



Swamped with pleas, J&K HC at 50% strength, looks to SC help

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

FLOODED WITH over 250 writs of habeas corpus seeking quashing of preventive detention, and the state just a month away from being split into two Union Territories, the two wings of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, overburdened with litigation, are functioning with just nine judges against a sanctioned strength of 17 judges.

On two separate occasions this year, Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court Gita Mittal forwarded seven names to the Supreme Court Collegium to fill the vacancies, *The Indian Express* has learnt. Not a single appointment has been made till date.

While the Supreme Court, hearing petitions related to the Valley, has sought reports from Justice Mittal on access to justice in the High Court — at one hearing this month, Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi called it “a serious matter” and said “if required, I will go personally and check” — the Collegium is yet to fill the vacancies in the High Court.

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FROM TODAY, BIG BENCH TO HEAR J&K PETITIONS

New Delhi: A clutch of petitions challenging the scrapping of Article 370 in J&K and related issues will be heard from Tuesday by a Constitution Bench headed by Justice N V Ramana and comprising Justices S K Kaul, R Subhash Reddy, B R Gavai and Surya Kant. **P7**

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNYY



In rush for Shivaji memorial bhumi puja, Maharashtra govt cut corners for green nod



The design selected by the Maharashtra government

VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 30

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW AN EXPRESS RTI APPLICATION

THE MAHARASHTRA government's Public Works Department (PWD) has taken many short cuts in the process for obtaining the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) approval to build a Shivaji memorial in the Arabian Sea off south Mumbai, according to RTI responses made available to *The Indian Express*.

For instance, the state PWD said the distance of the proposed site — a rocky outcrop in the bay between Nariman Point and Raj Bhavan, off south Mumbai — from the Gateway of India was 2 km while seeking MoEF approval in February 2015, whereas the distance was actually 12 km.

This is not the only aspect that raises eyebrows in the state government's rush to seek clear-

ances for the site of the project which has huge political resonance in Maharashtra and has been a poll plank for both the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena alliance and the Opposition Congress-NCP. The alternate sites proposed by the PWD for consideration were not serious options, as they are either heritage sites (Elephanta Caves) where construction is not permitted, or naval areas (Oyster Rock) which are out of bounds for civilians, or areas with rough seas and restrictions (Khandheri Island). Moreover, the PWD had commissioned an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report

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BIHAR DY CM AMONG THE STRANDED

Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi, his family await rescue from the flooded Rajendra Nagar in Patna, Monday. **ANI PAGE 10**

NRC fallout: Assam's N-E neighbours step up border checks, turn people away

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, SEPTEMBER 30

IN THE month since the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) was published on August 31, Assam's neighbouring North Eastern states have intensified checks on people crossing state borders without proper papers, and have turned back scores of people back to Assam.

In Meghalaya, the checks are based on “valid IDs” to prove that the person is an Indian while to enter Mizoram, an Inner Line Permit (ILP) is required, which the state government grants to only those whose names appear in the NRC.



Meghalaya sent back 1,329 people without valid ID. **File**

According to data from the Meghalaya Police Monday, “1,329 detected persons without proof of Indian citizen were sent back directly to bring their documentary proof”.

DIG of the anti-infiltration and security wing of the Meghalaya Police, O Pasi, told *The Indian Express*, “Full-fledged checking is going on. We are checking what valid documents the person has — but we are not checking NRC.”

In September, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma had highlighted to Union Home Minister Amit Shah at a meeting in Guwahati that there were fears about people left out of the NRC entering Meghalaya.

To such concerns, raised by Sangma and others, Shah had said, “I want to assure both that not even one *ghuspetiya* (infiltrator) will be allowed to reside

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Pakistan says Manmohan will be invited to Kartarpur event, his office says no word yet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

PAKISTAN WILL invite former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as a representative of the Sikh community for the inaugural ceremony of the historic Kartarpur Corridor in November, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told Pakistani media Monday.

However, Singh's office said they had no information of this move, and Congress party sources said he would “decline” any such invitation.



Work in progress at the Kartarpur Corridor in Pakistan. **File**

“The Kartarpur Corridor inauguration is a big programme and Pakistan is preparing for it in a big way... After consultations,

Pakistan has decided to invite Manmohan Singh to the inauguration, who we hold in high

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WORLD



HAFIZ SAEED CLAIMS THREAT TO LIFE, PAK COURT SHIFTS CASE

IMPEACHMENT PROBE TO INTENSIFY, TRUMP DEFIANT P17

INX Media case: Chidambaram gets no relief, HC says may influence witnesses

PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

THE DELHI High Court Monday denied bail to senior Congress leader and former Union Minister P Chidambaram, who has been in judicial custody following his arrest by the CBI in the INX Media case, on the ground that the possibility of him not



Has been in judicial custody in Tihar

influencing witnesses while out on bail, “directly or indirectly, cannot be ruled out”.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait

MALEEHA OUT AS PAK'S U.N. ENVOY

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Imran Khan Monday appointed Munir Akram Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, *Dawn* reported. Akram will replace Dr Maleeha Lodhi, who has held the office since February 2015. **PAGE 17**

TITLE SUIT APPEALS

As SC deadline nears, Ramlalla counsel says no to mediation

CJI says trying to conclude proceedings by October 18, extra sittings if need be

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

AS THE Supreme Court looks at October 18 to wrap up hearings in the appeals against the 2010 order on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit, hopes of arriving at a negotiated settlement to the Ayodhya dispute via a parallel mediation process faded after Ramlalla Virajman, one of the three main parties to the suit, said no to further mediation.

