



UNDER TECH & SECURITY COVER, AMARNATH YATRA BEGINS

The first batch of pilgrims on the Baltal route on Monday. Security measures include unmanned aerial vehicles and satellite trackers this year. *Shuaib Masood* P 8

Grassroot TMC leaders face cut-money blowback in Bengal: 'Can't return home'

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA & SANTANU CHOWDHURY
BARDHAMAN, BIRBHUM, JULY 1

ON THE night of June 23, Pradip Chakraborty, a block secretary of the Trinamool Congress, his wife Reena, their son, daughter-in-law and grandson fled their home at Mangalkot tehsil in Purba Bardhaman district to take shelter in a room inside a building provided by the party. "This is my home now. We are waiting for higher-ups in the party to tell us what to do. In my entire political career, I have never seen anything like this, it is spreading like wildfire," says Chakraborty.

The 57-year-old is among the scores of Trinamool leaders at the grassroots on the run, hounded by residents in their villages to return the "cut



money", or illegal commissions, they had allegedly taken to "facilitate" the grant of central and state government schemes.

"That evening, the villagers surrounded our house, started pelting stones," says Chakraborty, from Chanok village. His neigh-



TMC leader Pradip Chakraborty, wife Reena at a shelter arranged by the party in Mangalkot. *Ravik Bhattacharya*

bour in the "party building" is Samiran Majhi, Trinamool booth head from the village, who is here with his wife and two daughters after fleeing their home on June 24.

On June 18, with the BJP rapidly making inroads in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata

Banerjee asked her party leaders to end the practice of "cut money" and return them to the people.

For leaders at the lowest rung of the TMC, especially in the districts of Bardhaman, Birbhum, Hooghly, Malda, Murshidabad, Coochbehar and Uttar Dinajpur,

that was the beginning of the end. Many of them have since been forced to either return the "cut money" they had collected or submit in writing that they would do soon — or simply flee.

The *Indian Express* visited 12 villages in Bardhaman, Birbhum and Hooghly, where the backlash has been most visible. It found how "cut money", which is a well-entrenched practice dating back to the Left rule, had become "institutionalised" over the years, with specific rates for various schemes. And how a spurt in collections has widened the faultlines, socially and politically, forcing the TMC government to open special cells to address grievances — it has received over 1,500 complaints since June 10 — and prevent the BJP from cashing in on the resentment.

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JULY, AUG TO BE BETTER: IMD

Late monsoon: 33% deficit in June, highest in five years

Maharashtra, Andhra, Telangana, Kerala, parts of North-East are driest

ANJALI MARAR
PUNE, JULY 1

DUE TO late onset and the adverse impact of Cyclone Vayu, the first month of the monsoon season ended with a 32.8% deficiency in rainfall for the country as a whole — the worst in the last five years. But the months of July and August promise to be better, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

IMD officials said monsoon was in the process of intensifying and good rainfall was expected in many parts of the country in the next few days. As per the latest forecasts, a low pressure system that lay over Odisha as on July 1 is expected to cause widespread rainfall across Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra over the next four days (till July 6) starting Tuesday (July 2). Besides compensating for the deficit, this would also aid the further advancement of monsoon to cover the remaining parts of central, western and northern India by the end of this week.

The June deficiency was the worst since 2014, which saw a deficit of 42%. The rainfall in June last year was 5% below normal.

This year, the onset of monsoon over the Kerala coast was delayed by a week, and then

JUNE RAINFALL

(Departure from normal)	
2012	-28%
2013	34%
2014	-42%
2015	16%
2016	-10%
2017	5%
2018	-5%

Cyclone Vayu, which approached the Gujarat coast in the second week of June, halted the northward progress of the monsoon by another week. Some rainfall towards June-end ensured that the deficit dropped from 43% on June 19, to 36% on June 26, and less than 33% now.

With about 18% contribution, June accounts for the least amount of rainfall during the four-month monsoon season. July and August see the heaviest rainfall — accounting for about 33% and 30% respectively of the total rainfall.

