



NEARBY



Shah to head group to combat lynching

NEW DELHI
 An empowered Group of Ministers constituted last year to suggest measures to combat lynchings will continue functioning. It will be headed by Home Minister Amit Shah, said a senior government official. The GoM had met on two occasions. Since the GoM was position-specific, there was no need to reconstitute it, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

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Priyanka ideal as Cong. chief, says Amarinder

CHANDIGARH
 Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has pitched for Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to take over the party's reins, saying she was "a good bet" to replace Rahul Gandhi as party president. "Priyanka would be a perfect choice to take over the party reins but it would all depend on the CWC," he said

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It's official, Odisha is origin of Rasagola

BHUBANESWAR
 The rasagola, a popular dessert of Odisha, has received the Geographical Indication tag from the Registrar of Geographical Indication after years of controversy around the sweet. "Happy to share that #Odisha Rasagola has received GI tag in Geographical Indication Registry," tweeted Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

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Yediyurappa wins trust vote

Ramesh Kumar quits as Karnataka Assembly Speaker

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

The three-day-old BJP government in Karnataka headed by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa proved its majority with ease in the Assembly on Monday by winning the confidence motion by voice vote. Soon after the trust vote and the passage of the Finance Bill for a period of three months along with the supplementary budget, Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, who had disqualified 17 rebel MLAs of the Congress and the JD(S) over the last few days, tendered his resignation.

A depleted House

The 17 disqualifications had put the BJP in a comfortable position in the passage of the



New bonhomie: B.S. Yediyurappa greets Congress leader Siddaramaiah in the Assembly on Monday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

confidence motion, with the effective strength of the House down to 208 where the BJP enjoys the support of 106 MLAs. This was in contrast to Mr. Yediyurappa's third term in 2018 when he had to resign on account of lack of numbers within 48 hours of being sworn in.

The Opposition Congress and JD(S) did not press for division of votes, while vociferously opposing the confidence motion, terming it "immoral and unconstitutional."

The desertions by MLAs, allegedly engineered by the BJP, brought down the Con-

2 disqualified MLAs move SC

Two MLAs on Monday moved the Supreme Court against their disqualification from the Assembly under the anti-defection law. They said the Speaker had made the decision in "hot haste" at the behest of the Congress. They arraigned the Speaker, the State of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah and Dinesh Gundurao as respondents. ▶ PAGE 8

gress-JD(S) coalition government by reducing it to a minority.

Former CM and CLP leader Siddaramaiah said Mr. Yediyurappa would not be able to give a stable government given that he had come to power by 'luring MLAs.'

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India has nearly 3,000 tigers, up by a third from 2014 count

The results of the census were made public by PM Modi

JACOB KOSHY NEW DELHI

India has 2,967 tigers, a third more than in 2014, according to the results of a tiger census made public on Monday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Madhya Pradesh saw the highest number at 526, closely followed by Karnataka (524) and Uttarakhand (442). Chhattisgarh and Mizoram saw a decline in tiger population and all other States saw a "positive" increase, according to a press statement.

The survey, the fourth such since 2006, is a gargantuan exercise and conducted once in four years. The latest survey is the culmination of 15 months of forest officials surveying 3,81,400 square kilometres of forested habitat, installing 26,760 camera traps and wildlife biologists ferreting through 35 million images of wildlife – 76,523 of which were tigers (there can be multiple images of the same tiger). Nearly 83% of the estimated



tiger population was captured in these images.

While the Pench Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of tigers, the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu registered the "maximum improvement" since 2014, the statement said.

"We have to create a healthy balance between sustainability and development," Mr. Modi said in his address.

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PENCH, PERIYAR RATED TOP TIGER RESERVES ▶ PAGE 9

Field day



Shower of blessing: A woman planting paddy saplings in a field on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar after heavy rains on Monday. Though it has come as blessing for her, the showers have caused a flood-like situation in some parts of Odisha. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

Mamata's 'Tell Didi' campaign goes live

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

Aided by a battery of management professionals and communications experts, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched "a unique initiative" to reach out to the people of the State.

The initiative – *Didi Ke Bolo*, or Tell Didi (Ms. Banerjee) – has been developed as a platform with a phone number and website to communicate directly with the Trinamool Congress chief.



Mamata Banerjee

Besides, TMC functionaries will now have to visit specific pockets in cities and villages and even spend nights there as part of an enhanced public

relations campaign, said Ms. Banerjee while addressing a press conference on Monday.

