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Indus Valley settlers had distinct genetic lineage

They saw that Iranian-related ancestry in South Asians comes from a lineage that separated from ancient Iranian farmers and hunter-gatherers before those groups split from each other, nearly 9,000 years ago.

The researchers, therefore, concluded that farming in South Asia was not due to the movement of people from the farming cultures of the west and that local foragers adopted it.

"Researchers find no trace of the Anatolian-related ancestry that is a hallmark of the spread of farming to the west, but the

Iranian-related ancestry they detected in South Asians comes from a lineage that separated from ancient Iranian farmers and hunter-gatherers before those groups split from each other," a statement highlighting the findings says.

"Prior to the arrival of steppe pastoralists bringing their Indo-European languages about 4,000 years ago, we find no evidence of large-scale movements of people into South Asia," David Reich, a geneticist and a co-author of the study, based in the United States, said in a statement.

Madras High Court Chief Justice to quit

She had an impeccable record of having been a judge for nearly two decades.

Though she was due to retire from service on October 2, 2020, the sudden transfer to a much smaller High Court upset her, she told them. Sources at the dinner told *The Hindu* that almost all High Court judges requested her to reconsider her decision to resign.

"However, she was resolute and refused to budge. People could feel her pain. She said, her conscience was clear and that she would be leaving the institution with the satisfaction of having performed well," a source said.

In the meantime, a section of lawyers practising in the Madras High Court shot off a representation to the Supreme Court stating that "these kind of arbitrary transfers whittle away the independence of the judiciary and the confidence of judges."

The representation had been signed by advocates N.G.R. Prasad, G. Masilamani, R. Vaigai and 100 others.

"To now transfer her to one of the smallest High Courts is nothing short of a punishment and a humiliation. It cannot be justified on the principle of administrative interests, which is an expression that can be used in every case. It is ironical that a person of her seniori-

These kind of arbitrary transfers whittle away the independence of the judiciary and the confidence of judges

LAWYERS' MEMORANDUM

ty is being assigned to the smallest High Court. Any transfer should meet with an element of fairness but it is noticed, of late, that there appear to be no norms in the matter of transfer of judges," the memorandum said.

'No checks & balances'
Recalling the words of former Supreme Court judge V. Khaliq that transfer could be a more dangerous weapon than dismissal, the lawyers said: "It is a matter of concern that there are no checks and balances in matters of administration of judiciary. The style of functioning of the collegium leaves one with the impression that the High Court is subordinate to the collegium. This affects the majesty of the High Courts and erodes their primacy of position in the constitutional scheme of things."

They requested the collegium to reconsider the transfer and ensure that the confidence of the Bar and the Bench and the litigant public "did not get eroded further."

SIT finds multiple lapses in Pehlu Khan case probe



A file photo of Pehlu Khan's wife and sons at a press conference in New Delhi. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

The lapses detected by the team included an IO's failure to produce the video footage of the lynching incident in a professional manner and the clearing of the suspects named by Khan in his dying declaration without solid evidence.

Dairy farmer Khan, 55, and his sons were transporting cows, after purchasing them in a cattle fair in Jaipur, to their hometown Nuh in Haryana on April 1, 2017, when they were waylaid near Behror on the Jaipur-Delhi national highway by self-styled cow vigilantes and assaulted after being accused of smuggling the cattle. Khan died of his injuries in a hospital two days later.

Video not certified

Though a video of the incident, shot on a mobile phone, had sparked nationwide outrage, the court refused to treat it as admissible evidence in the absence of its certification by the forensic science laboratory

and also because of the IO's failure to seize the mobile phone and produce it in the court.

The SIT has pointed out loopholes left by four IOs, who joined the probe at different stages of investigation.

Six acquitted

After the CID-CB gave a clean chit to the six persons named by Khan from his hospital bed, a new set of nine accused, three of them minors, were arraigned on the basis of the video of the attack.

Six of these accused were acquitted by the sessions court, giving them the benefit of the doubt in view of the prosecution's theory being "unreliable" and not sufficient to prove their involvement in the crime. The three minors are facing proceedings as children in conflict with law at the Juvenile Justice Board in Alwar.

Respond to pleas against UAPA amendments, SC tells Centre

Govt. now has unfettered powers to categorise a person as a terrorist: petitioners

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Union government to respond to petitions challenging its decision to amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act giving it powers to categorise anyone as a terrorist.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi issued notice to the Centre on petitions filed by Sajal Awasthi and the Association for Protection of Civil Rights, an NGO, which said the amended law allowed the government to freely encroach upon the fundamental rights of dignity, free speech, dissent and reputation.

The petitions said the UAPA Amendment Act of 2019, passed by Parliament, gave the Centre "discretionary, unfettered and unbound powers" to categorise a per-



son as a terrorist. The law could now be used by the government to bring a person into disrepute, and even worse, rob him or her liberty. The heavy burden to prove the entire government machinery wrong would lie on the person.

