



Lata Mangeshkar
hospitalised for
breathing difficulty

page 9



Manmohan nominated
to parliamentary panel
in place of Digvijaya

page 12



Morales exit in
Bolivia sparks night
of violence, vacuum

page 14

Deepti spins a web
around the West Indies
as India takes a 2-0 lead

page 18



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NEARBY



Brace for 'severe' air
quality today, tomorrow

NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality stayed in the 'very poor' category on Monday and is expected to fall to the 'severe' category on Tuesday and Wednesday. The air quality is expected to come back to 'very poor' category on Thursday. The city's Air Quality Index on Monday was 360 (very poor), slightly up from 321 (very poor) on Sunday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

CITY ► PAGE 2

Three killed as truck
rams cab in Okhla

NEW DELHI

Three men, two of them brothers, were killed and one was grievously injured when a truck rammed their cab in the Okhla area of south-east Delhi, the police said on Monday. The incident happened around 11 p.m. on Sunday. The truck driver suddenly turned the vehicle on Maa Anand Mai Marg and hit the cab coming from the opposite direction.

CITY ► PAGE 3

Sena denied more time, NCP's turn now

Cong., NCP in huddle as Governor refuses Sena plea for three more days to produce letters of support

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

In fast-paced political developments in Maharashtra, Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari on Monday evening invited the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) to form the government after the Shiv Sena failed to provide the letters of support from the Congress-NCP alliance.

Though the Shiv Sena had asked for three more days to produce the letters, Mr. Koshiyari turned down the request and invited the NCP, which is the third largest party with 54 MLAs in the 288-member Assembly.

"We will discuss the proposal with our allies tomorrow and will get back with our reply to the Governor's office before 8.30 p.m. tomorrow," NCP State president Jayant Patil said after meeting the Governor late in the evening.

In a late night development, NCP president Sharad Pawar called up Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray to clear any misgivings and is learnt to have expressed confidence that the crisis would be resolved by Tuesday.

Sena exits NDA

The developments came on a day when the Shiv Sena's lone representative in the Union Cabinet, Arvind Sawant, resigned as the Union Heavy Industries Minister, and the party severed its ties with the National Democrat-



Turmoil continues: Shiv Sena youth wing chief Aaditya Thackeray addressing media after meeting the Governor in Mumbai on Monday. • ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

ic Alliance. The political drama took another twist after the Congress announced that it need more time to talk to its ally, the NCP, just minutes before the 7:30 p.m. deadline that the Governor had set for the Shiv Sena to stake claim.

"The Congress Working Committee (CWC) met this morning and had a detailed discussion on the situation in Maharashtra after which a consultation was held with State leaders. The Congress president has spoken with Sharad Pawarji. The party will have further discussion with the NCP," the Congress said in a statement.

The statement, however, had no mention about extending support to the Shiv Sena. Senior leaders, including A.K. Antony, Mallikarjun

Kharge and K.C. Venugopal, are learnt to have voiced reservations at the CWC meeting. Congress leaders from Kerala, which sends the highest number of MPs to the Lok Sabha, in particular, are learnt to have argued that a tie-up with the Shiv Sena will send a "wrong political signal" and give an edge to the Left parties.

However, a majority of the newly elected Congress MLAs were not only in favour of supporting a Shiv Sena-led alliance but also on joining the government.

'Positive direction'

Top Congress sources told *The Hindu* that though "there has been a pause to the process, it is proceeding in a positive direction" as there have been crucial

Musical chairs

Maharashtra witnessed fast-paced political developments since Saturday

Nov. 9

Governor invites BJP to form govt.

Nov. 10

6 p.m. BJP decides not to stake claim to form government

7.30 p.m. Governor invites Shiv Sena to form government; gives 24 hours

Nov. 11

2.20 p.m. NCP president Sharad Pawar meets Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray

6.45 p.m. Sena leaders call on Governor, seek more time, Governor refuses

8.30 p.m. Governor invites NCP to form government; gives 24 hours

Gehlot briefs MLAs at resort

Amid speculation on government formation in Maharashtra, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday briefed the Congress MLAs, put up at a resort near Jaipur, about the party's stand and obtained their views. Mr. Gehlot, along with his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel, reached the resort late in the evening. The MLAs, who were shifted to the resort on the Jaipur-Delhi National Highway on Friday and Saturday, later left for Mr. Gehlot's official residence, where a dinner was hosted in the honour of former President Pratibha Patil. ► PAGE 12

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

IIP shrinks by 4.3% to lowest in 8 years

All 3 major sectors saw contraction

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Industrial activity in September contracted sharply by 4.3%, driven by major slowdowns in the capital goods, mining, and manufacturing sectors, according to official data released on Monday.

The contraction in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) in September is compared with the contraction of 1.1% in August. The Index had grown 4.3% in September of the previous year.

"This is the first time after November 2012 that all three broad-based sectors have contracted and the lowest monthly growth in the 2011-12 base year series," Devendra Kumar Pant, Chief Economist and Senior Director, Public Finance, India Ratings & Research,

said. "In the old (2004-05) base, IIP in October 2011 contracted by 5%."

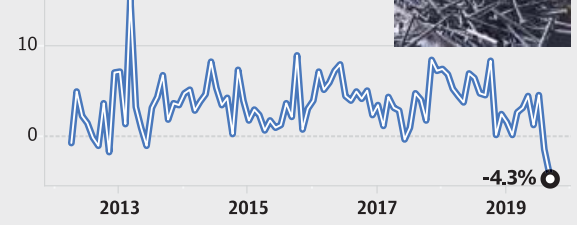
Within the Index, the capital goods sector saw a contraction of 20.7%, compared with shrinkage of 21% in August. The mining sector contracted by 8.5%, compared with an anaemic growth of 0.1% in August. The manufacturing sector contracted 3.9% in September, compared with a contraction of 1.2% in the previous month. The electricity sector, too, saw a continued contraction, shrinking 2.6%, compared with a contraction of 0.9% in August.

The consumer durables sector continued to shrink in September, by 9.9%, compared with a contraction of 9.1% in August.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

Deeper plunge

Industrial output contracted 4.3% in September - the worst fall in 90 months - adding to a series of weak indicators released recently suggesting a deep-rooted economic slowdown. Graph shows the year-on-year change in Index of Industrial Production (IIP) between April 2012 and September 2019



Trains to run again in Kashmir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Train services in Kashmir will resume on Tuesday, the Railway Ministry said here on Monday. The services were stopped nearly three months ago, following the Union government's decision to withdraw the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370.

"After assurance by the GRP [Government Railway Police], J&K, regarding safe operation of trains in Kashmir Valley between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., the Firozpur Division will commence a limited passenger service of two set of trains between Srinagar-Baramulla-Srinagar from November 12," a Ministry official said.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 13

JNU rocks Delhi



March halted: Jawaharlal Nehru University students being stopped by police in New Delhi on Monday as they protested against fee hike. Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal was stranded at the venue of a convocation. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR (PAGE 9)

MHA begins temple trust formation job

Officials to seeks Law Ministry's opinion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has initiated the process of setting up a trust to fix the modalities for the construction of a temple in Ayodhya as per the Supreme Court order in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case delivered on Saturday.

Ministry officials are examining the 1,045-page verdict and will soon seek the opinion of the Law Ministry and the Attorney-General on how to proceed with setting up a trust. An official said the technical aspects of the order were being studied.

However, another official said it was not clear whether the Home Ministry or the Culture Ministry would be the nodal body for the trust.

In its unanimous verdict, the court said: "The Central Government shall, within a period of three months from the date of this judgment, formulate a scheme under the Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act, 1993."

"The scheme shall envisage the setting up of a trust with a board of trustees or any other appropriate body... The scheme to be framed by Central government shall make necessary provisions in regard to the functioning of the trust or body including on matters relating to the management of the trust, the powers of the trustees including the construction of a temple and all necessary, incidental and supplemental matters," the court ruled.

Trains collide in Hyderabad, 18 injured

V. GEETANATH
ABHINAV DESHPANDE
HYDERABAD

Eighteen passengers were injured, one critically, after a local MMTS suburban train crashed into a Secunderabad-bound Hundry Express coming from Kur-nool just outside the Kacheguda station on Monday morning.

Twelve of the injured were discharged from the Osmania General Hospital (OGH) after first aid.

MMTS train loco-pilot L. Chandrasekhar, 36, who was trapped in the mangled lead coach, was pulled out alive after an eight-hour rescue operation and rushed to the hospital. Additional General Manager B.B. Singh blamed the accident on a "manual error".

NARROW ESCAPE ► PAGE 8

Seized antiquities left to face the elements in a Chennai parking lot

Priceless artefacts of stone, bronze and wood seized by the Idol Wing police, are out in the open, with just a wall separating them from the Adyar river

R. SIVARAMAN
CHENNAI

They had been stolen from temples across Tamil Nadu, valued for the priceless heritage of art and sculpture they embodied in bronze, stone and wood.

But now, many of these priceless artefacts - seized over the years by the Idol Wing Police - lie abandoned, at the mercy of the elements, in the rear of the unit's premises that is part of the CB-CID Economic Offences Wing at Guindy in Chennai.

The artefacts that include centuries-old stone sculptures and idols, carved stone pillars, intricately worked wooden pieces, temple cars, *vahanas* or ritual vehicles for idols, among others, are stored in

a haphazard manner in vehicle sheds and open spaces on the premises.

Treasure trove

Among these are around 800 antique stone idols and artefacts seized in 2016, when the Idol Wing stumbled upon a treasure trove at the godown and gallery of the antique dealer G. Deenadayalan in Alwarpet.

SPECIAL

Subsequently, 200 artefacts - most of them made of wood - were also seized from a bungalow-cum-gallery of one Lakshminarayanan, an associate of Deenadayalan, in Kuchikaadu, near Karanai village on the East Coast Road, on the outskirts of Chennai.

The Idol Wing also recovered 244 antique idols and artefacts from businessman Ranvir Shah's house in Saidapet and two farmhouses in Kancheepuram district. Further investigation led to the unearthing of 23 idols from the Poes Garden premises of businesswoman Kiran Rao.

These antiques were seized when A.G. Ponn Manickavel was Inspector General of Police of the Idol Wing. Following his superannuation, he is now the court-appointed Special Officer of the special unit.

Long wait

As per the Criminal Procedure Code, the antiques are seized by an investigation officer and are returned to the rightful owner or temple on-



Without care: Priceless heritage lies haphazard at the CB-CID Economic Offences Wing premises in Guindy. • R. SIVARAMAN

ly after the completion of legal proceedings, including a trial, which could take several years.

In some instances, however, the Idol Wing has re-

turned the items after they were able to produce claims from temple administrators or villagers in court.

Among these are the famous Kallidaikurichi Natar-

aja idol, which was retrieved from Australia and returned to the Sri Kulasekaramudaiy Temple, and another set of idols of Nataraja and consorts, which were returned to the Narumbunathar temple in Thiruppadaimarudur in Tirunelveli.

However, a large part of the seized artefacts are to be found in the open, waiting for legal proceedings against the dealers or offenders to be completed.

Bureaucratic tangle

Mr. Manickavel told *The Hindu* that the authorities of the Government Museum at Egmore had refused to allot space for storing the seized artefacts.

