



**NEARBY**  
**After 11 days, lawyers call off their strike**

**NEW DELHI**  
 Lawyers in all the six district courts in Delhi called off their strike on Friday, which had been going on since November 4 after a clash between advocates and policemen at the Tis Hazari Courts. The Coordination Committee of All District Courts Bar Associations took the decision after the Delhi High Court ordered the lawyers to resolve the matter.

**CITY** ▶ PAGE 4

**Woman gang-raped in Noida, four arrested**

**GHAZIABAD**  
 A 21-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped in Noida on Wednesday night when she went to meet an acquaintance for a job. The Noida police have arrested four of the six accused. Two are still on the run. According to police sources, the survivor hailed from Kasganj and was living with her family in Chhajjari colony in the city's Gautam Buddh Nagar.

**CITY** ▶ PAGE 4

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# ArcelorMittal's takeover of Essar cleared by SC

It allows upfront payment to secured financial creditors

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL**  
**NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Friday accepted ArcelorMittal's offer to pay an aggregate ₹42,000 crore as an upfront amount to the secured financial creditors of bankrupt Essar Steel.

This paves the way for ArcelorMittal to take over Essar and enter the world's second biggest steel market.

A three-judge Bench, led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman, upheld the "commercial wisdom" of the Committee of Creditors (CoC) to accept Arcelor's offer and set the ball rolling for the takeover.

**NCLAT ruling set aside**

The court set aside a judgment of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), which held that the amount ought to be shared equally between financial creditors and operational creditors.

"The equality principle cannot be stretched to treating unequals equally. That will destroy the very objective of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) — to resolve stressed assets. Equitable treatment is to be accorded to each creditor depending upon the class to which it belongs: secured or unsecured, financial or op-

**Takeover troubles**

The SC on Friday paved the way for ArcelorMittal's takeover of Essar Steel. A brief timeline of how the bid unfolded:

**October 4, 2018:** SC uses extraordinary powers under Article 142 to give ArcelorMittal and Numetal a chance to pay off the NPA of corporate debtors as a pre-condition to buy Essar Steel

**Oct. 18:** Arcelor informs resolution professional it has paid off the debts

**Oct. 19:** Arcelor



re-submits resolution plan for Essar

**Oct. 25:** Essar's committee of creditors' (CoC) approves Arcelor's final negotiated resolution plan

**March 8, 2019:** NCLT says financial and operational creditors should get equal treatment

**July 4:** NCLAT holds that in a resolution plan, there can be no difference between a financial creditor and an operational creditor in the payment of dues. CoC moves SC in appeal

**More time for resolution**

The Supreme Court on Friday increased the time limit for corporate insolvency resolution beyond the mandated 330 days, bringing relief to bankrupt firms facing liquidation. ▶ PAGE 15

**SBI may get ₹12,000 crore**

Banks, which have lent about ₹50,000 crore to get repayments from ArcelorMittal soon, in the wake of the SC decision. State Bank of India may get around ₹12,000 crore. ▶ PAGE 15

erational," Justice Nariman wrote in his 164-page judgment.

Explaining why financial creditors are favoured over operational creditors of a bankrupt company in a corporate resolution process,

Justice Nariman said financial creditors provide a working capital to enable such companies to run their business operation.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 12

**MORE REPORTS** ▶ PAGE 15

# MHA officials quizzed on J&K situation

Non-committal response to MPs' request for visit

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

Senior Home Ministry officials were non-committal when a parliamentary panel asked if they could travel to Kashmir Valley like Members of the European Parliament did recently.

The officials, including Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, on Friday briefed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, chaired by senior Congress leader Anand Sharma, on the situation in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kash-



**Shutdown continues:** Security personnel deployed outside the closed Jamia Masjid in Srinagar on Friday. • PTI

mir and Ladakh. A senior Rajya Sabha MP, who attended the meeting, told *The Hindu* that most parliamentarians questioned the officials on

the prolonged detention of political leaders, including Lok Sabha MP and National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, and sought to

know when they would be released. Mr. Abdullah has been detained under the stringent Public Safety Act.

"We asked Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla: 'You took foreign MPs to Kashmir... When will you let us visit the Valley?' He said they will look into it later," the MP said.

The officials told the panel that those detained under the PSA could challenge their detention only in designated tribunals, and then in the High Court. However, they did not give any time line for their release.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 12  
**DETAINEES BEING SHIFTED TO WARMER LOCATIONS** ▶ PAGE 12

# Govt. will be formed, no mid-term polls: Pawar

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**MUMBAI**

In what could be seen as the first hint at formation of a Shiv Sena, Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) government in Maharashtra, NCP president Sharad Pawar said in Nagpur on Friday, "There is no scope for mid-term polls (in Maharashtra). This government will be formed. It will run for five years. We all will ensure it."



Sharad Pawar

mention whether the government will be of the Sena, the NCP and the Congress. He had earlier said that the NCP is holding talks only with the Congress and the Sena to form the government.

According to sources, the Common Minimum Programme draft shared among the three parties on Thursday is set to be the basis of the alliance.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 12

# SC rejects ED plea against bail to D.K. Shivakumar

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected an appeal filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against the Delhi High Court decision to grant bail to Karnataka Congress leader D.K. Shivakumar in a money laundering case.



D.K. Shivakumar

A Bench of Justices Rohinton F. Nariman and S. Ravindra Bhat dismissed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's plea to issue notice on the

agency's appeal.

The ED had moved the court arguing that Mr. Shivakumar was an influential person and could tamper with evidence while on bail.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait of the Delhi High Court, while granting bail, had noted that there was no evidence placed by the agency to es-

tablish that either Mr. Shivakumar or his family or associates had ever tried to contact any of the witnesses.