IMD officials said the conditions were favourable for further northward progression of the monsoon in the coming days, and it would reach Delhi around July 4-5. On Monday, the Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) passed through Dwarka, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Jabalpur,

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Govt rolls out plan to save water, says it will be a mass movement



Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Monday. *Prem Nath Pandey*

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

ROLLING OUT its water conservation plan under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan on Monday, the Centre said it would focus its time-bound, mission-mode campaign on 1,592 "water-stressed" blocks in 257 districts.

Launching the "Sanchay Jal, Behtar Kal" campaign for rain-water harvesting and water conservation, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said the plan would rely largely on mass awareness programmes.

Jal Shakti Ministry officials said it will also involve focused implementation and convergence of existing water conservation schemes under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana's per-drop-more-crop (micro-irrigation) programme.

Pointing out that at the existing pace, India's water availability is estimated to decline to 1,341 cubic meter per capita per year by 2025 (from 5,177 cubic meter per capita per year in 1951), Shekhawat said: "We are staring at a water crisis. But there

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Shah invokes Atal, tells Valley 'no need for fear'

Azad welcomes visit with no 'blackout'

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

INVOKING ATAL Bihari Vajpayee's "Jamhooriyat, Kashmiriyat, Insaniyat" approach for J&K, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Monday said that the Modi government was working for all-round development of the state.

Appealing to the Valley youth, he said they should "not be misled" by those asking them to hurl stones, and people of Kashmir should "not be scared" nor influenced by wrong propaganda.

"There is no need for fear in anyone's mind," Shah said in Rajya Sabha, adding that it is the "government's responsibility to protect their life and property".

Replying to a discussion before the House passed a resolution to extend President's rule in J&K by six months and the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2019, Shah ruled out plebiscite in J&K saying "it is out of question today". He questioned why Jawaharlal Nehru had gone to the United Nations and prom-



Home Minister Amit Shah in Rajya Sabha on Monday. *PTI*

ised plebiscite even after the princely state had signed the instrument of accession.

Thanking members for reiterating that Kashmir is an integral part ("abhinna hissa") of India, he made it clear that "whoever will talk about breaking India, will get a response in the same manner".

He rejected the Opposition charge that the BJP was delaying

IN PARLIAMENT
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UP govt's caste certificates for 17 OBCs reopens SC list debate, Maya says illegal

MAULSHREE SETH & AVANEESH MISHRA
LUCKNOW, JULY 1

REKINDLING THE debate over moves to include 17 Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Scheduled Castes (SCs) list, the Uttar Pradesh government, citing a 2017 observation of the Allahabad High Court, has directed officials to issue caste certificates to these 17 castes "after examination and based on documents in accordance with the rules".

The High Court, while hearing a PIL, had said that "in the event, any caste certificates are issued pursuant to the order impugned, those certificates shall be subject to the outcome of the writ petition".

The state government's June 24 direction to district magistrates and commissioners to issue caste certificates to the 17 OBCs — Kashyap, Rajbhar, Dhivar, Bind, Kumhar, Kahar, Kewat, Nishad, Bhar, Mallah, Prajapati, Dhimar, Batham, Turha, Godia, Manjhi and

EXPLAINED SP had pushed it, BSP with a rider

THE BJP government in UP is not the first to move on the 17 most backward castes in the OBC list. In 2005, it was the SP government of Mulayam Singh Yadav which passed the first order to win over 11 of these castes who felt left out of the quota benefits. The order was stayed and the proposal sent to the Centre. Subsequently, the BSP government of Mayawati quashed the notification. She later said these castes could be included in the SC list provided the SC quota is increased. The SP government of Akhilesh Yadav cleared the inclusion proposal ahead of the 2017 assembly elections but it was challenged and is in court.

Machua — drew an angry response Monday from BSP chief Mayawati who called it "unconstitutional", saying these castes will neither get benefits meant for OBCs nor SCs since a state government has no power to make any alteration to the SC list.