"We have to keep them in our car parks and in open space exposing them to sun

and rain. What to do? At our request, the HR&CE (Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department) came forward to allot a place for keeping them safe. We were shown two places in Tiruvottiyur and Thiruvanniyur one year ago. Nothing has materialised so far," he said.

Idol Wing officials are also apprehensive of the artefacts getting damaged in case of floods with just a compound wall standing between the priceless artefacts and the Adyar river.

However, HR&CE Commissioner K. Phanindra Reddy said: "We have identified a piece of land belonging to the Kapaliswarar Temple. [But] the Idol Wing was to send a proposal to the government to take the land

on lease," indicating a procedural stalemate.

Experts appalled

Art experts and archaeologists have raised serious concerns over the possible damage to these priceless pieces of cultural heritage as a result of having been left in the open over a long period, especially in a coastal city.

"Efflorescence can result in deterioration of the surface through expansion and flaking. Bird droppings too are a threat. It may need treatment to remove salt by poultice using paper pulp," said Professor Sharada Srinivasan, an expert in archaeological science with the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

Brace for ‘severe’ air quality today, tomorrow: SAFAR

The AQI is expected to come back to ‘very poor’ category on Thursday

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi’s air quality stayed in the ‘very poor’ category on Monday and is expected to fall to the ‘severe’ category on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The air quality is expected to come back to ‘very poor’ category on Thursday.

The city’s Air Quality Index on Monday was 360 (very poor), slightly up from 321 (very poor) on Sunday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The level of PM2.5 was 3.8 times (229.1 ug/m3) the safe limit (60ug/m3) in Delhi-NCR at 7 p.m., as per CPCB data. ‘Severe’ air quality can cause respiratory problems in healthy people and has serious health impact on people with lung or heart diseases, according to the EPCA, a Supreme Court-appointed pollution control body.

Avoid outdoor activity

People are advised to avoid all outdoor physical activities, not go on morning walks, and close windows of their homes, during ‘severe’ air pollution.

“Stop any activity if you experience unusual coughing, chest discomfort,

There can’t be uniformity in rates of private nursing homes, hospitals: HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has held that there can be no uniformity in rates charged by private nursing homes and hospitals as the amount would depend upon the nature and type of disease as well as the quality of treatment provided.

The court also noted that charges levied by such entities would depend on the available facilities.

The HC made the remarks while dismissing a petition seeking directions to the Delhi government to issue a notification on bringing uniformity in charges levied by private nursing homes and hospitals in the Capital.

“All private nursing homes and hospitals cannot be equated with respect to the charges required to be paid by the patients,” the High Court said.

The High Court further noted that the charges depend on promptness in providing services, efficiency of staff and quality of services provided.

NGO Legal Forum for Women Empowerment had sought uniformity in charges, and also a mechanism to help the public lodge complaints or raise grievances against any malpractice by such entities.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Public Service Broadcasting Day - 2019 celebrations. On this day in 1947 Gandhiji addressed more than 2 lakh refugees at the Kurukshetra Camp from Broadcasting House, New Delhi. The event will begin with a commemoration choirs from schools of Delhi / NCR at Gandhi-King Memorial Plaza; Usha Mehta’s tryst with freedom: Reliving the moments with Rita Mukerjee, former Chief Producer, All India Radio at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium; Discussion on Public Service Broadcasting and Speaking Truth to Power, a presentation by Suhas Borker, at India International Centre (IIC), 10:30 a.m. onwards.

Talk: 14th annual discussion on the State of Parliamentary Democracy in India. Discussants: Prof. Surinder Singh Jodhka, Professor, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, JNU; Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, Senior Associate Editor, Frontline; and Sitaram Yechury, General Secretary, CPI-M at Conference Room - I, IIC, 6:30 p.m.

Music: To celebrate the legacy of Baba Guru Nanak Dev on his 550th birth anniversary, Dr. Madan Gopal Singh and Chaar Yaar present an ensemble of Odes to ecology, cosmos and the sheer diversity of life. An evening of Kabir, Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan, Tagore and many more at The Stein, Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Exhibition: “Live Unbound”, an art exhibition curated by Sugandha Chagti at Modern Art Gallery, Chanakyapuri, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@delhi@thehindu.co.in)



PM2.5 levels in the city reached nearly four times the safe limit on Monday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

wheezing, breathing difficulty, or fatigue and consult a doctor,” read the ‘severe’ category advisory issued by government-run monitoring agency SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research).

The agency said that the air quality is expected to deteriorate due to low wind speed, cloudy conditions, and an increase in contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring States to Delhi’s pollution over the next two days.

The contribution is expected to increase to 25% on

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	360	Gurugram	326
Ghaziabad	391	Faridabad	341
Noida	381	Greater Noida	371
Good	Satisfactory	Moderate	
0-50	51-100	101-200	
Poor	Very poor	Severe	
201-300	301-400	>401	
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB			

Tuesday, up from 18% on Monday. It was as high as 44% earlier this season.

“There is a western disturbance due to cyclonic circulation over Jammu & Kashmir. Under its influence, no rainfall is expected in the

Delhi region but the sky will be partly cloudy with cool temperature during the next two days,” said SAFAR.

This may lead to lowering of boundary layer height and accumulation of pollutants near the surface.

Boundary layer height is the height of the atmosphere at which pollutants are spread out. Lesser height leads to higher pollution.

Meanwhile, the EPCA all said dirty fuel-based industries, hot-mix plants and stone-crushers in Delhi-NCR will remain shut till Wednesday morning.

Ministers of other States absent at meeting on air pollution: govt.

Gahlot writes to Javadekar about lax attitude of authorities

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Kailash Gahlot on Monday claimed that the Environment Ministers of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan did not participate in a meeting called by the Centre to prepare a road-map to contain air pollution.

Mr. Gahlot also wrote letters to Union Minister Prakash Javadekar and the Chief Ministers of Haryana and Punjab over this issue.

“This lax approach – despite strict directions from the Supreme Court and even after summoning the Chief Secretaries of the respective States by the apex court – will not bring positive results in the efforts to contain pollution,” said Mr. Gahlot on Monday.

In the letter written to Mr. Javadekar, the Minister said that distribution of machines required for in-situ management of crop residue is taking place at a “tardy



Kailash Gahlot

pace” in the districts of neighbouring States.

Stubble burning

Adding that stubble burning in neighbouring States was a major cause of pollution, Mr. Gahlot wrote: “It is, therefore, important that strict timelines are laid down for distribution of machines to all the farmers in the neighbouring States and responsibility be fixed for not adhering to timelines.”

The Minister also said that there were no officials from the municipal corpora-

tions of Delhi and the Delhi Development Authority present at the meeting.

“Dust originating from roads, particularly from unpaved roads, is one of the major sources of pollution in Delhi. Mostly, these roads fall under the jurisdiction of the municipal corporations. The patches of empty land that create dust fall under the DDA. Neither municipal commissioners nor DDA officials were present in the meeting. Without the cooperation of such agencies, dust sources and garbage that causes pollution cannot be controlled. It is unfortunate that such a serious issue has been neglected by these agencies,” said Mr. Gahlot.

The Minister added that it was unfortunate that cases of stubble burning are increasing “despite the directions of the Supreme Court to the officials – starting from Chief Secretaries to district magistrates, gram panchayat officials”.

DU students continue stir against high-rise

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Multiple Delhi University students’ groups, including the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, National Students’ Union of India and others on Monday protested the proposed construction of a 39-storey building near North Campus.

The protesters say the building “would breach the privacy of women’s hostels in the vicinity and alter the cultural landscape of the area”. A student who had gone on a hunger strike continued his protest for the second day.

The NSUI carried out a

march up to Vishwavidyalaya metro station. The building will end the dream of creating a closed North Campus, said NSUI.

The Delhi University Students’ Union and the ABVP carried out a rally from the Faculty of Arts to the construction site. ABVP Secretary Sidharth Yadav said the building was a “sordid episode of legalised larceny, symbiotic corruption and moral turpitude”.

He added that the members of the group would petition the North civic body, DMRC, the L-G and the officials of the Ministry of Defence to seek redressal.

SOL students seek rollback of credit system

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Students of the School of Open Learning, Delhi University, protested outside the office of the Ministry of Human Resource Development on Monday.

They are demanding the rollback of the Choice Based Credit System, which they said was implemented hastily. The students were protest-

esting under the banner of Krantikari Yuva Sangathan.

The CBCS, which is already in place in for DU’s regular courses, was introduced for correspondence courses this year. However, students said that the SOL administration had implemented the system hastily.

“Many of the students do not know the syllabus and the teachers are also unsure.

I-T Department surveys onion traders in city

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Income-Tax Department on Monday surveyed onion traders in Delhi following reports of alleged hoarding of the bulb amid its skyrocketing prices.

I-T sleuths checked the account books of some wholesale dealers against physical stocks of the commodity and its delivery to buyers as part of a tax evasion investigation.

The department examining onion stocks as its price has shot up to ₹100/kg. Some digital evidence and incriminating documents were found during inspections, they added.

DELHI ☀️🌧️Timings

TUESDAY, NOV. 12			
☀️ RISE	06:41	🌃 SET	17:30
🌃 RISE	17:37	🌅 SET	06:11
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13			
☀️ RISE	06:42	🌃 SET	17:29
🌃 RISE	18:15	🌅 SET	07:08
THURSDAY, NOV. 14			
☀️ RISE	06:42	🌃 SET	17:29
🌃 RISE	18:59	🌅 SET	08:06

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	29	13
Safdarjang	29	13
Palam	27	14

Delhi Palam Today
28°C Shallow fog/mist during cool morning is likely. Day will be slightly warm with sunny sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
28°C Dry weather with shallow fog/mist would persist during morning. Day will be slightly warm. A mainly clear sky.

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IN BRIEF

Doctor assaulted by patient's family

NEW DELHI
A resident doctor of Safdarjung Hospital was assaulted while on duty on Sunday night by a few relatives of a patient. Following the incident, the doctors threatened to go on strike but were reassured of support from the hospital authorities after which they resumed work. The doctors said extreme pressure on the hospital in terms of patient flow is one of the prime causes of these frequent assaults.

Vendors to go on strike from tomorrow

NEW DELHI
Street vendors from different parts of Delhi, under the banner of National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), said they will go on an indefinite strike at the civic centre, starting Wednesday, demanding evictions be held off till surveys of vendors are completed.

Three killed as truck rams cab in Okhla

One passenger hurt, truck driver booked for negligent driving

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Three men, two of them brothers, were killed and one was grievously injured when a truck rammed their cab in the Okhla area of south-east Delhi, the police said on Monday.

The incident happened around 11 p.m. on Sunday. The truck driver suddenly turned the vehicle on Maa Anand Mai Marg in Okhla Phase-I and hit the cab coming from the opposite direction. Three of the cab occupants – Apoorv Sarkar (35), Sushankar Rai (42) and Siddhartha Rai (45) – died on the spot, while Roopam Mandal (43), a friend of Siddhartha, was admitted to a hospital with serious injuries, the police said. A PCR call was made and a team reached the spot. They found that the truck had a Chhattisgarh registration number and the cab bore an U.P. number plate. “Preliminary probe suggests that the truck was coming from the



The truck and the cab at the accident spot. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mehrauli-Badarpur side and its driver negligently turned towards Okhla Phase-I, hitting a cab coming from the Crown Plaza side and moving towards ESI Hospital,” said Chinmoy Biswal, DCP (South-East).

