



Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif fighting for life: doctor

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U.K.'s Opposition Labour Party agrees to December election

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Bangladesh all-rounder Shikab Al Hasan suspended for 2 years

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Ganguly succeeds in scheduling a Day-Night Test at Eden Gardens

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NEARBY



JNU students protest draft hostel manual

NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union held a strike against the institute's draft hostel manual on Tuesday, calling the changes "arbitrary, undemocratic and irrational" and demanding its immediate withdrawal.

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U.P. villagers attack police team, 3 injured

LUCKNOW

Three policemen, including a station house officer, were injured in an attack by some villagers in Varanasi's Rohaniya area, the police said on Tuesday. The police team had gone to Harsons village after a crime branch team arrived to apprehend two suspects in a loot case.

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Abhay Chautala rules out merger with JJP

CHANDIGARH

Indian National Lok Dal leader Abhay Chautala on Tuesday set aside speculation about coming together of his party and its offshoot outfit - the Jannayak Janta Party - in Haryana. "The chapter is closed... they have gone away and we are separate now," he said.

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European lawmakers begin J&K visit

Invite to MEP from United Kingdom rescinded after he asked to meet people without escort

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

As many as 23 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) arrived in Kashmir on a two-day visit on Tuesday to assess the ground situation after scrapping of J&K's special status and recorded the feedback from the Army, local officials and 15 delegations, as the Valley observed a complete shut-down and saw a spurt in street protests.

"We are looking for the facts. It is a good occasion to get some views. I do not have enough facts to reach a conclusion. We are conscious of the context. We are also conscious that we were being kept away from some people," Spanish MEP Herman Tertsch said.

Earlier in the day, United Kingdom MEP Chris Davies, whose invite was rescinded after he made a request to meet people without any escort, said, "I am not prepared to be part of a PR stunt for the Modi government and pretend that all is well. It's very clear democratic principles are being subverted in Kashmir and the world needs to start taking notice."

Around four MEPs have reportedly backed out from travelling to Kashmir.

On arrival, the European Union (EU) delegates drove through Srinagar city from the airport to their hotel located near the Dal lake, under a heavy security blanket.



Ground survey: Members of the European Union delegation at the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Tuesday. ■NISSAR AHMAD

5 migrant workers shot dead

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Coinciding with the visit of 23 Members of the European Parliament to Kashmir, suspected militants abducted and shot dead five migrant workers and injured another in south Kashmir's Kulgam on Tuesday. The

victims, who hailed from West Bengal, were abducted from their rented accommodation in Katrussu area around 7.30 p.m.

"One injured has been shifted to a Srinagar hospital," Kulgam deputy commissioner Showkat Ajaz told *The Hindu*.

The cavalcade also drove past four detention centres, where three former Chief Ministers and several mainstream politicians were being held since August 5.

The EU delegates held across-the-table interactions with 15 delegations, including of traders, grassroots leaders, students, a three-member women's group and civil society members, at the Lalit Grand Palace hotel, just

next to Hari Niwas where National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah is being detained. The members also took boat rides on the Dal lake in the evening.

Global Youth Foundation head Touseef Raina, who met the MEPs, said he highlighted that youth of J&K witnessed "enough bloodshed and wanted an end to it."

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Questions grow over NGO's invite to MEPs

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The Members of European Parliament (MEPs) visiting India were promised a "prestigious VIP meeting" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the NGO that organised the visit claimed that he wanted to meet them as "influential decision-makers from the European Union", invitations accessed by *The Hindu* show.

The invitation that went out to more than 30 MEPs from Brussels-based British PIO Madi Sharma, who accompanied the MEPs delegation, said that she ran a non-governmental organisation called WESTT (Women's Economic and Social Think Tank), although her link to the government and to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) are unclear. *The Hindu* attempted to email Ms. Sharma, whose Twitter account describes her as an "international business broker", but the message bounced back and said the page was invalid.

"I am organising a prestigious VIP meeting with the Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Narendra Modi and it is my privilege to offer this invitation to you," Ms.



Madi Sharma

Sharma said. "As you will be aware Prime Minister Modi had a landslide victory in the recent elections in India and is planning to continue on his path of growth and development for India the country and its people. In that respect, he would like to meet influential decision makers from the European Union."

It also explained that the three-day visit would include meetings with Mr. Modi and senior officials, a visit to Kashmir, and a press conference on Wednesday.

Ms. Sharma claimed that all expenses for the visit (flight and accommodations) would be sponsored by the Delhi-based International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS).

