

**NEARBY**



**SC rejects review plea of Nirbhaya case convict**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by one of the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape-and-murder case to review its May 5, 2017 judgment confirming his death penalty. The court refused Akshay Singh's plea to grant him three weeks' time to file a mercy petition before the President of India.

**NATION** ▶ PAGE 9

**Tharoor wins Akademi's 2019 award for English**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Sahitya Akademi on Wednesday announced its annual literary awards for 2019 for works in 23 languages, including one for Shashi Tharoor's non-fiction book about British rule in India.

**NATION** ▶ PAGE 9

**Kejriwal blames opposition for violence**

**NEW DELHI**  
Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal expressed his concern over the law and order situation in the city, accusing "the opposition" for fuelling incidents of violence. City BJP chief Manoj Tiwari challenged the AAP and the Congress for a debate on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

**CITY** ▶ PAGE 2

# Tribunal reinstates Mistry as Tata Sons executive chairman

Appellate body rules that decision to remove him from the top post was illegal

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

Three years after Cyrus Pallonji Mistry was unceremoniously removed from the post of executive chairman of Tata Sons, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Wednesday ruled that the decision was "illegal", paving the way for his reinstatement.

The replacement of the present 'executive chairman' and the reinstatement of Mr. Mistry will, however, come into effect after four weeks, during which Tata Sons has the option to challenge the tribunal's verdict before the Supreme Court.

Additionally, the tribunal clarified that Mr. Mistry will be reinstated as director of 'Tata Companies' with immediate effect.

The tribunal also ordered Ratan N. Tata and the nominee of the 'Tata Trusts' to desist from taking any decision in advance which requires a majority decision of the board of directors or in the annual general meeting.

It also declared as illegal the conversion of Tata Sons Limited from a 'public company' to a 'private company' by the Registrar of Companies. The tribunal remarked that the decision to convert the company as private was "prejudicial" and "oppres-

## Back at the helm

Three years after he was removed as executive chairman of Tata Sons, Cyrus Mistry was reinstated on Wednesday by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal. Key points from the ruling:



**Changed equations:** A file photo of Ratan Tata, left, and Cyrus Mistry. • PTI

- NCLAT said resolution passed by the board of directors on October 24, 2016, removing Mistry as executive chairman of Tata Sons was illegal
- Mistry to be reinstated after four weeks, during which time Tata Sons can appeal against

the verdict before the Supreme Court

- Tata Sons ordered to go back from 'private company' to 'public company'
- Ratan Tata and nominees of trusts told to desist from taking any decision in advance

- Told to 'create healthy atmosphere removing the mistrust' between Tata Group and Shapoorji Pallonji Group
- NCLAT said there

was nothing on record to suggest that the board of directors or any of the trusts at any time expressed displeasure about the performance of Mistry

While the board of directors brought in a motion to remove Mistry on the ground that Tata Trusts had lost confidence in him, none of the purported reasons for his removal was discussed or deliberated

sive" to the minority shareholders, including the Shapoorji Pallonji Group.

**FULL COVERAGE: PAGE 15**

The Shapoorji Pallonji Group is in business with the Tata Group, i.e. Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust, for more than four decades.

Earlier, Mr. Pallonji Shapoorji Mistry, father of Mr. Cyrus Pallonji Mistry, was appointed as the executive chairman of Tata Sons.

For better protection of the interest of all stakehol-

ders, the tribunal said that in future at the time of appointment of the executive chairman, independent director and directors, the Tata Group, should consult the minority group – the Shapoorji Pallonji Group.