The car was crushed in the collision. All the occupants of the car were taken to different hospitals, the DCP said. Sarkar from U.P.was driving the cab. He was declared brought dead at ESI Hospital. He was the brother-in-law of Sushankar and Siddhartha, a senior officer said. Siddhartha, who worked as a cab driver, was declared brought

dead at AIIMS Trauma Centre after being referred from ESI Hospital.

Sushankar was declared brought dead at Apollo Hospital. He hailed from MP and used to do agricultural work. He had come to Delhi to meet his brother Siddhartha.

Mandal, an employee at a private firm, has been moved to ICU at Max Hospital. The truck driver, Ram Rattan (32), was nabbed from the spot. A case under Sections 279 (rash driving) and 304-A (causing death by negligence) of the IPC was registered at the Okhla Industrial Area police station, they said.

Toddler comes under water tanker, dies; driver arrested

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A one-year-old toddler came under the wheels of a water tanker in Outer North Delhi’s Narela on Monday, the police said.

The driver, Neeraj, has been arrested, they said. DCP (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said the incident was reported at 11 a.m. in Narela’s Pocket 8.

“On reaching the spot, the police were told that the toddler had gone under the parked vehicle, which the driver did not know. He reversed his vehicle and the child came under the wheels,” he said.

The vehicle has been seized. An officer said a neighbour claimed that the driver had earphones on while driving and hence could not hear them scream. The body has been sent for post-mortem and a case under Section 304A (causing death by negligence) of the IPC and relevant sections of Motor Vehicle Act has been registered.

Regularisation:
AAP slams BJP,
Congress for
‘fooling people’

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Monday criticised the BJP and Congress on regularisation of unauthorised colonies in the city, saying that the Congress had distributed “false” provisional certificates and now the BJP will distribute “false” numbers from a website.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh said that before the 2008 election, Sheila Dikshit’s government had distributed provisional certificates to several unauthorised colonies. “At that time, it was promised that after the election, the colonies will be registered. But the Congress failed to keep the promise,” he said.

“Now the BJP-led Central government will open a website to fool people and they will ask all to apply on that website,” he added.

AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai, said, “As per sources, the BJP has no intention of getting the registration done”

Firm up regularisation
process, L-G tells govt.

‘Implement PM-UDAY in mission mode’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal on Monday directed Delhi government officials to firm up processes and mobilise adequate resources in a time-bound manner to provide ownership rights to residents of close to 2,000 unauthorised colonies in the Capital.

Mr. Baijal, the Raj Niwas said in a statement, also directed that a digital survey of these colonies be carried out and their boundaries be delineated to ensure the smooth implementation of the PM-UDAY (Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojna) “in mission mode”.

The development comes in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s felicitation by a delegation of residents and members of residents’ welfare associations from unauthorised colonies, on Friday, for his government’s move to confer on them ownership rights.

They were also assured that



Anil Baijal

a Bill to this effect would be passed during the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament.

Review by L-G

At a meeting attended by the Chief Secretary and officials representing other departments concerned, Mr. Baijal reviewed the steps to be taken with the objective of giving ownership, transfer and mortgage rights to the residents of an estimated 1,797 such colonies, the statement by Raj Niwas said.

The L-G, according to the statement, emphasised on access to social infrastructure and basic civic amenities for the residents of these colonies.

Centre begins work on
NCR Regional Plan 2041

Improving rank of NCR on ease of living index will be priority

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Setting the goals of enhancing liveability, economic activity and sustainability of the National Capital Region, the process of preparing a 20-year plan – the NCR Regional Plan 2041 – by September 2021 was kick-started by the government here on Monday.

Speaking at an inaugural conclave on NCR-2041 by the NCR Planning Board (NCRPB), Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said the regional plan would have to be drafted “keeping citizens at the centre”. He added that improving the ranking of NCR cities on the ease of living index, boosting economic activity and opportunity, and furthering sustainability, would be the focus of the planning process.

Archana Agrawal, Member Secretary of the NCRPB, said the population of the



The population of NCR is expected to increase from 6 crore now to 11 crore in 2041. • FILE PHOTO

NCR, which comprises Delhi, 13 districts of Haryana, nine of Uttar Pradesh and two of Rajasthan, spread over 55,083 sqkm, was expected to increase from six crore now to 11 crore in 2041.

Mr. Mishra added that with that population, the NCR would have a population similar to some countries like France and Italy.

The NCR Regional Plan 2021, which was supposed to guide the development of

the region from 2001 till 2021, was only notified in 2005. When asked whether the 2041 plan would be ready in time, Mr. Mishra said it should be. Ms. Agrawal said the target would be September 2041.

Taking a critical look at the regional plan 2021, Mr. Mishra said many projections made in the plan had not come true and there was a need to “diagnose” this.

Apart from boosting employment overall, Mr. Mishra said there was also a need to integrate rural and urban sections of the NCR. He added that the concept of a natural conservation zone that was introduced in the 2021 plan for the first time needed to be made more effective.

Starting the process of collecting public feedback, the NCRPB invited suggestions on what the plan should include via a form on its website, Ms. Agrawal said.

DMRC line utilisation
sees steady rise due
to network expansion

Daily figure jumps from 47 lakh to 54 lakh

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro’s line utilisation figures have seen a steady rise from 47.37 lakh per day in April to 54.26 lakh per day in September this year, show data provided by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

Line utilisation is a concept used by the DMRC to record a person’s commute across corridors as against the ridership figures, which count a particular commuter once, irrespective of the number of lines used by the commuter to travel to a particular destination.

Data provided by the DMRC show that while the daily average line utilisation in May was 48.40 lakh, it was 48.75 lakh in June. July, August and September saw a daily average of 51.73 lakh, 52.47 lakh and 54.26 lakh respectively.

DMRC officials maintained that the increase in line utilisation is a result of the expanding metro network in the National Capital Region and reflects the “ease in commute” for passengers.

“With the new enhanced reach and feasibility of travel by the metro in all directions of Delhi-NCR after the opening of Phase III, the ridership figure alone does not any more reflect how popular the lines are among users. Rather, it is the utilisation of the lines by passengers which shows how the metro network is easing the commuting experience for



those residing in Delhi-NCR,” a DMRC official said.

With the completion of Phase III, the DMRC network has expanded to over 391km with 286 stations across Delhi-NCR.

While stating that line utilisation helps in recording how connectivity for a particular commuter has “significantly gone up”, the DMRC official said: “Earlier, a passenger who lived in GTB Nagar and had to go to Chirag Delhi for work had to use the Yellow Line [till Hauz Khas] and then use some other mode of transport to reach office. However, now his entire journey can be completed via the metro if he uses the Magenta Line to reach Chirag Delhi by interchanging trains at Hauz Khas.”

“In this case, there is no increase in ridership observed in the metro system but definitely the same passenger has benefited a great deal and line utilisation of the metro has increased from one [Yellow] to two [Yellow and Magenta],” the official added.

‘Name political nominees
for metro board quickly’

Delhi government tells DMRC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Monday asked the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to expedite its decision on the appointment of four political nominees on its board while asserting that the DMRC’s decision to seek legal opinion on the matter was “illegal”.

Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said the DMRC board of directors had met on September 26 and took several crucial decisions, passing them without any representation from the Delhi government which has 50% stake in the DMRC.

‘Decisions illegal’

Such decisions, he alleged, were “illegal and voidable”.

“We came to know from the minutes of the board meeting held on September 26 that the matter of Delhi government’s nominees was on the agenda but the decision [their appointment] was deferred,” Mr. Gahlot said at a press conference.

The DMRC refused to

comment on the Transport Minister’s allegations.

In July, the Delhi government nominated AAP leaders Raghav Chadha and Atishi in addition to Delhi Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC) Vice-Chairman Jasmine Shah and Navin Gupta to the corporation’s board.

However, a decision on their appointment is yet to be taken by the DMRC. In the meantime, the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry objected to the nomination of non-bureaucratic persons to the DMRC board.

In September, the HUA Ministry sought legal opinion on the Delhi government’s four “political” nominations, according to sources.

On Monday, Mr. Gahlot alleged that the DMRC seeking legal opinion on the Delhi government’s recommendation was “illegal.”

“I am writing to the Managing Director of the DMRC to expedite the decision and appoint the government nominees,” Mr. Gahlot added.

Three found dead in
suspected accident case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

In a suspected case of an accident, three persons, including a minor, were found dead near a drain in outer Delhi’s Nihal Vihar on Monday morning, the police said.

Additional DCP (Outer) Rajendra Singh Sagar said the victims – Harji (22), Kapil (15), and Vishaluddin alias Vishal (20) – are all from Nihal Vihar. The case came to fore when at 8 a.m., an ASI saw three persons lying dead near a sewage plant in Nihal Vihar. “A motorcycle was also found at the spot in accidental condition,” he said.

The bodies were shifted to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital. “No other vehicle was

found involved in the accident. It appears that the two-wheeler was being driven at a high speed. There is a curve near the drain and the driver might have lost control of the vehicle,” Mr. Sagar said, adding that the incident is expected to have happened post 12 a.m.

During probe, it was found that the bike belonged to Vishal. Kapil’s mother told the police that he had left home saying that he was going out for dinner with friends. Harji worked at a cloth shop and Kapil was a school dropout.

“A case under Sections 279 (rash driving) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the IPC has been registered and a probe is under way,” the officer said.

3 held for thrashing Dalit youth for taking part in Swabhiman rally

‘Rahul Meghwal’s own friends turned enemies when it came to caste’

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

The Neemuch police on Monday arrested two Rajput men for allegedly thrashing a Dalit youth for taking part in a rally calling for an end to caste discrimination on November 3.

“While one of the accused was arrested earlier, another is absconding. We have declared a reward of ₹5,000 for anyone informing the police about his whereabouts,” said Rakesh Kumar Sagar, district Superintendent of Police.

Although the incident occurred on the night of November 3, the day Rahul Meghwal took part in a Dalit Swabhiman rally (rally for self-respect), he went to the police only on November 7.

“I was scared initially. They had threatened to kill me if I filed a complaint,” Mr. Rahul, a resident of Ratadiya village, 15 km from Neemuch, told *The Hindu*. “I have never had to face even a slap. But that night, the four men, who were my friends, thrashed me on my back with lathis.”



Members of Dalit groups taking part in the Swabhiman rally in Neemuch on November 3. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A Bachelor of Science graduate, Mr. Rahul, 23, runs a news portal – Malwa 24 News, and his coverage of the rally was well appreciated by members of his community.

While thrashing him at a village on the outskirts of Neemuch, the accused hurled casteist slurs on him and told him: “Weren’t you jumping a lot in the rally? You don’t have the status to be our equal. Don’t you know about our clout in this area?”

At 8 p.m. on November 3,

Mr. Rahul was called to a dhaba by his friend Yogesh Singh, who was arrested on Monday.

There, he helped stop a scuffle between Kapil Meghwal, of his own village, and Yogesh, who later asked for a joyride on Mr. Rahul’s motorcycle, but fled with it, according to the First Information Report.

Yogesh called him to the Dushera ground, where, along with three others, he snatched his two mobile phones when Mr. Rahul refused to give him Mr. Kapil’s

address. Then they forcibly took him to an empty spot near a village.

