitte India, said.

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CORE SECTOR GROWTH SLOWS TO 5.1% IN MAY ▶ PAGE 15

Iran breaches limit on uranium stockpile

Will move ahead with our plans: Zarif

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN

Iran has broken the limit set on its stockpile of low-enriched uranium by its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, international inspectors and Tehran said on Monday, marking its first major departure from the unravelling agreement a year after the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from it.

The announcement by Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and later confirmation by the UN nuclear watchdog put new pressure on European nations trying to save the deal amid President Donald Trump's maximalist campaign targeting Tehran. Iran separately threatens to raise its uranium enrichment closer to weapons-grade levels on July 7 if Europe fails to offer it a new deal.

Speaking to journalists in Tehran, Mr. Zarif acknowledged that Iran had broken through the limit set by the accord.

"We had previously announced this and we have said it transparently what



Mohammad Javad Zarif says EU measures are not enough to save the deal. • AP

we are going to do," he said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency later said its Director-General had informed officials that it verified on Monday that Iran had broken through the limit.

Under the nuclear deal, Iran agreed to have less than 300 kg of uranium enriched to a maximum of 3.67%. Previously, Iran enriched as high as 20%, a short technical step away from weapons-grade levels.

The "actions of the Europeans have not been enough so the Islamic Republic will move ahead with its plans as it has previously announced," Mr. Zarif said.

Man ends life after killing wife, daughter, son

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

A 55-year-old former scientist with a pharmaceutical company allegedly murdered his wife, daughter and son by hitting them with a hammer and a sharp-edged weapon, before ending his life in Sector 49 here on Monday morning. The police have ruled out any foul play.

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