It also barred Tata Sons from invoking its power under Article 75, which empowers Tata Sons Limited at any time to transfer "ordinary shares" of any of the shareholders, against Mr. Mistry and others.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 12

## Tata Group likely to move Supreme Court

The Tata Group is likely to move the Supreme Court against the NCLAT judgment to restore Cyrus Mistry as the executive chairman of Tata Sons Ltd. "Tata Sons strongly believes in the strength of its case and will take appropriate legal recourse," said Shuva Mandal, group general counsel, Tata Sons. ▶ PAGE 15

## Council votes for 28% GST on all lotteries

**PRISCILLA JEBARAJ**  
**NEW DELHI**

The GST Council broke its tradition of taking decisions by consensus at its 38th meeting on Wednesday, with a first-time vote on a proposal to tax all lotteries at the uniform rate of 28%. After Kerala pushed for a division, States voted 21-7 in favour of the proposal. There were no proposals or discussion regarding overall GST rate changes at the meeting, said Finance Minister Nirmla Sitharaman.

A presentation on revenue augmentation made by State and Central officials contained data and projections of revenue collection and compensation cess collection, but did not make any suggestions to increase or cut rates, she said.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 12

## No stay on Citizenship Act implementation, says SC

Court says it will hear the 59 petitions on January 22

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

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019, which fast-tracks citizenship by naturalisation process for "illegal" migrants from six religious communities, other than Muslims, who have fled persecution from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde instead orally suggested to the government to publicise the actual intent of the Act so that there was no confusion among the public about its objectives and aims.

Protests have broken out all over the country since the notification of the Act on December 12.

"There is need to publicise why the Act [CAA] is passed. There is a need for that," Justice Bobde addressed Attorney General K.K. Venugopal for the Centre. "I agree. We will see to it," Mr. Venugopal responded.

### 'Lot of confusion'

The CJI's comments came on a submission by advocate A.K. Upadhyay that there was a lot of confusion in the public mind about the objectives of the amended Citizenship Act.



**Protests continue:** Students raising slogans outside Jamia Millia Islamia on Wednesday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The government has maintained that the amendments made to the Citizenship Act of 1955 were meant to protect and welcome religiously persecuted people fleeing the three neighbouring countries, where Muslims form the majority.

The Supreme Court issued a formal notice admitting 59 petitions filed by people from all walks of life and faiths. The court said it would hear the petitions on January 22. This is its last working day before it closes for the winter vacation till January 1.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 12

**JAIRAM RAMESH INTERVIEW**  
▶ PAGE 13

**RELATED REPORTS** ▶ PAGE 13

## No threat to Muslim citizens: Naqvi

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Wednesday said there was no threat to citizenship of any Indian Muslim or any other citizen due to the Citizenship Amendment Act. He said there were many myths around the Act that needed to be busted. "When you speak to people there is a refrain that 'We will get thrown out [of the country]'. That is absolutely untrue, why would anyone throw anyone out and why?" he said. ▶ PAGE 12

## Prayer for peace



**Open again:** After a gap of four and a half months, the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar was thrown open for the public on Wednesday. • NISSAR AHMAD (REPORT ON PAGE 5)

## Four held guilty in 2008 Jaipur serial blasts case

Quantum of sentence expected today; 71 persons were killed, around 200 injured in the explosions

**MOHAMMED IQBAL**  
**JAIPUR**

A special court here on Wednesday convicted four persons of the serial blasts that ripped through the Walled City of Jaipur 11 years ago, killing 71 persons and leaving about 200 injured. One of the five accused, charged with sending an e-mail which claimed responsibility for the blasts on behalf of the Indian Mujahideen, was acquitted.

Those held guilty of planting the bombs and carrying out the explosions on May 13, 2008, were Mohammed Saif, Mohammed Sarwar Azmi,



The van carrying the blast accused in Jaipur on Wednesday. • ROHIT JAIN PARAS

Saifur Rehman and Mohammed Salman. Special Judge Ajay Kumar Sharma

scheduled the hearing on the quantum of sentence for the convicts for Thursday.

Public Prosecutor Sri Chand said the four persons were convicted under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Explosives Act in eight cases registered by the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of Rajasthan police.

### One acquitted

Shahbaz Ahmed, a resident of Lucknow who was the first one to be arrested three months after the blasts, was acquitted in all the cases for want of evidence.

The convicts were bet-

ween 21 and 25 years old at the time of their arrest.