“I shouted for help all along the way,” said Mr. Rahul. “And there they thrashed me for hours.”

Then, Arjun Singh, also arrested, took out “something resembling a gun” and put it to his head, threatening to kill him if he went to the police, said the FIR. Mr. Rahul returned home at 4.30 a.m. the next day.

Father threatened

The four also threatened Mr. Rahul’s father against filing a complaint. But as things came to a head on November 6 when they were threatened again, Mr. Rahul, district incharge of the Bhim Army, approached its State leadership.

“He was initially reluctant about complaining against upper caste men as they had threatened him. But we told him not to worry about consequences,” said Sunil Astay, State in-charge, Bhim Army. “His own friends turned enemies when it came to caste.”

45 policemen suspended for dereliction of duty

Illegal entry of heavy trucks on bridge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

As many as 45 policemen were suspended on Monday for giving illegal entry to overloaded trucks on Mahatma Gandhi Setu which connects Patna to north Bihar.

Among the suspended policemen are 32 constables and 13 personnel of the rank of Sub-Inspector and Assistant Sub-Inspector.

Patna Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Amarkesh D. suspended the policemen after getting reports of regular movement of overloaded trucks and heavy vehicles on the dilapidated bridge built over the Ganga.

Bridge under repair

The overloaded trucks were said to be crossing the 5.7-km-long bridge after allegedly greasing the palms of

policemen deputed there to check the movement of vehicles. The dilapidated bridge, third-longest in India, is undergoing reconstruction and heavy vehicles are banned on it.

Recently, videos of policemen accepting money from truck drivers had gone viral on social media.

FIR lodged

“We have been getting information for the past few days that there was movement of 100-150 heavy vehicles and overloaded trucks on the bridge... so after inquiry we took action and suspended the policemen posted there,” said a senior police officer at the State police headquarters.

“An FIR has also been lodged against them and departmental action too will be taken,” he added.

Tejashwi draws flak for birthday bash in plane

RJD defends Lalu’s younger son

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA

Jailed Rashtriya Janata Dal supremo Lalu Prasad’s younger son Tejashwi Prasad Yadav was at the receiving end of the Opposition ire on Monday after pictures of his 30th birthday celebration in a chartered plane went viral on social media.

In the pictures, Mr. Tejashwi is seen with his close aides Sanjay Yadav and Mani Yadav and Lalu Prasad’s associate Bhola Yadav. However, the day when and where these pictures were clicked is not yet known.

Lashing out at Mr. Tejashwi, Bihar BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand said: “These leaders were born with silver spoons, they not only make fun of the poor but are also the black spots in the name of a political party.”

The RJD leader had on Sa-



Tejashwi Yadav

turday celebrated his birthday by planting 30 saplings at his 1, Polo Road bungalow here. He also cut a 30-pound cake during the bash, which was attended by senior RJD functionaries.

The RJD, however, defended Mr. Tejashwi. “The Opposition parties are suffering from Tejashwiphobia. Why can’t a leader who talks about the poor celebrate his birthday?” said RJD spokesperson Mrityunjaya Tiwari.

Birds found dead in Sambhar Lake

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR

Hundreds of migratory birds of over a dozen species have been found dead in Sambhar Lake area near Jaipur.

Water contamination is suspected to be the cause behind the birds’ death, said officials, adding, the exact reason, however, would be clear only after testing their viscera.

The birds, numbering around 1,500, were found dead on Sunday in an five to seven square km area around the lake.

After receiving the information from local residents, a team of revenue, forest and veterinary officials visited the area and found around 1,500 carcasses of 15 species, including those of northern shovelers, ruddy shelduck, plovers, avocets and others.

“Samples were collected by the veterinary team and sent to the National Institute of High Security Animal Disease Centre, Bhopal. The result is expected in four to five days,” a Forest Department official said.

Carcasses have been disposed and the area is being thoroughly combed.

This is the second incident after a similar incident in Jodhpur’s Khinchan area, where 37 demoiselle cranes were found dead on Thursday last week.

Death toll due to Cyclone Bulbul rises

Mamata assures compensation



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee meeting Cyclone Bulbul victims in Kakdwip on Monday. ■SUBHAM DUTTA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday made an aerial survey of the cyclone-hit areas in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district and held administrative meetings at Kakdwip, where 60,000 families had been affected, authorities said.

She assured the people affected by Cyclone Bulbul that the State government would offer compensation for damaged houses and crops.

"We will send a team of experts to assess the damage... Those whose betel nut cultivation or paddy crops have been affected will be compensated," Ms. Banerjee told the people who met her in Kakdwip.

The Chief Minister said that 1.78 lakh people were stationed in relief centres or else the casualties would have been higher.

Ms. Banerjee said that 4-5 lakh people had been affected by the cyclone in the

South 24 Parganas district alone.

Ms. Banerjee said one person, a fisherman, was found dead in the district after a trawler capsized. "Eight fishermen, who were in a trawler, are still missing. Fifteen have been rescued," she said.

The Chief Minister met the family members of Sk. Mubur Rehman, the fisherman whose body was recovered on Monday morning.

Bodies recovered

Later in the day, four more bodies were recovered by the Indian Coast Guard.

The trawler had capsized near Sagar on the evening of November 9.

Cyclone Bulbul made a landfall between Sagar Island in South 24 Parganas and Khepupara in Bangladesh.

With five bodies of the missing fishermen, the death toll due to the cyclone has increased from seven to 12.

Delhi to Mumbai, a roller coaster day for Sena

While Governor refuses to grant extension to form government, party leaders say confident of proving numbers

TANVI DESHPANDE
SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

It was a day of hectic political negotiations for the Shiv Sena on Monday, though it did not bear the result the saffron party may have expected.

Almost every Sena leader spent the day busy in meetings and discussions, racing the 7.30 p.m. deadline set by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari for the party to indicate its willingness and ability to form a government in the State.

The day began with Shiv Sena MP and Union Minister of Heavy Industries Arvind Sawant announcing his resignation. He announced his decision through a tweet around 7.30 a.m., and later sent a letter to this effect to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The letter blamed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for going back on its promise to share the chief minister's post with the Sena and attempting to call Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray a liar by saying this was never the deal.

“That is why Uddhav Thackeray has decided not to stay with those not following the truth and promises. I don't think it will be right and ethical to be a minister here,” Mr. Sawant said in his letter.

‘BJP can’t blame us’

As this development unfolded in Delhi, senior Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut held a press conference around 10 a.m. in Mumbai.

“The Governor has given us 24 hours’ time while the BJP was given 72 hours. It is our responsibility to form a government, but when many people are taken together, it requires time. Some people are working to push this State towards President’s



Day of parleys: Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar leaves a five star hotel in Mumbai on Monday after meeting Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray. ■VIJAY BATE.

Rule. But we are trying until the last moment to give this State a stable government. Had the Governor given us more time, it would have been easier. But we are not complaining,” Mr. Raut said.

He asked how the BJP could blame the Sena for not being able to form a government. “In fact, the BJP was so determined not to share the CM's post with us, as pre-decided, that it decided to sit in the Opposition. This is *ahankar* (ego) and *dwesh* (hatred).”

He further said, “I appeal to the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP): this is the moment to prove they will do what it takes to keep the BJP out of power. The Shiv Sena is forming the government, and the CM will be from the Sena. We want to build this government on a common minimum programme of farmers’ welfare, unemployment, inflation, education, health and development of the State. All political

leaders need to come together to create a common minimum programme.”

When asked about ideological differences with the non-saffron Congress-NCP, the MP cited examples of the BJP and Mehbooba Mufti's PDP aligning in Kashmir. “Forget that. These parties are not seditious parties, they were formed on the Indian soil and have contributed to the country. We have had differences with the BJP also.”

An editorial in Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* on Monday praised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his “maturity” in welcoming the Ayodhya verdict. “It would have helped if political leaders like Asaduddin Owaisi had shown the same maturity,” it said.

Later in the day, the seniormost Sena leaders met at the Thackeray residence, Matoshree. At the same time, party leaders Anil Desai and Mr. Sawant also met

senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel in New Delhi.

Talks with Pawar

Meanwhile, Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Raut met NCP chief Sharad Pawar at a five-star hotel in Bandra. Mr. Raut became indisposed later in the day and could not be a part of further parleys.

Speaking during the day, Mr. Desai said, “The Governor has invited us, that is why we are going to meet the him to stake a claim for government formation. We have 118-120 [legislators]. But a crucial meeting of the Congress is under way. On the face of it, we feel the Congress is positive.”

Another senior Sena leader, on condition of anonymity, said the Congress seemed to be divided on offering support to the saffron party. “That is why, today we are only going to express ability to form government while requesting for more time,” he said.

As they 7.30 p.m. deadline grew closer, the senior-most party leaders, including legislative party leader Eknath Shinde and Worli MLA Aaditya Thackeray, reached to meet the Governor at Raj Bhavan.

Around the same time, the Sena legislators staying in a Madh island resort started celebrating, shouting slogans hailing the party, its founder Bal Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray. They also distributed sweets and spoke to news channels about the late Sena founder's dream of having a Sena CM being fulfilled.

‘Time not enough’

Outside Raj Bhavan, however, Aaditya Thackeray announced that the Governor had refused to grant the Sena an extension. He said the State deserves a stable government and a leadership that does not lie to the people. Senior Sena leaders said the party has the capability of providing that government, but the time given to it to complete the process was too less.

The Sena delegation had informed the Governor that it had in-principle support of 162 MLAs, including those of Congress, NCP and about 15 Independents. The delegation included seven Independent MLAs. “If formed, this will be a government of farmers and labourers and the chief minister will be whoever Uddhav Thackeray wants to be,” said Independent MLA Bachhu Kadu.

Sena leader Anandrao Adul said, “We have the support of 160 legislators but could not produce letter of support from the Congress and NCP.” He said the party was confident of proving it had the numbers, soon.

“The time given to us is not enough, but our claim still stays,” Aaditya said.

Cong. leaders from Delhi to hold talks with NCP in city

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Within hours of the Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari refusing to grant extra time to Shiv Sena after it failed to submit ‘requisite letter of support,’ he invited Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) which is the third largest in the 288-member Assembly to form the government.

The call to the NCP also means that the Governor will not be able to recommend President's Rule in the State until 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday.

Earlier party chief spokesperson Nawab Malik said, “The NCP held meetings throughout the day keeping an eye on the developments. As informed earlier, the NCP and Congress which fought the election in an alliance had agreed to take the decision of supporting the Sena together.”

In the 288-member Assembly, the NCP has 54 MLAs while its pre-poll ally, the Congress, has 44. Sena won 56 seats while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the single largest party winning 105 seats. The BJP has already confirmed that it will not form the government, following which the Sena was called and given 24 hours time.

On Tuesday, the NCP has called a meeting of its MLAs at 11 a.m. while senior Congress leaders like Mallikarjun Kharge and Ahmad Patel are likely to be in the Mumbai to hold talks with Mr. Pawar to discuss the future course of action.

Seven killed as car hits truck in Beed

Three other passengers injured

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEED

At least seven people, including a child, were killed and three others injured when their sports utility vehicle (SUV) hit a stationary truck in Beed district on Monday morning.

The deceased also include two women, assistant inspector A. Pathan of the Patoda police station said.