In a statement, Mayawati said: "This order of the Uttar Pradesh BJP government is a big

fraud on these 17 castes as in reality they are not going to get benefits of either OBC or SC. They will not get benefits of OBC because the government will not consider them OBC after this order, and neither of SC because no state government can add any caste to the SC list nor remove just with an order. Article 341 of

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THE EDITORIAL PAGE

GST BIRTH PANGS OVER, STABLE NOW
BY SUSHIL KUMAR MODI
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WORLD



IRAN BREACHES NUCLEAR DEAL'S STOCKPILE LIMIT
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CITY



PARKING ROW SPARKS COMMUNAL FLARE-UP

GURGAON MAN KILLS WIFE, 2 CHILDREN, HANGS HIMSELF
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In meeting with Cong CMs, Rahul firm on quitting as party chief



Congress Chief Ministers V Narayanasamy, Ashok Gehlot, Amarinder Singh, Kamal Nath, Bhupesh Baghel after meeting party chief Rahul Gandhi on Monday. *Prem Nath Pandey*

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

FOR THE first time after the Lok Sabha election defeat, Rahul Gandhi Monday met Chief Ministers of the five Congress-ruled states who asked him to reconsider his decision to step down as Congress president. But Rahul did not give any indication on changing his mind, signalling that the crisis that has hit the party is far from over.

At least one chief minister, Rajasthan's Ashok Gehlot, said that they "own up" responsibility for the election loss. He said the chief ministers hope Rahul will take a positive decision. Rahul is learnt to have told the CMs that he has already conveyed his decision to the Congress Working Committee (CWC). He also asked them to arrive at a consensus on an alternative.

Rahul is said to be upset that none of those state leaders and

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BUSINESS AS USUAL



GOVT & POLITICS

KARNATAKA: TWO CONG MLAs RESIGN
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PAGE 1 ANCHOR

Death Row convict's only hope: His age, 25 years ago

Pune police report says he was juvenile when he was sentenced, along with two others, for murder of five of a family in 1994; case was reopened in January this year

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

NARAYAN CHETANARAM Chaudary is 39 years old and has spent almost two-thirds of his life in the shadow of the gallows. In 1994, he and two others were sentenced to death for the murder of five members of a family that included a pregnant woman and two children — a 'rarest of

the rare' case.

But in the 25 years he has spent in Pune's Yerwada Central Jail, Narayan has worked towards making himself a model prisoner with the hope that it would help in the commutation of his death sentence.

Unlettered when he went to jail, Narayan taught himself Marathi and Hindi and went on to finish a BA in Social Science, MA in Sociology and completed

a course in Tourism from open universities. He has virtually exhausted all legal options after his death sentence was confirmed by the Bombay High Court and twice by the Supreme Court in 2000.

But Narayan's story is about to change. It is his education, not the degrees he earned in prison but a year-and-half of schooling he had as a kid in Rajasthan's Bikaner district, that is promis-



Moved Supreme Court in October last year

ing him a fresh lease of life.

Narayan discovered that he could not have been awarded the death penalty as he was barely 14 years old when he was sentenced. He moved the Supreme Court in October last year, seeking a recall of the earlier court rulings confirming his death sentence.

In 1994, the sessions court in Pune had recorded Narayan's age as 20 years and he was tried and convicted as an adult under the Indian Penal Code. But Narayan was only 14 years old, a juvenile who could not have been awarded the death sentence.

However, the issue was never raised in court by Narayan during his trial. Narayan's lawyer in the Supreme Court had argued that his young age must be considered as a mitigating circumstance but the court had refused to entertain the argument.

His case was reopened in January this year and Narayan obtained his school documents from a government school in Bikaner — he had dropped out after 18 months — and from the district administration that records his date of birth.

In January, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court directed the Principal District and

Sessions Judge of Pune to decide whether Narayan was a juvenile when the crime was committed.

The Pune police have concluded, in a report submitted to the Supreme Court, that in 1994, when the crime was committed, Narayan was 12 years and six months.

"Capital punishment can never be imposed on a juvenile," the Supreme Court said while granting Narayan parole for a week in May to perform the last rites of his father. He is back in Yerwada jail now but his fresh battle before the Supreme Court has just begun.