The eight locations targeted in a series of nine synchronised bomb blasts are situated within a 2-km radius in the densely populated Walled City.

The court pronounced the judgment in the presence of the blast accused amid tight security in the Bani Park District Courts Complex. Three accused - Yasin Bhatkal, Asadullah Akhtar, and Mohammed Aariz - are at present lodged in Tihar Jail in Delhi, facing trial in other blast cases.

## Eight held for Seelampur violence

**STAFF REPORTER**  
**NEW DELHI**

Eight persons have been arrested in connection with violence that erupted during protests in east Delhi's Seelampur area on Tuesday, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North East) Ved Prakash Surya said that six persons were arrested on Tuesday while two others were arrested on Wednesday. "They are all locals of

the area and whether they have a criminal background or not is being verified," he said, adding that others have been identified and action will be taken against them. At least 18 people have also been taken in preventive custody, police said.

Police had on Tuesday registered two first information reports into the incident of violence in which 21 persons, including 15 security personnel, were injured.

On Wednesday, Section 144 (unlawful assembly) was imposed in most parts of east Delhi to maintain law and order in the area. Police also conducted a flag march in the area which was joined by Joint Commissioner of Police Alok Kumar and Mr. Surya. "The idea was to send a message of peace and to request people not to indulge in any unlawful activity," the DCP said.

**SEE ALSO** ▶ PAGE 3

# Parties blame each other for violence over Citizenship Act

While Kejriwal chooses not to name anyone, Tiwari challenges AAP and the Congress for a debate on the Act

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Each of the three political players in the Capital continued to blame the other for violence associated with protests related to the Citizenship Act here on Wednesday.

While he chose not to name either the BJP or the Congress directly, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal expressed his concern over the law and order situation in the city accusing “the opposition” for fuelling such incidents while Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party chief Manoj Tiwari challenged AAP and the Congress for a debate on the Act.

The Congress, on its part, accused the AAP and the BJP for “being complicit” in triggering such events at Okhla and Seelampur and demanded that a sitting High Court judge probe these.

“I am very worried about the law and order situation in the city...we want that peace be maintained. Everyone has a right to protest but not to attack or harm others and damage public property...I also want to say that all this is happening at a time when AAP is poised to win the upcoming Assembly election,” Mr. Kejriwal alleged at a press conference here.

## ‘Nothing to gain’

Mr. Kejriwal said, AAP had nothing to gain and much to lose by its name “getting dragged” into the mess in relation to the CAA protests. “What will AAP gain from such incidents? It is clear that those who think such events can help them electorally are fanning them...Everyone knows who is capable of triggering such incidents across the country,” he added.

Mr. Tiwari, meanwhile, challenged both AAP and Congress for a debate on the CAA even as he sought to caution both parties against creating “disturbance by spreading rumours in Delhi” related to it.

**I am very worried about the law and order situation in the city...we want that peace be maintained. Everyone has a right to protest but not to attack or harm others and damage public property...**

ARVIND KEJRIWAL  
Chief Minister

“The Act is to give citizenship to the refugees and not meant for depriving any person of citizenship rights...15 cases have been filed in connection with the incidents in Seelampur out of which five cases are against the leaders of AAP and the Congress,” Mr. Tiwari argued.

“It clearly shows that both these parties are working to disturb peace in Delhi. Everybody has right to express his view but there is no place for violence in the society. It is very sad that people are not studying the Citizenship Act but believing in rumours. AAP and the Congress are taking advantage of it and adding fuel to fire for creating disturbance,” he alleged further.

Delhi Congress president Subhash Chopra, making a direct attack on the BJP and the AAP, accused both parties for being “responsible for vitiating the atmosphere in Delhi.”

## Terms it direct insult

The Citizenship Act, he alleged further, was “a direct insult” to the Constitution in addition to questioning the “silence” of the AAP on the CAA and arguing that this showed “its complicity with the BJP.”

“The attack on students of Jamia was an indelible blot on democracy which will not be tolerated...the violence witnessed in the Capital was a calculated conspiracy to scuttle the peaceful agitations against CAA,” he alleged.