Driver lost control

The accident occurred around 10 a.m. when the driver of the SUV lost control over the wheel. The vehicle hit a stationary truck on Manjursuba Road in Pa-

toda tehsil, he said.

All the victims were residents of Vaidkini village in Beed. Around 12 people, including the driver, were in the SUV when it met with the accident.

Local residents later rushed to the spot and took the occupants to a civil hospital in Beed, where seven of them were declared dead by doctors, he said.

Three of the deceased were identified as Vajinath Gyanoba Tandle, Balu Pandrinath Munde and Kesarbai Bansi Munde. The three injured persons were undergoing treatment at the civil hospital, he said.

Radio channel to guide farmers on climate change

State panel to set up channel in Latur



Need of the hour: Heavy monsoon and post-monsoon rain has damaged crops across the State this year. ■FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AURANGABAD

The Maharashtra State Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices is planning to start a dedicated community radio channel to inform farmers about climate change and help resolve their problems.

An expert panel on the radio channel will try to address the issues faced by farmers, the commission's chairman Pasha Patel said, adding that necessary permissions have been taken to start the channel by the year-end. The radio station will be based at Lodaga village in Latur district, he said.

“Climate change is a major problem for the agriculture sector in Maharashtra as well as in the country. Our State has experienced a moody climate in past few months. We saw heavy monsoon rains in Satara

and Sangli and the post-monsoon showers damaged crops in Marathwada region,” Mr. Patel said.

The radio channel will broadcast discussions on climate change and problems related to it. To address the issues of cultivators, the commission will form a committee of five to six members, comprising experts from Krishi Vigyan Kendras, the State agriculture department and private companies working in the field of agriculture and technology, he said.

“We are in talks with a Delhi-based company to set up the radio station at Lodaga. We will study the problems related to climate change across the globe and try to find a solution. Our team will make sure that these solutions reach the farmers,” he said.

IN BRIEF



Maradu apartments to be razed in January
KOCHI
The four flat complexes at Maradu here, built in violation of the Coastal Zone Regulation norms, will be razed in January. Alfa Serene (in photo) and Holy Faith H2O will be demolished on January 11, followed by Golden Kayaloram and Jain Coral Cove the next day.

Missing A.P. girl's body found in gunny bag
VIJAYAWADA
The body of the missing seven-year-old girl was found in a gunny sack in her neighbour's house at Bhavanipuram, Vijayawada, on Monday. Her neighbour, Barlapudi Pentayya alias Prakash, was arrested. The motive for the murder was not known, the police said. She went missing on Sunday.

Rebel BJP leader Raju Kage to join Congress
BENGALURU
Rebel BJP leader Raju Kage is set to join the Congress on Wednesday. He said he would contest from the Kagwad constituency as the Congress nominee. Mr. Kage had been upset over the BJP's plan to field disqualified legislator Shrimant Patil from Kagwad.

Narrow escape for passengers

Eight coaches, diesel engine of express train derail after Hyderabad collision

V. GEETANATH
ABHINAY DESHPANDE
HYDERABAD
Passengers on the Lingampally to Falaknuma train in Hyderabad had a miraculous escape on Monday morning as their train collided head on with the Secunderabad-bound Hundry Express just outside the Kacheguda station.

The MMTS (Multi-Modal Transport System) train to Falaknuma was moving from Platform No.2 to the mainline when it crashed into the engine of the incoming train bound towards Platform No.4.

In the impact, five compartments of the MMTS train and three of the Express train, including the diesel engine were derailed.

A more serious incident was averted as the local train was yet to pick up speed while the oncoming Express had slowed down at the station.

"We felt a big jolt and loud noise. Passengers in the forward carriages were screaming as a few were thrown out and others managed to jump out," said RPF Home Guard M.R.L. Reddy, who was deployed in the ladies coach of the MMTS train. "I was sitting next to a



Mega effort: The loco driver being brought out of the mangled MMTS coach by the Railway and NDRF personnel after an eight-hour-long operation. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

window and jumped out in time but a man next to me was injured as he was thrown into the opposite seat," said Saketh, a student from Falaknuma.

Probe ordered
"We suspect the loco pilot of MMTS overshot the signal and left the platform and even after noticing the oncoming train, he did not manage to apply the brakes," said a SCR official.

Ram Kripal, Commissioner Railway Safety, Southern Central Circle-Secunderabad, will conduct an inquiry. "The Ministry of Railways has taken today's accident very seriously. Member (Traction), Additional Member (Signal & Telecom) and ED, Safety, Railway Board, will visit the site. Ex gratia will be disbursed to the injured passengers at the rate of ₹5,000 to those with minor injuries and ₹25,000 to

passengers having grievous injuries," said an official release. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted: "Received the tragic news of the train accident in Hyderabad & immediate instructions have been given to the authorities for assistance & monitoring. Railway administration is extending assistance & have made arrangements for the treatment of the injured at the accident site."

Seven students arrested in Bengaluru for prank videos

They used to dress up as ghosts and scare motorists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Playing pranks on unsuspecting people to record videos and upload them on social media turned out to be costly for a group of seven youth who were arrested by police here early on Monday. They were later let off on bail with a warning.

A few passers-by at Sharif Nagar, Yeshwanthpur, who were shocked after seeing a man dressed like a ghost, alerted the police.

The police rushed to the spot and caught Shaan Malik, 20, Naveed, 20, Sajil Mohammed, 21, Sakib, 20, Syed Nabil, 20, Yusif Ahmed, 20, all residents of RT Nagar, and Mohammed Ayub, 20, a resident of Nagawara, and brought them to the police station.

The accused were into making prank videos and uploading them on social media for traction. As per the plan, one of the accused, wearing a long white kurta and a wig and splashing red paint over the dress to make it look like blood, started scaring motorists, pedestrians and people sleeping on pavements, and created



Joke is on you: A video grab shows a person dressed as a ghost trying to scare a two-wheeler rider.

panic for some time. They used to upload the videos on YouTube under the title 'Ghost Prank in Bengaluru'.

The accused are studying engineering, BBM, and B.Sc in city colleges.

They even tried to scare the police personnel in mufti without realising that they had come to arrest them, said N. Shashikumar, DCP (North).

Let off with warning
The police questioned the accused to ascertain their motive and later summoned their parents to the station. The accused were made to

give an undertaking and let off with a stern warning.

A cab driver who was sleeping in his vehicle by the wayside told the police that he was scared out of his wits when the accused walked up to him. "I was in deep sleep. I had the shock of my life when a scary man was banging on the window of the car and trying to open it," he reported to the police.

Another man fell and sustained minor injuries while trying to run away from the "ghost".

A senior police officer has warned people against recording such videos.

SC panel finds lapses in Walayar probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) will seek clarifications from the doctors who performed the post-mortem on two minor Dalit girls, who were raped and later found dead under "suspicious circumstances" in Walayar in Kerala, NCSC vice-chairman L. Murugan said on Monday.

The acquittal of all the ac-

cused by the POCSO court had created a lot of anger and protests by political parties and NGOs. They alleged that the Kerala police "deliberately did a bad investigation to help the accused".

Talking to mediapersons here after holding a personal hearing on the case with Kerala Principal Secretary (SC/ST development) A. Jayathilak and Addl. DGP (Law and Order) Shaik Darvesh Saheb,

Mr. Murugan said the police had failed to properly investigate the case.

'Will speak to doctors'
"There were a lot of contradictions in the police probe and building up of the case against the accused. The NCSC will seek clarifications from the doctors who performed the post-mortem on the girls," he said. The next hearing is on November 21.

One girl was found hanging in January and the other in March 2017. The post-mortem reports suggested that they were sexually assaulted.

The police had arrested four people, charging them with abetment to suicide and rape. The POCSO court in Palakkad, while acquitting the accused, pulled up the investigating team, saying it did not present enough scientific evidence.

Jagan defends English medium move

A.P. CM lashes out at Naidu, Pawan for criticism

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday defended the State government's decision to convert all government schools into English-medium schools from the next

academic year.

He asked Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu, and Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan — who criticised the move — to "introspect" and tell people whether their children/grandchildren were studying in Telugu medium schools.

Mr. Reddy said education in English was the right of all sections. The government is-

sued the GO with the objective of fulfilling the aspirations of the poor who wanted to send their children to English medium schools.

Telugu compulsory
English was necessary if "our children" wanted to compete and excel, but leaders such as Mr. Venkaiah Naidu, Mr. Chandrababu Naidu and Mr. Pawan Kalyan had fault-

ed the decision. A few vernacular dailies too had been harsh in their criticism, he said. Lashing out at the JSP chief, the Chief Minister said, "Mr. Pawan Kalyan has four or five children. In which medium of instruction are they studying?"

"Though the medium of instruction will be English, Telugu or Urdu will be a compulsory subject in all government schools," he said.

‘Suranga Bawadi’ enters World Monument Watch list

The water supply structure will now get funds for restoration

FIROZ ROZINDAR
VIJAYAPURA

Suranga Bawadi, an integral part of the ancient Karez system of supplying water through subterranean tunnels built during Adil Shahi era in Karnataka's Vijayapura, is now set to get funding for restoration. A New York-based NGO has included it in the World Monument Watch list for 2020 along with 24 other monuments from across the world.

The monument has been selected under the "Ancient Water System of the Deccan Plateau" by the World Monuments Fund (the NGO), which monitors restoration of ancient monuments across the globe.

With this, the Suranga Bawadi is expected to get funds for restoration within the next two years. The NGO would also coordinate with the authorities concerned for restoration and create

awareness on its importance.

250 applications
Confirming this to *The Hindu*, Mehriz Khatib, functionary of the NGO here, said they had received about 250 applications from across the world. "The applications were sent in February this year. The NGO, after going through all details to meet the requirements, finally selected 25, including the Suranga Bawadi," he said.

Mr. Khatib said the World Monuments Fund works in collaboration with the local stakeholders, including the district administration, the Archaeological Survey of India and local explorers of ancient monuments, in highlighting the need for restoration of ancient monuments.

"In this case, it will be working on the ancient water system 'Karez' which is be-

lieved to be one of the best systems in the world. But owing to lack of maintenance, the whole structure is in bad condition," he said.

Though the Karez system was built in the 16th century by Ali Adil Shah-I, his successor, Ibrahim Adil Shah-II, brought in several changes by adding more structures to strengthen it.

According to historians, the Adil Shahis built the magnificent underground system to supply water to the city, which had a population of nearly 12 lakh then.

The move has come as a shot in the arm for conservationists. "We are happy that at least some steps have been taken. Hopefully, this will put pressure on the administration to grant adequate funds and take up timely restoration of the structure which is in a bad shape now," Abdul Ghani Imaratwale, a historian, said.



Ahead of times: According to historians, the Adil Shahis built the Karez underground water system in the 16th century to supply water to Vijayapura in Karnataka. ■ RAJENDRA SINGH HAJERI

Bidar holds special place for Sikhs

Founder of Sikhism is said to have visited here during his ‘dakshinapatha’

RISHIKESH BAHADUR DESAI
BIDAR

Bidar, a town in northeastern Karnataka, holds a special place in the history of the Sikh faith as it is connected to the life of Guru Nanak and a few other religious figures.

As the faithful celebrate Prakash Purab, the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak on Tuesday, Bidar town is marking the event with special fervour, under the aegis of the the Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee and the Guru Nanak Foundation.