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Sena not promised top post: Fadnavis

'It will be a BJP-led govt. for 5 years'

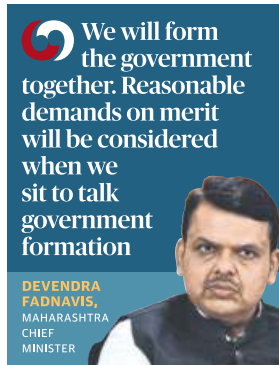
ALOK DESHPANDE
AJEET MAHALE
MUMBAI

A day before the meeting of newly elected MLAs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the Shiv Sena was not promised the top post for two-and-a-half years when the alliance was formalised before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Highlighting the party's stand amid the ongoing tussle with its alliance partner over power sharing, Mr. Fadnavis on Tuesday said he will be the Chief Minister for the next five years and that the BJP Legislature Party would elect its new leader on Wednesday. "There should be no doubt in anybody's mind that it will be a BJP-led government for the next five years," he told reporters at his official residence 'Varsha'.

After the election results on October 24, the Shiv Sena has been pushing for a rotational CM, with Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray last week reminding the BJP of the 50:50 formula "agreed upon" between himself, BJP president Amit Shah and Mr. Fadnavis ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Commenting on this, Mr. Fadnavis said, "I have confirmed with Amit Shah and he told me that the BJP has not given any assurance for



the Chief Minister's post for two-and-a-half years [each for the BJP and Sena]."

Deputy CM's post

Asked about the 50:50 formula and the talk of giving the post of Deputy Chief Minister to the Sena, he said an "appropriate decision" would soon be taken.

Mr. Shah will not take part in Wednesday's meeting of the legislature party for undisclosed reasons. He is likely to visit Mumbai on November 1 or 2.

The meeting will be attended by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and BJP vice-president Avinash Rai Khanna. It is likely to pass a resolution giving all rights to Mr. Shah to elect the leader of the legislature party.

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BROTHERHOOD UNBOUND
► EDITORIAL

India, Saudi Arabia constitute Strategic Partnership Council

PM Modi addresses Future Investment Initiative Summit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced the formation of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council that will be led by the leaderships of both countries. The announcement was made in Saudi capital Riyadh where Prime Minister Modi paid a visit during October 28-29.

The Indian leader thanked the hosts for far-sighted economic planning for Saudi Arabia and praised Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman for his leadership role in giving a new vision to one of the largest energy suppliers in the world. "In talks with the Crown Prince today, we agreed on setting up the Strategic Partnership Council that will help India ad-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the King of Saudi Arabia, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, in Riyadh on Tuesday. ■ANI

dress its expectations and aspirations," said Prime Minister Modi in Hindi, delivering the keynote address at the Future Investment Initiative Summit in Riyadh.

A joint statement at the end of the visit stated that

the founding document setting up the bilateral Strategic Partnership Council was signed by Prime Minister Modi and the Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

CONDEMNS TERRORISM ► PAGE 13

Justice Bobde appointed next CJI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde was appointed the next Chief Justice of India (CJI) on Tuesday after President Ram Nath Kovind signed the warrant of his appointment.

The 63-year-old judge will take oath as the country's 47th CJI on November 18 and will have a tenure of 17 months until April 23, 2021. As per convention, CJI Ranjan Gogoi, who will demit office on November 17, had recommended the name of Justice Bobde - the most senior judge of the Supreme Court - to succeed him.

Justice Bobde is part of the five-judge Constitution Bench that will soon deliver the judgment in the Ram Jannabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute case.

'PRACTICAL JUDGE' ► PAGE 12

City's air quality dips with spike in stubble burning

The AQI on Tuesday was recorded at 400, up from 368 a day before

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality deteriorated further on Tuesday and remained one notch short of the 'severe' category (AQI 401), the worst for this season so far.

The Air Quality Index on Tuesday was recorded at 400, 'very poor' category, at 4 p.m., which is the average of the past 24 hours, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The air quality has worsened since Monday, when it was at 368, mainly due to stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana. The stubble fire counts in the two States have increased from 1,654 to 2,577 during the past 24 hours after a noticeable dip on Sunday, said the government-run SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research).

The contribution of crop residue burning in neighbouring States to the air pol-



The visibility level dropped with smog shrouding the city on Tuesday. ■V.V. KRISHNAN

lution in Delhi was 25% on Tuesday and is expected to increase to 29% on Wednesday, which will be the season's highest, said SAFAR.

An increase in the boundary layer wind speed is expected to improve the air quality by November 1.

CM's appeal

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal requested the Punjab and Haryana governments to take action against stubble burning. "On behalf of Delhi's residents, I appeal to the

governments of Punjab and Haryana with folded hands to take some concrete steps immediately and save Delhi from becoming a gas chamber," he said in a tweet.