(Clockwise from top) Jamia Teachers' Association taking out a peace march on Wednesday thanking other universities and organisations that have extended solidarity with the university; a Delhi Police van stuck during a protest against the amended Citizenship Act outside Jamia Millia Islamia; people protesting against the Act at Turkman Gate; and students and local residents during a protest outside Jamia.

\*SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



## Jamia teachers thank others for the support

Fact-finding committee constituted to probe ‘police brutality’ on students: JTA

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

While “categorically” rejecting the recently passed Citizenship Act and the National Register of Citizens, the Jamia Teachers' Association (JTA) on Wednesday took out a peace march, thanking other universities and organisations that have extended solidarity with the university.

The JTA said that a fact-finding committee was constituted to probe the “police brutality unleashed on innocent students” on December 15. They demanded adequate compensation from the government for loss of property.

## Call to withdraw cases

The teachers' association also sought withdrawal of cases registered against students following the police crackdown which took place on Sunday.

Sonia Gupta, a professor at the university, said, “You can destroy a library but you cannot destroy ideas. Our academic degrees are not to remain silent. The issue is not just restricted to Jamia. Students from across the universities are facing police atrocities.”

Addressing the media, JTA secretary Majid Jamil said, “Over the years Jamia has demonstrated its secular character. It is very unfortunate that a 100 years later, the university is going through such a critical phase. On Sunday, innocent students and guards had to face police brutality and it is shameful.”

## Complaint emailed

A complaint was emailed to the SHO Jamia Nagar, DCP southeast and the police commissioner on Tuesday. While the proctor declined to share a copy of the complaint, the email states that

## Kanhaiya joins protest outside Jamia Millia

NEW DELHI

Former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) president Kanhaiya Kumar on Wednesday joined the protest outside the Jamia Millia Islamia and said that the fight was not limited to protecting the Muslim community but to protect the entire country.

Mr. Kumar, addressing a large gathering of protesters, said: “If the National Register of Citizens is implemented in pan-India, we will all have to stand in long queues like the demonetisation days. The protests against the citizenship law will go down in history as the one which saved the Constitution.”

Adding that peaceful protests need to be carried out, Mr. Kumar said, “We must ensure that we remain in our senses while trying to maintain the same level of energy. Remember we hold pens and not AK-47.”

attempts had been made to register the complaint at the police station but the complaint “was not received.”

The proctor said that the complaint had been made against the illegal entry of police personnel into the university, the attack on students and the damage caused to the reading room and other infrastructure. It had demanded action against the personnel responsible.

Shikha Kapoor, another professor of the university said: “The support garnered reflects that Jamia has taken up the right cause. A law which is arbitrary is not acceptable and in no way should dissent be crushed.”

## No role in plea against disqualification:EC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday told the Delhi High Court that the

poll panel has no role to play in the matter pertaining to disqualification of former AAP MLAs Anil Bajpai and Devender Sehrawat.

The submission by the Election Commission was made on an affidavit placed before Justice Navin Chawla.

## DELHI TODAY

**Talk:** “Poverty, Equity and Social Justice - The Role of the Civil Services”. A tribute to former bureaucrat B.N. Yugandhar. Speakers: Dr. Y.K. Alagh, economist and former Union Minister; Dr. Aruna Roy, political and social activist; and Harsh Mander, author and columnist. Tributes by Ravi Vira, former Secretary Economic Affairs, Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India; and Mohan Kanda, former Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh at Seminar Rooms I, II & III, Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre (IIC), 6.30 p.m.

**Talk:** “Christmas Through the Ages”, an illustrated lecture with live demonstration by Marilyn Thomas, Lyric Ensemble of Delhi at Lecture Room - II, Basement Annexe, India International

Centre (IIC), 6.30 p.m.

**Talk:** Public lecture on “The Literary and Intellectual Worlds of Qasbah Towns in Colonial India” by Dr. Raisur Rahman, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, at Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMMML), Teen Murti House, Teen Murti Marg, 3 p.m.