Guru Nanak is believed to have visited Bidar during the 'dakshinapatha' or his southern sojourn. Legend has it that he stopped in the hilly town of Bidar while re-



Devotees attend the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak in Bidar on Monday. ■ GOPICHAND T.

turning from Sri Lanka in 1512. The people of the parched land asked him for water and he moved a stone with his toe and an eternal spring came alive there. The spring (*jhira*) that bears his name still exists in the town

near Gurudwara Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib.

The main Prakash Purab events in Bidar, which began on November 9 and will culminate on Tuesday, are being held at the Gurudwara Guru Nanak Jhira in Guru

Nagar. The events include prayers, sermons, mass singing, processions and demonstrations of martial arts.

As a precursor to the festival, a pan-India rally was held from June to October. A team of around 100 devotees travelled to all places associated with the life of Guru Nanak and other places of religious importance. They carried copies of the Guru Granth Sahib from the Gurudwara Huzur Sahib in Nanded and held meetings with the youth to create awareness about Guru Nanak's philosophy.

The Prabhandak committee said lakhs had visited Bidar since November 9, coming in from various States and Punjab, besides international destinations.

Ban on food apps: hoteliers firm on commission cut

Swiggy denies charges of secret parleys with restaurants

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

Online food delivery app Swiggy has denied negotiating with the city restaurant owners even after they had logged off from the online app, demanding a reduction in the commission it charged, said Vijayawada Hotel Owners' Association Secretary Sanjay Mehta Jain. "The app is playing a divide and rule policy with the restaurants. They have been approaching those restaurants that have logged out of the app individually asking them to provide their services. However, all of us stand firm on our proposition," said Mr. Jain.

Such a move came after the Association, at a press conference held last week, had decided to impose an indefinite ban on Swiggy, Zomato and Uber Eats saying the online food delivery apps had increased their commission rates from 18 to 25% on the orders. This has compounded the hoteliers' burden in the face of rising cost of ingredients and operations.

"We want the apps to reduce the commission to 15%. Ever since their hold has become stronger in the city since last year, they have been increasing the commission rates gradually," the association said.

"We will also ban the use of both Zomato and UberEats if they do not negotiate with us. While Zomato is yet to reply, Uber Eats had communicated that they were ready to negotiate with us," he said.

Delivery boys in a limbo
The Association has 240 restaurants as members, and about 270 other restaurants in the city have extended their support over the issue. The face-off between the Association and the aggregator has left the delivery partners in a limbo as most of them claimed to be full-time partners of the food delivery apps.

We will give a tough fight in six seats, says Gowda

STAFF REPORTER
KALABURAGI

Former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) national president H.D. Deve Gowda on Monday said that the party would field candidates in all 15 Assembly constituencies in Karnataka that are going to bypolls, and that they would give a tough fight in at least six seats.

Speaking to reporters here, he said the party would give a tough fight in two seats in Belagavi district and four in Old Mysore region. He also said that the JD(S) would contest bypolls without forging an alliance with either the Congress or the BJP.

The B.S. Yediyurappa-led government in the State is stable since it does not face a threat from the outside, he said. He, however, added that the government may face serious trouble because of internal conflicts within the BJP. Mr. Gowda said that the BJP government in the State was on safe ground since the JD (S) would not ally with the Congress because of previous bad experiences.

Holding former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah responsible for the collapse of the Congress-JD(S) coalition government in the State, Mr. Gowda said that some of the legislators who resigned were close to him. The Congress high command's decision to make H.D. Kumaraswamy the Chief Minister, without taking Mr. Siddaramaiah into confidence, was wrong.

"We have got enough time for the next Assembly elections (more than three years), and I will tour across the State to strengthen the party at the grass-roots level. I will not sacrifice the party's interests for the sake of alliances," Mr. Gowda added.

JNU students protest fee hike, clash with police

They are also seeking the withdrawal of a draft hostel manual; HRD Minister stuck at convocation venue for over six hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Thousands of students of Jawaharlal Nehru University, led by members of the Students’ Union, on Monday protested outside the All India Council For Technical Education (AICTE) auditorium even as Vice-President of India Venkaiah Naidu and Union Minister for Human Resource Development Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ were guests at University’s third convocation.

The students are demanding a withdrawal of the draft hostel manual and the proposed hike in the hostel fees since October 28 and alleged that Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadeesh Kumar has not responded to their demands.

The agitated students broke through barricades set up at the campus gates as well as barricades on Nelson



High drama: Police personnel using water cannon to disperse students protesting against the JNU administration's 'anti-students' policies on Monday. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHKAPAKAR

Mandela Marg by mid-morning and moved towards the convocation venue, some 3 km from the campus. As protesters clashed with the police manning the barricades, the latter used water cannons to disperse the

crowd. While Mr. Naidu left the venue after the convocation just before the protestors arrived, Mr. Pokhriyal was stuck inside for over six hours forcing him to cancel two scheduled events. The

minister was able to leave the premises only around 4.15 p.m. after having a meeting with the protesters. Though he assured the students that his Ministry would look into their demands, the students were

not persuaded as the JNU Vice-Chancellor had refused to meet them.

In a statement on the protests, the Registrar of JNU said, “It is unfortunate that instead of participating in a constructive dialogue for which the administration is always open and has made several attempts for conducting discussions, the protesting students are persistently staging strikes, and demonstrations and causing administrative shutdown and academic loss.”

‘Unable to meet V-C’
President of the JNUSU Aishwarya Ghosh said the V-C was destroying the university and that several attempts to meet him were not successful as he did not want to have a dialogue. “The Union Minister has assured us that he will instruct the V-C to have a dia-

logue with us and we hope that the upcoming executive council meeting will not pass the draft hostel manual,” Ms. Ghosh said.

The JNUSU said the University faces an unprecedented crisis with an overwhelming number of its students facing a threat to their academic future as a majority come from the most marginalised backgrounds and would not be able to continue their studies with the fee hike.

The Union also took on the Delhi Police for “resorting to unprovoked violence on the students and using water canons. A Delhi police officer, however, said, “We tried to get the students and V-C to talk but the V-C refused. We then set up a meeting with the Union HRD Minister. The students then dispersed peacefully.”

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Minimum temperature very likely to fall over northwest, east and adjoining central India by 2-3°C during the next 2 days. Shallow to moderate fog very likely over north-east India during the next 2 days. In association with an active easterly wave, isolated to scattered rainfall with isolated heavy falls is likely over south Peninsular India.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	27.9	25.0	21.0	Kozhikode	5.2	33.0	24.0
Ahmedabad	33.0	23.0	21.0	Kurnool	33.0	21.0	21.0
Aizawl	2.0	26.0	15.0	Lucknow	30.0	15.0	15.0
Allahabad	32.0	16.0	16.0	Madurai	33.0	25.0	25.0
Bengaluru	29.0	20.0	20.0	Mangaluru	87.0	31.0	23.0
Bhopal	29.0	17.0	17.0	Mumbai	33.0	23.0	23.0
Bhubaneswar	32.0	21.0	21.0	Mysuru	1.0	28.0	19.0
Chandigarh	25.0	14.0	14.0	New Delhi	29.0	13.0	13.0
Chennai	33.0	25.0	25.0	Patna	31.0	21.0	21.0
Coimbatore	5.6	33.0	23.0	Port Blair	31.0	24.0	24.0
Delhradun	26.0	11.0	11.0	Puducherry	33.0	23.0	23.0
Gangtok	17.0	11.0	11.0	Pune	31.0	17.0	17.0
Goa	32.0	23.0	23.0	Raipur	31.0	20.0	20.0
Guwahati	0.3	29.0	20.0	Ranchi	27.0	16.0	16.0
Hubballi	29.0	19.0	19.0	Shillong	1.0	22.0	12.0
Hyderabad	31.0	19.0	19.0	Shimla	18.0	9.0	9.0
Imphal	12.4	25.0	16.0	Srinagar	6.0	0.0	0.0
Jaipur	30.0	19.0	19.0	Thiruvananthapuram	1.0	33.0	24.0
Kochi	12.3	32.0	24.0	Tiruchi	34.0	25.0	25.0
Kohima	9.2	22.0	12.0	Vijayawada	33.0	23.0	23.0
Kolkata	30.0	21.0	21.0	Visakhapatnam	33.0	25.0	25.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	189	51	163	135	135	135	
Bengaluru	64	90	174	120	120	120	
Chennai	15	47	226	135	135	135	
Delhi	38	71	410	335	335	335	
Hyderabad	5	43	34	149	113	113	
Kolkata	7	40	21	46	76	76	
Lucknow	2	25	38	350	350	350	
Mumbai	7	99	38	134	126	126	
Pune	79	11	64	82	72	72	
Visakhapatnam	55	55	55	55	55	55	

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

IN BRIEF



101st anniversary of WWI armistice observed

PUDUCHERRY

Puducherry joined the global observance of the 101st anniversary of the end of World War I. French Consul General Catherine Suard led the dignitaries in paying homage at the Monument aux Morts (French War Memorial) on Monday.

Court seeks details of consular access to Michel

NEW DELHI

A special court told the Tihar jail authorities to furnish records of the meeting of the British High Commission officials with the VVIP chopper case accused Christian Michel, on an application by him that CBI and ED officials tried to interfere in the meeting.

Six infants in Odisha die of respiratory infection

BERHAMPUR

Six infants have died of respiratory infections in Tamanapalli village of Odisha's Malkangiri district in the last 27 days and seven others remain sick. Chief District Medical Officer Dr. Ajay Kumar Baitharu said viral infection-like influenza may be a major reason behind the acute respiratory infection.

Woman's legs crushed by speeding truck

COIMBATORE

A woman's legs were crushed by a speeding truck when she fell off her scooter after an AIADMK flagpost erected on the side of Avinashi Road in Coimbatore tilted towards her on Monday morning. The victim, N. Rajeswari, 30, worked in the accounts section of a hotel.

U.K.'s Prince Charles to visit India this week

NEW DELHI

Britain's Prince Charles will arrive in India on Wednesday on a two-day trip that will have a packed schedule, including a meeting with President Ram Nath Kovind, discussions on issues like climate change and sustainable finance, and a visit to a gurdwara to mark the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. PTI

Centre forms committee to draft new water policy

It is expected to submit its report within six months

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Water Resources Ministry has finalised a committee to draft a new National Water Policy (NWP). It will be chaired by Mihir Shah, who is a former Planning Commission member and a water expert. The committee has 10 principal members, including Shashi Shekhar, a former secretary of Water Resources, and A.B. Pandya, former chairman of the Central Ground Water Board.

The committee is expected to produce a report within six months.

In September, Union Water Resources Minister Gajendra Shekhawat said that the Centre was planning to update the NWP and make key changes in water gover-



The policy currently in force prescribes minimum water flow level for rivers to meet ecological needs. •R. ASHOK

nance structure and regulatory framework. A National Bureau of Water Use Efficiency was also on the cards, he said.

The NWP currently in force was drafted in 2012. Among the major innovations in the 2012 policy was the concept of an Integrated Water Resources Management approach that took the “river basin/ sub-basin” as a unit for planning, development and management of water resources.

It also proposed that a

portion of river flows ought to be kept aside to meet ecological needs. Such an approach led to the government, in 2018, requiring minimum water levels to be maintained in the Ganga all through the year and hydro-power projects to refrain from hoarding water beyond a point. That policy also stressed for a minimum quantity of potable water for essential health and hygiene to all its citizens to be made available within easy reach of households.