Senior advocate C S Vaidyanathan, representing the deity in Ayodhya, conveyed this to a five-judge Constitution Bench which is hearing appeals against the September 30, 2010 verdict of the Allahabad High Court ordering a three-way division of the disputed 2.77 acres between the Nirmohi Akhara, the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board and Ramlalla Virajman.

Vaidyanathan told the bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices SA Bobde, DY Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer that there were reports in the media about fresh mediation and “I want to make it clear that we do not want to be part of any mediation efforts”.

The CJI said the bench was hearing the appeals and trying to wrap up the proceedings by October 18 and “if required” will sit even on Saturdays to complete it.

Exploring the mediation option, the Supreme Court had



AYODHYA HEARING

EXPLAINED
E.

Settlement via talks looks over

THE THREE-MEMBER mediation committee, formed by the SC, had given another shot at a negotiated settlement after its first effort failed. The court, while making clear that hearing of appeals will continue, had given its nod for a fresh parallel effort to resolve the vexed issue. It had also said that should there be a breakthrough, the court should be duly informed.

on March 8 constituted a three-member committee comprising its retired judge Justice F M Ibrahim Kalifulla, Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

New numbers show dip in growth of core infrastructure sectors

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 30

THE GROWTH of eight infrastructure sectors contracted 0.5 per cent in August following broad-based deterioration in output across as many as five sectors, including cement and electricity. But for a turnaround in refinery products — the largest constituent of the core sector — and an uptick in the growth of fertilisers, the contraction in numbers would have been sharper.

The August numbers mark the first contraction in core infrastructure output since April 2019, pointing to the continuing weakness in demand conditions. While analysts expect the festival demand to push industrial growth, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is likely to take note of weak demand conditions in its policy review on October 4 and cut rates.

The eight core sector industries had expanded by 4.7 per cent in August last year.

During the latest reported month, output of coal (-8.6 per cent), crude oil (-5.4 per cent), natural gas (-3.9 per cent), cement (-4.9 per cent) and electricity (-2.9 per cent) contracted while only production of refinery products (2.6 per cent), fertilizers (2.9 per cent) and steel (5 per cent) recorded a growth.

Given that private final consumption expenditure growth in June declined to its slowest in 18 quarters, there are expectations that the RBI could go beyond the 25 basis point cut to support growth. The index of industrial production (IIP) had grown 4.3 per cent in July from a downward-revised 1.2 per cent a month ago, according to data released last month.

Devendra Kumar Pant, Chief Economist and Senior Director, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

KAVITHAIYER
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 30

TEN THOUSAND bottles of human faecal matter — decomposed in toilet pits that were sealed six months to a year ago, sun-dried over the last seven days, sieved into a tea leaf-like consistency and packed into glass jars — have been sent by truck from Akola in Maharashtra to Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad.

On October 2, these 100-gram jars of completely organic manure high in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium content,

and prepared with a sprinkling of seeds that will sprout upon watering, will be presented to guests at the celebration to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

For the Maharashtra government, the Akola Zilla Parishad and UNICEF, which together undertook the project to empty toilet pits, collect and process the manure, the idea is to popularise the use of decomposed waste from the nearly 10 crore toilets built across the nation under Swachh Bharat.

The Maharashtra government has christened the manure Sona Khaad, alluding to a gold

standard of sustainability — the toilet pits can be re-used only once they are emptied, and the decomposed waste simply goes back into the soil.

UNICEF Mumbai's Water and Sanitation Hygiene specialist Yusuf Kabir, who has a teacup of Sona Khaad on his work table, had in 2017 initiated the delinking of caste and stigma from the emptying of toilet pits. “Secretary to the Government of India Param Iyer, who was then heading the Swachh Bharat Mission, emptied out a toilet pit in a village in Telangana. Later, Bollywood actors and others emptied toilet pits, to show that

you do not even need safai workers to empty out the scientific twin pits, something not possible in a septic tank. The stigma associated with cleaning out the pits was removed,” Kabir told *The Indian Express*.

UNICEF Maharashtra, in fact, prepared a step-by-step protocol on emptying out twin pit toilets a couple of years ago. According to Kabir, giving guests at Sabarmati Ashram little jars of Sona Khaad demonstrates the closing of the loop of an ecological cycle, “returning to nature what is natural”.

Staffers at the Akola Zilla Parishad got to work on the proj-



100g jars will be gifted to guests at the ashram

ect only on September 21, the request for the bottles of manure having arrived by mail the previous afternoon. “One big challenge was identifying toilets that had been built some time back, where a pit would have been sealed for about a year,” said Akola Zilla Parishad CEO Ayush Prasad.

There is no list of toilets with date of construction, and the officer eventually sent out a squad in a car. Equipped with shovels and other implements, the team found no suitable toilet over the first two days of scouting. Eventually, an octogenarian woman's home that had a toilet

built in 2014 yielded the desired result.

The team then began to set about looking for toilets built under previous government sanitation projects, including the Gadge Baba Gram Swachhata Abhiyaan and the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan of the UPA era. About 45 toilet pits were opened, but only 26 had manure while the others had waste that was still decomposing. Prasad says the team had to be particularly careful in selecting which pits to empty — emptying out a pit with waste that is not yet decomposed would amount to manual scavenging.

According to Jayant Deshpande, sanitation consultant with UNICEF, of the 10 crore toilets under SBM, at least about 6.5 crore are twin pit toilets. When used by an average Indian family, a pit gets filled up every six to seven years. Upon being sealed, faecal matter that comprises 80 per cent water undergoes anaerobic decomposition with the water draining out, each pit yielding on average 60 kg to 70 kg of manure. By that math, about 1 crore toilets may be available to be emptied every year, yielding in total about 60 lakh quintals of manure. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**