The Bharatiya Janata Party called it a "gimmick" of poll strategist Prashant Kishor.

"More than 1,000 elected representatives and party functionaries will visit more than 10,000 villages and urban habitations to listen to people. [They] will spend the night in those habitations and also listen to the important residents of the area," Ms. Banerjee said.

BJP MLA booked for murder over collision

U.P. govt. recommends CBI probe; faced repeated threats, says rape survivor's uncle

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government in a late night decision on Monday decided to refer to the CBI the investigation into the case of the Raebareilly accident suffered by the Unnao rape survivor and her family. A formal request has been sent to the Centre.

Earlier in the day, jailed BJP MLA from Unnao Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who faces charges of gang rape, was booked for criminal conspiracy and murder in connection with the accident in which the survivor and her lawyer were seriously injured, while her two aunts were killed when a truck



Kuldeep Singh Sengar. ■ PTI

rammed the car they were travelling in.

The FIR against Sengar was lodged at the Gurbakshganj police station in Raebareilly on a complaint from the survivor's uncle who has been in prison since February.

His wife was one of the victims of Sunday's fatal col-

lision. The four persons were travelling to meet him when the accident took place.

The BJP MLA was booked for murder, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy and criminal intimidation. The FIR mentions 10 persons including Sengar, his brother Manoj Singh Sengar and his aides, and 15 to 20 other unidentified persons.

In his complaint, the uncle said he and his family had faced repeated threats from the MLA and his men and were being intimidated to change their statements in court or reach a compromise with the MLA in the gang rape case. They have been

threatened that if they didn't agree to a compromise, they would be killed one way or the other, the complaint said.

The uncle also said that whenever he went to Unnao for a hearing in his case, the MLA's men reminded him that "the government is with the MLA".

The uncle's complaint says the driver of the truck which hit the car in which his family was travelling, was associated with the MLA. The collision was orchestrated with an "intent to kill", he said.

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Azam Khan apologises twice in LS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

SP member Azam Khan apologised twice in the Lok Sabha on Monday for his remarks against BJP member Rama Devi when she was presiding over the proceedings last week.

"... I want to say I had no such intention towards the Chair. I have been a nine-time legislator, a Minister and a Rajya Sabha member.... If people think that I committed a mistake then I am sorry for it," he said after the proceedings began.

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Quarmy the dog bags honour for taking on hunters

She patrols the Kaziranga National Park to curb poaching and illegal trade

RAHUL KARMAKAR GUWAHATI

Hers is an unusual name for a female dog. But then, not all canines sniff poachers out in tiger territory and have a Facebook page.

Quarmy, a German Shepherd, was the odd one out at a congregation in Kohora – a tourist range of the Kaziranga National Park (KNP) – organised on Monday to felicitate the wards of forest officers and frontline staff who did well in the higher secondary exams for the 2018-19

academic year. The event was organised to mark Global Tiger Day.

She held her own as the winner of a special prize for patrolling the Biswanath Wildlife Division of the KNP to curb poaching and illegal trade of tigers. "Her name means a quarter of an army. She has virtually been many soldiers rolled into one ever since she became a part of our team in December 2017," Mukut Chandra Das, the division's Deputy Conservator of Forest told *The Hindu*.



Quarmy is many soldiers rolled into one.

He said Quarmy, four months short of three years, was formally told about her special prize for tiger

conservation at the Kohora congregation. "We are expecting the certificate for her soon," he added.

On December 27, 2017, a week after joining the Biswanath Wildlife Division, Quarmy helped forest guards catch four rhino poachers. She also played a major part in nabbing 12 more rhino poachers by July 2018. "That was when we decided Quarmy needs her own Facebook page. She has quite a number of followers," Mr. Das said. Kaziranga, a major tiger reserve, is spread across 1,080 sq km.

The Trade Record Analysis of Flora and Fauna

in Commerce (TRAFFIC) had announced the winners of the first Canines for Felines, a special contest for wildlife "super sniffer" dogs trained under a TRAFFIC and World Wide Fund-India programme in India.

The competition received 12 entries from across India. Among them, the 12 super sniffer contestants have helped enforcement agencies solve 131 wildlife cases. The overall winner was Nirman, a super sniffer from the Tiger Strike Force in Satna, while Myna, his counterpart in Indore, took the second spot. Both dogs belong to the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department.