# MPs, bureaucrats skip meeting on Delhi pollution

MP Gautam Gambhir among those who stayed away from parliamentary panel meet

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

Top officials of the Environment Ministry, Delhi Development Authority and three Municipal Commissioners on Friday stayed away from a key meeting of a parliamentary panel on urban development that was to discuss the severe pollution levels in the Capital.

Chairman of the committee and MP Jagdambika Pal, sources said, cut the meeting short due to the absence of officials. Those who skipped included Union Environment Secretary C.K. Mishra, DDA Vice-Chairman Tarun Kapoor and the three Municipal Commissioners.

Sources said Mr. Pal will be writing to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Cabinet Secretary Pradeep Kumar Sinha to initiate contempt of parliamentary privileges against



A girl uses anti-pollution mask in Delhi. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the missing officials.

As many as 25 of the 29 members of the committee were absent. Other than Mr. Pal, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, BJP MP C.R. Patil and National Conference MP Hasnain Masoodi were the only ones to attend.

Delhi BJP MP Gautam Gambhir was among the absentees. A tweet by former cricketer V.V.S. Laxman showed Mr. Gambhir enjoying roadside snacks at Indore

in M.P., where he has gone for a commentary assignment on the India-Bangladesh test match.

**All-out attack**

AAP launched an all-out attack on the BJP for Mr. Gambhir's absence. Quoting Mr. Laxman's tweet, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said in a tweet: "Does Delhi deserve such MPs who are busy with Jalebi Poha while missing crucial Parliamentary Committee Meeting on Pollution in Delhi NCR." The majority of members in the committee are from the BJP, Mr. Bharadwaj said, adding that the absence of Mr. Gambhir and other BJP MPs shows that the party was not serious about the health of Delhiites.

The AAP said the agenda for the meeting was circulated a week in advance on No-

vember 8. Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said he would investigate the absence of officials from his Ministry. "This is a serious matter and I will definitely enquire about it. But let me emphasise that addressing Delhi's pollution is not about indulging in blame-game," he said when reporters sought an explanation for the absence.

Later in the day, the Environment Ministry issued a statement saying that the body was represented by a Deputy Secretary and an officer from the Central Pollution Control Board. A Joint Secretary could not attend as she was to appear for "an important matter" in the Supreme Court. The Ministry had submitted "detailed notes" to the Urban Development Ministry, an official statement said.

# Floating city



**Deluged again:** The flooded St. Mark's Square in Venice on Friday, two days after the city suffered its highest tide in 50 years. Italy declared a state of emergency in the city, where the rising waters have caused unprecedented damage. • AFP

# Report on household spending put on hold

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**

The government has decided not to release the household consumer expenditure survey results of 2017-18 due to data quality issues, it announced on Friday.

Media reports said the unreleased survey had been suppressed because it showed that consumer demand had declined in 2017-18 for the first time in more than 40 years.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in a statement that it is "planning the next consumer expenditure survey in 2021-22 after data quality refinement in the survey process."

The Ministry said the report that was cited in the media was a draft and should not be considered final, a defence it has employed earlier when unpleasant data has been leaked. "The Ministry has seen media reports of consumer expenditure survey by NSS (National Sample Survey) stating that index is falling and report is withheld due to adverse findings," it said.

"The Ministry states that there is a rigorous procedure for vetting of data and reports produced through surveys. All such submissions that come to Ministry are draft in nature and cannot be deemed to be final report."

# At this railway station, dog looks out for passengers

Abandoned pet joins forces with the security personnel at the Chennai Park suburban station



**Duty beckons:** Chinnaponnu barking at footboard travellers at the Chennai Park Railway Station. • B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

**DENNIS S. JESUDASAN**  
**CHENNAI**

It's the most ubiquitous sight across the country — a dog curled up on a railway platform — and would hardly merit a second look.

But the black-and-tan dog asleep under an old fan near the Station Master's room at the Chennai Park Railway Station in Tamil Nadu is no ordinary canine but an active volunteer with the Railway Protection Force (RPF) unit deployed at the busy commuter hub in the city.

Chinnaponnu, who was abandoned at the station over two years ago, has seriously taken up the job of assisting the RPF in warning commuters illegally crossing

the railway tracks and those travelling on the footboard of the suburban trains.

**'Not a trained dog'**  
 "She is not a trained dog but after watching us warning people crossing the tracks and travelling on the footboard, Chinnaponnu has learnt the drill. As we do our duty, she joins us and does her 'duty'," says RPF head constable G.C.D. Chiranjeevi.

When some passengers discreetly attempt to cross the tracks behind the back of the policemen on duty, Chinnaponnu barks and alerts them.

She also makes sure that nobody travels on footboard. V. Senthambizhan, who

works at a kiosk at the station, says the dog keeps to herself but is watchful of the surroundings.

"She once helped the police catch a man who was running away after snatching the mobile phone of a commuter," recalls S. Sureshbabu, who works at another kiosk.

"I saw her owner from Tiruvannamalai, who said the family had to abandon her because their landlord did not allow them to keep a pet at home. But, they visit her once a month. It was from them we got to know her name is Chinnaponnu," says Sureshbabu.

(See video at <http://bit.ly/ChinnaponnuDog>)

# HC dismisses Chidambaram's bail plea

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH**  
**NEW DELHI**

The Delhi High Court on Friday dismissed the regular bail plea of former Union Minister P. Chidambaram in connection with the INX Media money laundering case. A Bench of Justice Suresh Kumar Kait was of the opinion that the prima facie allegations against Mr. Chidambaram are serious in nature and that he played a "key and active role" in the case.

While declining the bail plea of the senior Congress leader, the judge said granting relief to such offenders would send a wrong message.

**DETAILS ON** ▶ PAGE 12