Lata Mangeshkar hospitalised

Her condition is critical, doctors say

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

Legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar was rushed to the Breach Candy Hospital early on Monday after she complained of difficulty in breathing. A source said that she was brought to the hospital at around 1.30 am with acute breathlessness and was admitted to the ICU. Her physician, Dr. Pratib Samdani said that her condition was critical but she was showing signs of improvement. “She has developed pneumonia and a left ventricular failure”, Dr. Samdani told *The Hindu*.

The 90-year-old singer had taken to the social media on Sunday to wish good luck to Padmani Kolhapure



Lata Mangeshkar

for her role in the upcoming film Panipat. Sources said that she was conscious and responding to commands.

Her family members said that she was stable and recovering. “Didi is stable and on the path of recovery by gods grace. Please pray and send your good wishes,” said a family member.

J&K Bank fraud case: 70 entities under ED scanner

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Nearly 70 entities have come under the scanner of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the money laundering investigation into the J&K Bank-related cases registered by the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Jammu and Kashmir government.

The primary allegation being probed is the diversion of funds received from the bank in the form of credit facilities through these entities, which include companies that received loans. The agency suspects that several of these companies were incorporated solely for the purpose of money laundering and they were later shut down after routing the funds.

Two of the cases being investigated by the ED are related to a group whose two companies are said to be involved in a bank fraud involving over ₹300 crore.



The ED suspects that several companies were incorporated only for laundering money.

One of the firms did not pay up the outstanding amount and the loan amount became non-performing asset (NPA) and the issue was subsequently settled in its favour through a one-time settlement, allegedly as part of a conspiracy with bank officials.

In another case, the ACB alleges fraud involving ₹1,124 crore.

‘India will be net innovator, exporter of defence technology’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday exuded confidence that India will emerge as a net innovator and net exporter of defence technologies, rather than a net importer, as the Ministry announced measures to expand the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative, which is meant to encourage start-ups in defence.

“I am pretty confident that we can become a \$10 trillion economy in the next 10-15 years,” Mr. Singh said at ‘Def-Connect’, organised by the Ministry.

Subhash Chandra, Secretary, Defence Production, said the aim was to fund 250 start-ups and achieve 50 tangible innovations in the next five years. “The MoD is in the process of seeking approvals of ₹500 crore for the purpose,” he said.

Nagaland cracks down on proxy teachers

Regular employees pay them a fraction of their salary to teach on their behalf

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Nagaland has undertaken an exercise to cleanse the education system of proxy teachers “appointed” by regular employees, in order to avoid working out of their comfort zones.

The crackdown began with the State’s Directorate of School Education ordering 16 teachers to join their places of posting in Kiphire district, bordering Myanmar, on Monday.

To send photos

To ensure that these teachers do not go back to

their old ways of letting a substitute teach on their behalf, the directorate asked them to email their photographs with the school building in the background as well as photographs while taking classes every day from November 11 to the end of the academic session this year.

“The reforms in the education sector have begun in earnest with inspection of schools,” said Mmhomlumo Kikon, BJP legislator and State government’s adviser for IT, Science and Technology.

The crackdown started

from November 4 to 7 with Mr. Shanavas undertaking school inspections in Kiphire district. He found 16 teachers absent with proxies teaching on their behalf.



“We don’t have data on how many proxy teachers are working but the situation is grave,” Mr. Shanavas told *The Hindu*.

He said district education officials had been asked to survey the schools in their areas to purge the system of proxy teachers, many of whom are not qualified to teach.

Investigations by NGOs had revealed that regular teachers paid their proxies a fraction of their salaries while staying at home in urban centres or villages in a different district and pursuing other vocations.



The extra mile

Kartarpur corridor has realised the dream of devout Sikhs, but done little for India-Pak. ties

For millions of Sikhs worldwide, the inauguration of the Kartarpur corridor was a dream seven decades in the making. Ever since India and Pakistan were partitioned with an arbitrary line drawn through Punjab, the placement of Kartarpur, where Guru Nanak spent his last years, meant that while a majority of his devotees were left on one side of the border, his last resting place was left just four kilometres on the other side. Unlike the other major Sikh shrine at Guru Nanak’s birthplace Nankana Sahib, Kartarpur Sahib was off Pakistan’s highways and therefore fell into disuse. Those keen to see it were restricted to peering through binoculars at a border checkpoint. Saturday’s inauguration of the renovated shrine in Kartarpur by Prime Minister Imran Khan, and the access to the corridor from Sultanpur Lodhi on the Indian side by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saw the fervent hopes of all those people being granted, timed with the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. The corridor, which will allow 5,000 Indian pilgrims a day to walk visa-free into Pakistan, pay obeisance and then return to India, is unique. If both governments are willing, it could lend itself to other cross-border connections for Hindus and Sikhs to visit shrines in Pakistan, and for Muslims and Sufism followers to visit shrines just across the border in Gujarat and Rajasthan. That it was completed from start to finish in a year that saw relations between the two countries plumb new depths, is also nothing short of a miracle: from the Pulwama terror attack and the Bala-kot strikes; the slugfest over the government’s moves on Kashmir; the recall of High Commissioners; and even Pakistan’s repeated denial of overflight rights to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s aircraft on foreign visits, it was a downward spiral. Each event was accompanied by sharp rhetoric and recriminations, yet the Kartarpur process was not derailed.

In that sense, the Kartarpur shrine has fulfilled the promise it held out to the devout, but hasn’t lived up to its potential for diplomacy. It had been hoped, when Pakistan’s Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa first conveyed Islamabad’s acceptance of India’s long-pending demand for the corridor, that this would lead to a new sense of understanding between the two governments as well. Instead, Pakistan’s encouragement of Khalistani separatist groups to use Kartarpur as a platform has been a constant cause for suspicion for India. On the other side, India’s misgivings have been seen as a churlish response to Pakistan’s efforts on building the corridor. The fact is that neither side has been able to build on the goodwill for the project in both countries to create an atmosphere for talks on other issues. This failure was most evident when both Mr. Modi and Mr. Khan carried out separate inauguration ceremonies, but failed to come together at the border for the launch of the project, though both leaders likened it to the “coming down of the Berlin wall”. For that promise to be realised, leaders will need to walk the extra mile, both literally and figuratively.

Casting the Net wide

Kerala’s plan for providing free Internet access to the poor is worthy of emulation by others

If things go as per plan, Kerala could have near-universal Internet access in a little over a year’s time. Last week’s nod by the State Cabinet for the Kerala Fibre Optic Network project clears the path for a Kerala-wide optical fibre network by December 2020. At ₹1,548 crore, it is, without doubt, an ambitious project. But what makes it commendable is its recognition that Internet access is a basic human right. No other Indian State has recognised Internet access in this manner till now. This is also in sync with what the UN has been articulating in recent years, based on the Internet’s role in enabling freedom of speech and reducing inequality, among other things. And so, embedded in this plan to touch every household in Kerala is a provision to deliver free Internet access to over two million BPL families. The idea is to charge affordable rates for other families. The network, to be set up by the Kerala State Electricity Board Ltd. and the Kerala State IT Infrastructure Ltd., will also connect 30,000 government offices and educational institutions. When complete, Kerala, a State that already tops in human development indicators in the country, will be ready for a steep digital evolution.

Kerala’s plan for Internet roll-out, therefore, is also worthy of emulation by other States, given that Internet have-nots still exist in the millions. There is no doubt that India has made huge leaps in providing Internet access to its people in recent years. To be sure, a good part of the growth till now can be attributed to cheap data plans, triggered in no small measure by the advent of RelianceJio. According to a recent study by the Internet and Mobile Association of India and Nielsen, the country has 451 million active Internet users. But this number masks huge access gaps. Internet penetration is significantly higher in urban areas than it is in rural areas; it is also significantly higher for men than it is for women. The best-performing State, Delhi-NCR, has an Internet penetration of 69%. The second-best is Kerala, with just 54%. Global technology companies have in recent years eyed the huge population of Internet have-nots as an opportunity. Some, like Facebook, even came up with an idea of free access to a list of chosen sites, a severely skewed version of the Internet which endangered its basic values. While such ideas were thankfully rejected by the government, the gaps are there nonetheless. There is no doubt that governments need to play an interventionist role in plugging this gap. Kerala could set a healthy example.

Several positives for the Muslim plaintiffs

Minorities and defenders of the rule of law and secularism need not feel disappointed with the Ayodhya verdict



FAIZAN MUSTAFA & AYMEN MOHAMMED

The judgment in the hotly contested property dispute of Ayodhya has finally been delivered by a five-judge Supreme Court Bench. Though our judges do take an oath to decide on cases without fear or favour, in what looks to be an unprecedented act, the judge who authored this verdict preferred not to reveal his name. Even the author of the 116-page addendum has strangely kept his name secret.

Though the apex court accepted that a wrong had been done when the Babri Masjid was desecrated in 1949 through installation of idols and also held that the demolition of the mosque in 1992 was illegal, in the final order, it had to give the entire disputed site to the Hindu plaintiffs though law of equity says that one who seeks equity must come with clean hands.

Peace and tranquillity

In paragraph 799, the court explicitly said that “even as a matter of maintaining public peace and tranquillity, the solution which commended itself to the [Allahabad] High Court [division of the property into three parts] is not feasible. The disputed site measures all of 1500 square yards. Dividing the land will not sub-serve the interest of either of the parties or secure a lasting sense of peace and tranquillity.” This was, thus,

the central concern of the court in this historic dispute.

The defenders of the rule of law, minority rights and secularism in general and Muslims in particular need not feel disappointed with this judgment though it is true that the court, after correctly spelling out the law, wrongly applied them to facts. Here, we will examine the several positive findings and observations of the court that must be welcomed and appreciated, which will help us retain our otherwise shaken confidence in the majesty of law.

Since there is worry about the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)’s claim in respect of 3,000 other mosques, the court yet again reiterated that secularism is part of the basic structure of the Constitution and that the Places of Worship Act, 1991, protects and secures fundamental values of the Constitution. It went on to say that, “The Places of Worship Act imposes a non-derogable obligation towards enforcing our commitment to secularism under Indian Constitution... [the Act] is thus a legislative intervention which preserves non-retrogression as an essential feature of our secular values.” This assurance by the court must put all apprehensions to rest.

Second, on the topic of freedom of religion under Article 25, the court categorically made a highly appreciable observation that “we must firmly reject any attempt to lead the court to interpret religious doctrine in an absolute and extreme form and question the faith of worshippers. Nothing would be as destructive of the values underlying Article 25...” Accordingly, the argument put forward by some Hindus that the



AFP

Babri Masjid as per Islamic theology was not a legitimate mosque was rejected. “Faith is a matter for the individual believer,” said the court.

Third, the court accepted the Sunni Waqf Board’s plea that the place of Lord Ram’s birth is not in itself a juristic person. This is a major setback to the Ram Lalla suit and will, in fact, avoid several future religious conflicts. The court said that conferral of such a right will impinge on the rights of people of other faiths. In Para 201, the court observed that “the purpose for which juristic personality is conferred cannot be evolved into a Trojan horse that permits, on the basis of religious faith and belief, the extinguishing of all competing proprietary claims over property...” It said that a method of offering worship unique to one religion cannot result in conferral of an absolute title. In other words, the court made it clear that it could not accord primacy of one faith over others. This should really be music to the ears of proponents of multiculturalism who are every day feeling the heat of aggressive majoritarianism.

