

## Andhra hikes bar licence fees, says prohibition soon

SCREENIVAS JANYALA  
HYDERABAD, NOVEMBER 24



Cancels all existing licences

THE ANDHRA Pradesh government has cancelled the existing licences of all the 798 bars in the state and announced a new policy which includes a sharp hike in the fees for obtaining a bar licence. This comes less than two months after the government reduced the number of liquor shops in the state. Deputy Chief Minister (Excise) K Narayana Swamy said the decision is in line with the government's commitment to implement total prohibition next year. Under the new policy, which will come into effect from January 1 and remain in force for two years, only 479 bars will get new licences. The application fee for 3-star and above hotels has been increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1.45 crore, with a 10 per cent hike after one year, while it

has been hiked from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh for the other bars. "The new (bar licence) policy issued on Friday is aimed at reducing the number of bars in the state by 40 per cent, as announced earlier. On October 1, we had issued a new policy by which the number of liquor shops in the state was reduced from 4,380 to 3,500, and the AP State Beverages Corporation took over these 3,500 liquor shops. These are steps towards implementing total prohibition in the state as Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy promised in his election campaign. It is not a sudden decision, we had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## AYODHYA JUDGMENT

## Review plea will signal Muslims against important Hindu temple: NCM chief

ABANTIKA GHOSH  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 24



Ghayurul Hazan Rizvi

NATIONAL COMMISSION for Minorities chairman Ghayurul Hasan Rizvi has said Muslims should refrain from filing a review plea against the Supreme Court ruling in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case as it sends out the message that they are creating obstructions in the construction of a temple for Ram — "the most important Hindu God". It will also amount to breaking the "word" given to the nation to abide by the SC order, he said. "It is important to understand that the entire country, Hindus, Muslims and even the AIMPLB (All India Muslim Personal Law Board) had promised the country before the judgment that they would abide by

it. Muslims never said they would abide by the judgment only if it is in their favour. So essentially, they have now reneged on that word. But what is far more dangerous is the message that a review petition would send out — that Muslims are deliberately creating obstructions in the building of a Ram temple, to celebrate the most important

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

MOVING FORWARD WITH FRESH HOPES, SAYS PM PAGE 9

## SENA-NCP-CONGRESS PLEA AGAINST GOVERNOR'S DECISION

# Mumbai swearing-in: To test spirit, Supreme Court asks for letters today

Court tells Centre to produce Fadnavis letter claiming majority support, Governor's invitation to form govt

ANANTHAKRISHNAN  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 24

PUTTING OFF a decision on the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress's plea for a floor test in Maharashtra "within 24 hours", the Supreme Court on Sunday asked the Centre to produce by 10.30 am Monday the letters of Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari inviting Devendra Fadnavis to form the government, and of the BJP leader claiming the support of the required number of MLAs to stake claim.

A bench of Justices N V Ramana, Ashok Bhushan and Sanjiv Khanna said it would pass orders on the petitioners' demand for an urgent floor test only after perusing these letters. "We have taken note of all the arguments, particularly the argument that the Governor's decision dated 23-11-2019 inviting the Respondent No.3 to form a Government on 23-11-2019 is unconstitutional... As adjudication of the issues and also the interim prayers sought by the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**EXPLAINED**  
**E** A test of due process

THE LETTERS the court has asked for are crucial for determining whether the Governor applied the "prima facie" test that a Constitution bench laid down in 2006, to establish whether Governor followed due process as per constitutional norms, and reasonably verified the promise of a stable government when recommending revocation of President's Rule.

## INSIDE

PRO-TEM SPEAKER HOLDS KEY

PAWAR, UDDHAV MEET NCP MLAs PAGE 8

## At NCP's Nov 17 meeting, Ajit Pawar backed tie-up with BJP

SANDEEP ASHAR  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 24

DAYS BEFORE he broke ranks, Ajit Pawar gave the first indication that he wanted the NCP to align with the BJP for government formation in Maharashtra at the party's core committee meeting in Pune on November 17, said party sources.

Exposing the division within the Pawar family and the party over forming an alliance with the Shiv Sena, Ajit Pawar, who was



Ajit Pawar in Mumbai on Sunday. Nirmal Harindran

then the legislature party leader, is learnt to have openly backed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Congress leaders Prithviraj Chavan and Randeep Singh Surjewala on Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

## THE EDITORIAL PAGE

### IN DARKNESS

Given stealth in swearing-in, a prompt floor test is only way to bring the light in PAGE 10

### BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



Will the much-tampered pink ball be finally stopped?

## Ajit says still with NCP, Sharad says no question of alliance with BJP

MANOJ MORE & ZEESHAN SHAIKH  
PUNE, MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 24

WHILE THE NCP on Sunday claimed the support of most of its MLAs, including four of the five who could not be accounted for on Saturday, senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar, who had sprung a surprise by joining hands with the BJP and taking oath as Deputy Chief Minister, exuded confidence that the new government would win the floor test. "You will see...we will win the



Sharad Pawar in Mumbai on Sunday. Amit Chakravarty

trust vote on the floor of the house," Ajit Pawar, who was sacked as the NCP party

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## With Op Lotus, BJP prepares for floor test



Fadnavis in Mumbai on Sunday. Prashant Nadkar

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE & SANDEEP ASHAR  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 24

WHILE THE Supreme Court on Sunday did not set an immediate date for the Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP government in Maharashtra to undertake a floor test, the party began working to shore up its numbers.

The BJP, the single largest party with 105 MLAs, requires the support of 40 more MLAs to get to a simple majority of 145 in the 288-member state Assembly.

While expressing confidence about retaining the Ajit Pawar-led NCP faction on their side, BJP insiders said the party has launched 'Operation Lotus',

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## EXPLAINED



SIMPLY PUT  
WHEN SC REVIEWS A DECISION  
PAGE 12

## THE GOVERNANCE PAGE



HOW AI ANSWERS COMPLAINTS IN KANNADA  
PAGE 13

## WORLD



HONG KONG: HIGH POLL TURNOUT SEEN AS REFERENDUM ON PROTESTS  
PAGE 14

BILLIONAIRE BLOOMBERG ENTERS WHITE HOUSE RACE  
PAGE 14

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