"The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019 seeks to substantially modify Chapter VI of the Unlawful Activities (Pre-

vention) Act, 1967 and Section 35 and 36 therein. The new Section 35 of the UAPA Act, 1967 empowers the Central government to categorise any individual as 'terrorist' and add name of such a person in Schedule 4 of the Act," Mr. Awasthi contended.

Right to reputation

The petition said the right to reputation was an intrinsic

part of fundamental right to life with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution and tagging an individual as "terrorist" even before the commencement of trial or any application of judicial mind over it, did not amount to following the "procedure established by law".

"The right to dissent is a part and parcel of fundamental right to free speech and expression and therefore, cannot be abridged in any circumstances except for mentioned in Article 19 (2). The UAPA 2019 empowers the ruling government, under the garb of curbing terrorism, to impose indirect restriction on the right to dissent which is detrimental to our developing democratic society," it said. Instead of preserving the dignity of an individual, the government sought to encroach upon it, it added.

West Bengal Assembly rules out NRC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

In an unprecedented show of unity, the West Bengal Assembly on Friday passed a resolution opposing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. It also ruled out the possibility of any such exercise in the State.

The development comes within a week of the release of the final list of the Assam NRC, from which over 19 lakh people have been left out.

The resolution, tabled under Rule 185 of the Rules of Procedure of Conduct of Business of the House, was supported by members of the Trinamool Congress from the Treasury benches and legislators of the Left parties and the Congress from the Opposition benches. Only a handful of BJP members opposed the resolution, which was passed after a three-hour debate.

"We do not accept the NRC. What has happened in Assam can never happen in Bengal," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said. She thanked Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for opposing a similar exercise in his State. Issues like this were propped up to divert people's attention from the economic distress faced by the country, Ms. Banerjee alleged.

Anti-NRC shutdown affects life in Assam

'Hajela has legitimised lakhs of Bangladeshi immigrants'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A 12-hour shutdown imposed by the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal against a "faulty National Register of Citizens (NRC)" partially affected life in Assam on Friday.

The shutdown, however, had no impact in Guwahati and a few other major towns.

The police said there were no incidents of violence apart from the blockade of roads by mobs. Some members of the Bajrang Dal and affiliates were detained in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh for allegedly trying to stop the screening of a newly released Assamese film.

The Assam unit of the Bajrang Dal accused the NRC authorities of deliberately coming out with an erroneous document containing the names of Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants.

"NRC State Coordinator Prateek Hajela has legitimised lakhs of such immigrants despite many leaders including former Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia and Union Minister Kiren Rijji saying Assam has at least 50 lakh Bangladeshis," a spokesperson of the unit asserted.

It demanded the reupdating of the NRC based on 1951



All-round dissent: Congress MP Abdul Khaleque addressing a press conference on the NRC in Guwahati on Friday. ■ PTI

as the cut-off date, granting of citizenship to the Hindu refugees and their rehabilitation in various States and inclusion of the names of excluded indigenous people in the NRC.

Tribunal hurdle

Santanu Bharali, legal advisor to Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, said the State government was finding it tough to make the 200 new Foreigners' Tribunals operational as the NRC authorities had not shared district-wise numbers of the excluded people.

"The government is ready to start the tribunals, but we are waiting for the data on district-wise exclusions," he said, adding that the NRC authorities would have to put in place a security regime as in the case of Aad-

haar before sharing the data.

Leaders of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangha on Friday met Assam Home Commissioner Ashutosh Agnihotri and requested that the government provide relief to more than 20,000 Gurkha doubtful (D) voters excluded from the final NRC.

Along with their dependents, the number of excluded Gurkhas is more than 1 lakh, the organisation said.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs in October 2018 said the Gurkhas cannot be tried in Foreigners' Tribunals," said community leader Nanda Kirati Dewan. "But members of the community have nevertheless been tried in the tribunals, made D-voters and struck off the NRC. The government has to get out of its complacency and move the court," he added.

Aircel-Maxis case hearing adjourned

ED seeks time to gather evidence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In an unprecedented happening, a Delhi court on Friday adjourned *sine die* the hearing in the Aircel-Maxis corruption and money laundering cases against former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram and his son Karti.

Special Judge O.P. Saini adjourned the hearing on separate requests by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) made through Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta and Special Public Prosecutors. The two probe agencies wanted the proceedings put off till they gathered more evidence.

In separate applications, the ED and the CBI also said that letters rogatory had been sent to different countries and responses to them were still awaited.

"Since further investigation is pending since long



P. Chidambaram

and the prosecution has been seeking adjournment after adjournment, it would be in the interest of justice, if the instant cases are adjourned *sine die*, with liberty to the prosecution to get them revived as soon as it is able to complete the investigation on collection of further evidence and/or receipt of responses to letters rogatory," Mr. Saini said in his order.

Mr. Chidambaram is now in judicial custody in the INX Media case.

Appeal to live-stream Ayodhya case with CJI

It deals with a sensitive issue: Bench

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court Bench on Friday referred to Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi a plea for live-streaming of the ongoing Ayodhya title dispute hearings.