Fourth, the court categorically accepted the central argument of the Muslim plaintiffs that the mosque was not constructed after the demolition of a Ram temple. The court has also said that the Archae-

ological Survey of India (ASI)’s report had not found any evidence of demolition of a temple to construct the mosque. It pointed out that the ASI’s findings had an intervening gap of four centuries. Thus, the Hindu right’s primary narrative has been clearly rejected.

No evidence on pillars

Fifth, the court also said that as per the ASI report, remnants of a pre-existing structure were not used for the construction of the mosque. Interestingly, even about the black *kasauti* stone pillars, the court held that ASI in fact found no evidence to show that the pillars were relatable to the underlying pillar bases found during the excavation.

Sixth, the argument of the Muslim plaintiffs that a title cannot be decided solely on the basis of faith or archaeological findings too has been accepted and this is not a small victory and will be of great use in future disputes.

Seventh, the Muslim plaintiffs’ argument that title of property cannot be decided on the basis of travellers’ accounts was also accepted and the court rightly said that some portions of these accounts, including one by the 18th-century Austrian missionary, Joseph Tieffenthaler, were based on hearsay. Ideally, the court should have totally rejected Tieffenthaler’s writings, which have many inaccurate descriptions. Even about the Babri mosque, he said that Aurangzeb constructed it.

Eighth, the court also accepted that there is no historical record prior to the 18th century that talked of the demolition of a Ram temple prior to the construction of the Babri mosque. The court not-

ed the evidence of Hindu witnesses who testified that there is no mention of Ram’s birthplace either in Valmiki’s *Ramayana* or Tulsidas’s *Ramcharitmanas*.

This seems to be the most controversial part of the verdict as the court used freedom of religious faith to uphold the Hindu case when it said that “whether a belief is justified lies beyond [the] ken of judicial scrutiny.” It went on to hold that “once the witnesses have deposed to the basis of the belief and there is nothing to doubt its genuineness, it is not open to the court to question the basis of belief. Scriptural interpretations are susceptible to a multitude of inferences. The court would do well not to step into the pulpit by adjudging which, if any, of competing interpretations should be accepted.” But did not this very court interpret Koran on maintenance in the *Shah Bano* case (1985) and on triple divorce in the *Shayara Bano* case (2017)? Did it not reject the Hanafi interpretation?

Finally, since the Muslim plaintiffs did not claim title in this case, they should be not mind the final outcome. The relief sought by them was just about the “delivery of possession”. Since the court did accept that they were wrongly deprived of their possession in 1949, ideally they should have been given possession of the inner courtyard rather than five acres of land elsewhere. Thereafter, the court would have been justified in invoking Article 142 to give the site to Hindus or it may have asked Muslims to give up this land.

Faizan Mustafa is Vice-Chancellor, NALSAR University of Law, where Aymen Mohammed is a research scholar

What the Maulana said in Islamabad

The Azadi March will probably fizzle out but his statement against the Army must be taken seriously



S. AKBAR ZAIDI

Maulana Fazlur Rehman of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), who descended on Islamabad with thousands of supporters on an ‘Azadi March’, has made some preposterous statements against Pakistan’s elected government. His demands have included calls for an ‘immediate resignation’ of Prime Minister Imran Khan, snap elections, the insistence that there should be “no role of the Army in the electoral process,” and the demand that the Constitution of Pakistan should reign supreme. Maulana Rehman was defeated in the 2018 elections from a constituency which he had made his own.

How can an elected Prime Minister be asked to resign by a defeated candidate? This is unheard of. After all, Imran Khan won from five constituencies in 2018 and his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), bagged the largest number of votes and seats to form a government in Islamabad and the Punjab. It was also re-elected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and, importantly, wiped out the political party which had controlled Karachi for four decades. By every ac-

count, Imran Khan won a huge victory in the 2018 elections and any demand, that too from a politician of a marginal, provincial party, to step down, simply because he feels that the election results were manipulated or that the economy is on the brink, is wishful thinking.

In 2014, even after spending more than four months in Islamabad in a famous *dharna*, the far more charismatic and popular Imran Khan was unable to bring Nawaz Sharif’s government down or force his resignation. The Maulana has been in Islamabad for less than two weeks. The Maulana’s insistence, after his electoral loss, sounds like complaining about the grapes being sour. However, one of his demands – reducing the Army’s role in politics – needs to be taken seriously.

Critical of Army’s role

By suggesting that the Army should have no role in the electoral process, Maulana Rehman has, in no uncertain ways, pointed out that the Army actually determines political outcomes, both elected and unconstitutional ones. He has boldly alleged that Pakistan’s military is a manipulator of the political process and played a role in the 2018 elections which ensured that Mr. Khan would be selected as Prime Minister. There has been ample evidence which supports such claims, that Pakistan’s military went out of its way to broker



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deals with politicians to support Mr. Khan’s party, with many abandoning Mr. Sharif’s Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) days before the elections.

Dozens of candidates went public before the 2018 elections stating that they were threatened and intimidated for supporting Mr. Sharif. Numerous other measures were reportedly taken to keep Mr. Sharif’s party out of contention. There were accusations of pre-poll rigging, the involvement of the military in ensuring ‘peace’ during voting day, and its involvement in the election process almost directly, with evidence provided to suggest that this was indeed the case.

Maulana Rehman’s public statement, which resulted in a strong denial by the military’s spokesman, only gave greater credence to the allegations. The Director General Inter-Services Public Relations issued a statement that the “Pakistan Army, as a state institution, has nothing to do with politics,” and that the “Army follows the government’s orders.” He also stated the obvious, that the “Pakis-

tan Army always supported democratically elected governments in accordance with the law and the Constitution.”

No support from PPP, PML-N

Perhaps it is because of the Maulana’s claims that the military rigs elections that the two main political parties and the real Opposition did not support him.

The PML-N and Asif Ali Zardari’s Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), with both its leaders in prison (Mr. Sharif has since been released on medical grounds), have kept a conspicuous distance from the ‘Azadi March’. Both the PML-N and the PPP have greater street support than the Maulana, and had they joined forces with him, the three could have posed a serious threat to the stability of Mr. Khan’s government. Leaders of both the main political parties have called Mr. Khan a ‘selected’ Prime Minister, but unlike the Maulana, have not been as forthright. Perhaps nothing reflects the sad state of Pakistan’s elected politics than such cowardice and opportunism.

What next for the Maulana? It appears that he had no sustainable plan to ensure that his demands were going to be met. Mr. Khan doesn’t have any reason to resign, the military is not involved in rigging or in elections, not even in politics, and no one seems to have any urgency to hold mid-term elections. The status quo prevails.

Both the main political parties have had to cut deals with the powers that be, and Mr. Sharif should be on his way for treatment abroad joined by his brother Shah-baz Sharif, who has played a particularly divisive role in the current scenario, forcing fissures to emerge in the PML-N.

Without broad-based political support, Maulana Rehman’s *dharna* ought to fizzle out soon. Even Mr. Khan’s *dharna* in 2014, telecast 24x7, ended with little change evident at that time. The Maulana’s speeches are blocked on what Mr. Khan calls Pakistan’s ‘free media’. Social media platforms are limited. Yet, the fact that no elected Prime Minister of Pakistan has ever completed his/her five-year term hangs over all political assessments and predictions. Analysts find and create conspiracies, arguing that the Maulana would not have taken such a step unless he had a plan or someone else had a plan for him. It doesn’t seem that either the PPP or the PML-N has a plan, and since the Maulana only supports democracy and has “nothing to do with politics,” speculation about who started this and why, and about what this *dharna* could possibly result in, becomes curiousest and curiousest.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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After the verdict

It wouldn’t be an understatement to say that the verdict has left the Constitution defiled and defaced. It is true that it has put an end to a decades-old dispute but, in the process, the Supreme Court has also put an end to many precious constitutional values like neutrality and secularism. It is most astonishing that the apex court, being a neutral institution, has gone to the extent of directing the Centre to construct a Hindu temple in a place where Hindus and Muslims had once worshipped. The court has issued this direction despite finding that there was no proof whatsoever that there was a Hindu temple on which the Babri Masjid was built. Having condemned in no uncertain terms the Hindutva forces for their

role in planting the idols and demolishing the mosque, the court bent over backwards to reward the perpetrators, instead of punishing them. Further, the unanimous nature of the judgment has surprised everyone (Editorial, “Peace and justice,” Nov. 11).

N.G.R. PRASAD,
K.K. RAM SIDDHARTHA,
Chennai

■ Thank god, the ongoing struggle between the Hindus and the Muslims on who is entitled to construct a temple or build a mosque at the disputed site has come to an end. The Supreme Court has delivered its judgment much to the relief of all parties. The Waqf Board has agreed to respect the verdict. But I feel that this political wrangle could have been resolved much earlier. Had the Supreme Court applied its mind even more seriously,

it could have delivered the same judgment earlier.

MANI NATARAJAN,
Chennai

■ A unanimous 1,045-page decision given by a five-judge Constitution Bench following a 40-day hearing is legally too complex for a layperson to critically evaluate. The lay question, rather concern, that one has is: if all other facts, evidence and arguments were the same, but the mosque still stood unharmed, would the Supreme Court have still arrived at the same decision, and ordered the destruction of the Babri Masjid for building a temple? This is one question the judges must place to their moral and judicial conscience, for it is they who have held the destruction of the mosque in 1992 as an illegal act.

P. DATTA,
Kolkata

■ It is easy to pore over the verdict with a critical lens and indict it by applying the yardstick of lofty abstractions (Editorial page, “A reward for ‘egregious’ violations,” Nov. 11). By making it appear as favouring one party over the other, the article seems to have ignored the enormity of the judicial task of trying to adjudicate on a faith-based dispute which the nation’s political class, cultural elites and the society at large failed to resolve out of court. Given a chance, the Supreme Court would prefer to stay away from pronouncing on matters of faith. Having forsaken the spirit of compromise as a guiding force to settle faith-related disputes, the society cannot expect the judiciary to come up with miraculous solutions. It serves nobody’s interest to continue to stoke the flames of bitterness in a

conflict-weary society.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,
Thiruvananthapuram

Seshan’s legacy

T.N. Seshan’s life is a great book that will teach anyone how to be principled, focused on objectives and uncompromising even in trying circumstances. The fact that every politician had criticised him at one point or other testifies to his neutrality. He became a middle-class hero across the nation in the 1990s. Unfortunately, his efforts to mobilise that support into a movement did not yield fruits. He let people know firmly that he was a constitutional authority and was Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), India, and not CEC, government of India. Second, he asserted that the Election Commission would fix the dates and the number of

phases and brooked no interference in that. Third, he made it clear that the CEC would decide on the paramilitary forces and local police required for the conduct of elections and if they were not provided, there would be no election. One of his important reforms was given up later. He introduced the practice of mixing up the ballot papers before counting so that no one could know which area fetched a particular number of votes for any party. If this reform is revived, and the machines are pooled and then counted, secrecy in the process will be ensured (News page, “The man who cleaned up the Indian electoral system,” Nov. 11).

S. PUSHPAVANAM,
Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu



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