At 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday, Delhi's AQI was 417, in the 'severe' category, according to CPCB. Anand Vihar and Wazirpur remained the most polluted areas with AQI at 469 and 454 respectively.

The visibility levels also dropped with smog shrouding the city.

"Since Deepavali, smog

has started to build up due to which visibility has decreased. Emergency action to control pollution, and not to contribute to it, should be taken," said Anumita Roychowdhury, head of 'clean air' programme at the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi.

"The peak pollution on Deepavali night was chiefly due to firecrackers, and now local pollutants are getting trapped and the mixing height [height at which pollutants are spread out in the atmosphere] has also reduced," she said.

The Delhi government on Tuesday attacked Haryana and Punjab for the air pollution in the city. "Latest NASA images show a drastic spurt in crop residue burnings in the neighbouring States, which has severely affected Delhi's air quality," an official statement said.

SEE ALSO ► PAGE 3

80-hour battle to rescue boy from borewell fails

Hundreds of residents of T.N. village line up on roads to bid tearful farewell to two-year-old Sujith

R. KRISHNAMOORTHY
KATHELENE ANTONY
TIRUCHI

The more than 80-hour long battle to save two-year-old Sujith Wilson, who had fallen into an abandoned borewell at Nadukattupatti, near Manapparai, in Tamil Nadu on Friday, failed on Tuesday with rescue workers managing to retrieve only his "highly decomposed and dismembered" body.

The boy was formally declared dead at 2.30 a.m. and his body was retrieved by teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) a couple of hours later.

The body, covered by a polythene sheet, was shifted for post-mortem to the Ma-



Prayers in vain: Two-year-old Sujith Wilson was laid to rest at Fathima Pudur in Tamil Nadu's Tiruchi district on Tuesday. ■PTI

napparai Government Hospital and then to the burial ground for the final rites as people lined up on the roads to bid a tearful farewell.

The mortal remains were laid to rest at a graveyard at

Fathima Pudur shortly after 8 a.m. as relatives and well-wishers grieved in silence.

Commissioner of Revenue Administration J. Radhakrishnan said rescue workers had noticed foul smell ema-

nating from the abandoned borewell around 10 p.m. on Monday.

Special equipment used

As per the NDRF's guidelines, the decision to remove his remains from the borewell was made. "Soon, special equipment was used to retrieve him from the well. A team of doctors took around 45 minutes to confirm his death and give a detailed report," he said.

A pall of gloom pervaded Fathima Pudur in Malaiyadi-patti panchayat, the native village of the child's family, and in neighbouring Vilankurichi and surroundings as wailing relatives had a last glimpse of the coffin. The parents of the child were inconsolable as hundreds of rela-

tives and well-wishers from surrounding villages paid homage at the graveyard.

Sixty-year-old Subramani, a family friend, said nobody was allowed to witness the retrieval operation or the body. Relatives of the family admitted that retrieving the body was difficult since the diameter of the borewell into which the boy had fallen was just four inches.

Although efforts were on to dig an adjacent passage to reach the two-year-old for over 36 hours, NDRF and SDRF officials began attempts to lift the boy through the opening of the abandoned borewell around 1:20 a.m. on Tuesday.

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DEEP TRAPS ► EDITORIAL

P. SUDHAKAR
TIRUNELVELI

Hours after a cybersecurity expert claimed on Twitter that the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant's (KKNPP) domain controller-level access could have been compromised, officials categorically denied it on Tuesday.

KKNPP Site Director Sanjay Kumar said the totally isolated network of KKNPP could not be accessed by any outside network from any part of the globe. Hence, there was no question of it being hacked.

Asked if power generation was stopped last week in the second reactor due to a possible compromise, Mr. Kumar said it was pure-

ly due to the malfunctioning of a mechanical device in the turbine section, and not due to any electronic complication.

"While the first reactor of KKNPP is generating 1,000 Mwe power, the capacity of the Russian supplied VVER reactor, the second unit is producing 670 Mwe electricity [as on Tuesday morning]," Mr. Kumar said.

A press release from the plant information officer also said a cyberattack was not possible as the control systems are not linked to outside network on Internet.

'CONTROL SYSTEMS ARE HACK-PROOF' ► PAGE 13

Most welcome free bus rides, but some men are critical

HEMANI BHANDARI
SHIJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

"Mahilayein apni free ticket le lein [women, please take your free tickets]," announced the conductor of a DTC bus as women passengers hopped on the vehicle on Tuesday morning. Their face lit up when he handed them a pink ticket.

The Delhi government rolled out the free bus ride scheme for women in DTC buses from Tuesday.

Though the initiative was lauded by women, many male passengers, whom *The Hindu* spoke to, took it with a pinch of salt.

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