The CJI is likely to hear on September 11 the petition filed by activist K.N. Govindacharya.

The Bench led by Justice Robinton Narimam, while hearing the petition, said the 'open court system' did not mean outsiders are privy to proceedings. It merely meant the court was open to litigants to attend proceedings.

The Bench asked whether it would be right to live-stream the Ayodhya proceedings, as it dealt with a sensitive issue.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh said the issue was one of social and constitutional gravity. If not live-streamed, the proceedings should at least be audio-recorded and transcripts made available.

The Govindacharya petition reminded the court of its own judgment of September 2018 that ordered live-streaming of hearings in momentous cases of national importance. The judgment is yet to be implemented.

The petitioner said the case, "famously known as



Activist K.N. Govindacharya, who moved the SC, feels that live-streaming will ensure transparency.

the Ayodhya Ram Mandir matter", had created large-scale interest across India.

Pending for nine years

"The Supreme Court has already held that sunlight is the best disinfectant. Live-streaming as an extension of the principle of open courts will ensure that the interface between a court hearing with virtual reality will result in the dissemination of information in the widest possible sense, imparting transparency and accountability to the judicial process," the petition said.

The Ayodhya case had been pending in the court for the last nine years, and the public at large was interested in knowing the reasons behind the delay in deciding cases at the court, it said.

I'm not acting as a 'Super Chief Minister': Digvijaya

Defends writing letters to Ministers

SANDEEP PHUKAN
SIDHARTH YADAV
NEW DELHI/BHOPAL

Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh on Friday rejected the charge of being a "Super Chief Minister" of Madhya Pradesh, and defended his practice of writing to State Ministers asking for appointments.

"The Congress government has been formed due to the hard work of party workers. They come to me for their work and letters of the same were forwarded to Ministers," he told presspersons.

The former two-time CM had recently asked Ministers to give him appointment so that he could follow up on development work and his recommendations for transfers. "What was wrong in the letter if I wanted to know about the action on these letters in accordance with law. This is my responsibility as an MP," he said and added that Chief Minister Kamal Nath did not need a "Super CM as he is a strong leader himself".



Digvijaya Singh

His response came just days after Forest Minister Umang Singh had accused him of "blackmailing" the government.

In a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Mr. Singhar alleged that Mr. Singh was trying to 'destabilise' the nine-month-old Kamal Nath government.

Asked about these charges, Mr. Singh said it was for Ms. Gandhi and Mr. Nath, who also heads the PCC, to respond. "This entire episode [Mr. Singhar's allegations] started when I alleged that BJP IT Cell leader Dhruv Saxena and Bajrang Dal leader Balram Singh were caught taking money from the ISI [of Pakistan]," he said.

BJP delegation visits China, calls for cut in trade deficit

'Countries should respect each other's sensitivities'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

An 11-member BJP delegation led by party general secretary Arun Singh, which visited China at the invitation of the Communist Party of China, made it clear that "sensitivities and aspirations" of both countries were to be respected for better relations, while making a pitch for a reduction in trade deficit and more cooperation in the fields of pharmaceuticals, agriculture and tourism.

Informal summit

The visit, (from August 26 to September 1) between political parties, comes after a gap of nearly a decade and in the run-up to the second edition of an informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, to be held in Mamallapuram between October 10 and 12.

Mr. Singh was accompanied by the BJP's foreign affairs cell chief Vijay Chauthaiwale, economic affairs cell



Arun Singh with CPC standing committee member Ye Zhenqin.

chief Gopal Krishna Agarwal and several others.

The delegation met with CPC standing committee member Ye Zhenqin, Guo Yezhou (vice minister of IDCPC) and Song Tao, minister IDCPC, to whom a letter from Home Minister Amit Shah addressed to President Xi Jinping was also handed over.

Article 370

The delegation members said the dilution of Article 370 was raised in the meetings held with members of the CPC, but that the Indian side had conveyed that

"each one should respect the other's [country's] sensitivities and aspirations" and that no territorial change affecting relations with any country had taken place. The BJP delegation also said that it would "hurt Indian sentiments" if China was seen to take the side of any country "fostering and promoting terrorism" against India, a reference to Pakistan.

More tie-ups

Trade issues also prominently figured in the meetings, especially the need to reduce trade deficit between the two countries as well as foster enhanced cooperation in the field of pharmaceuticals, agriculture and tourism.

"Mostly, however, the visit, after such a long gap, was helpful for us to understand the structures of each other's parties. We have extended an invitation for a return visit by members of the CPC but firm dates have not been agreed upon," said a member of the delegation.

Shehla Rashid booked on sedition charge

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have filed a sedition case against activist Shehla Rashid for allegedly spreading misinformation about the situation in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370.

The Delhi police said a First Information Report (FIR) was registered on Wednesday against Ms. Rashid based on a complaint by a lawyer at the Tilak Marg police station.

"An FIR has been registered under IPC Section 124-A (sedition), 153-A (Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot)," said a police officer.

The case has been transferred to the Special Cell for investigation.

Most of the tweets referred to in the complaint were made around August 18.