**Exhibition:** “Out of Line” an art show tracing abstraction within contemporary art in Cambodia at Akar Prakar, First Floor, D-43 Defence Colony, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Screening:** “Laces”, a Hebrew film directed by Jacob Goldwasser will be screened as part of the ongoing mini festival of Israeli films at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m. (Mail your listings for this column at Cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

## Man from Odisha sets himself ablaze

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old man from Odisha has allegedly set himself ablaze on Wednesday evening near India Gate.

A PCR van rushed the injured to a hospital where doctors said that he has suffered 90% burns.

The man belong to Odisha. He was not connected to the protesters gathered at the India Gate lawns against the Citizenship Act, the police said.

## Freedom under threat from religion: Gopal Gandhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Criticising the Citizenship Act and the National Register of Citizens, former West Bengal governor Gopal Gandhi said that freedom in India today is under threat.

Mr. Gandhi was delivering the first Mushirul Hasan Memorial Lecture on the theme "the enterprise of free speech in a market of control" here on Tuesday.

Stating that "fear is a fever and our freedom is fevered", Mr. Gandhi added that fear was merely the symptom, not the disease. The underlying causes compromising freedom are three-fold, he said. They are the role of religion and money in politics, and "the role which political power, legitimately elected and democratically installed, plays in ways that befuddle the laws and bewilder democracy".

### Money and graft

Deplored the NRC and CAA as efforts to determine citizenship by religion, Mr. Gandhi said these initiatives of the current government would have left the Constituent Assembly aghast. Corporate money in politics has resulted in corruption as well as loss of independent candidates, he added.

However, Mr. Gandhi also made it clear that the threat to freedom is not simply a post-2014 phenomenon. Noting that Sheikh Abdullah had been jailed for 11 years during Jawaharlal Nehru's term as Prime Minister, while his son and grandson are under arrest today, Mr. Gandhi said that "the prisoners have changed, but the prisoners stayed the same".

The judiciary also came in for flak from Mr. Gandhi who said that it was "fallible" like any human being, and the defenders of freedom could not take it for granted any more than the peasant could take the monsoon for granted.

He also deplored the disdain of the left liberal secular intelligentsia for the religious middle class. It is not arrogant, but rather, self-defeating, he said.

## Ragpicker shoots to fame after saving police officer

She stopped a mob from attacking him during Seelampur clash

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

A 45-year-old ragpicker rose to fame in a day after she saved a police officer from the mob during the clashes in Seelampur. A WhatsApp video of her saving the official is making rounds among the residents while Anwari Begum sat on a rickshaw chatting with her friends as usual on Wednesday.

A resident of Seelampur jhuggis, Anwari is not aware of the nuances of Citizenship Act. She only knows that it has to do something against the Muslim community.

When *The Hindu* visited Seelampur, a resident showed a video of the incident in which an official wearing a uniform and helmet and holding a stick in his hand runs behind scores of protesters. Suddenly, the mob turns towards him and start pelting stones. The video made by a woman, who did not wish to be identified, can be heard saying "It was wrong for the official to come alone. He will get hurt".

The official then runs towards a street where Anwari was sitting with a couple of people. She can be seen coming towards the crowd and asking them to stop. Her son also comes and stop the two men who were pelting stones.



Anwari Begum sitting on a rickshaw in Seelampur on Wednesday. ■HEMANI BHANDARI

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Anwari recalled the incident and said that the official came towards her and she made him sit. "Vo police wala sehem gaya tha [The police official was shaken]". She turned towards the men pelting stones and told them "haath mat lagana [Don't touch him]" after which they ran towards the other side.

Anwari and her family then took the official to the street and offered him tea. "He drank it and then left," she said.

Anwari doesn't know what Citizenship Act is. She only knows "Kuch Musalmanon ke khilaaf hai [There

is something against Muslims]" but she said, "Whatever it is, it is against the leaders. What have the police done? Why beat them?"

Laraib, a resident, standing next to Anwari butted in and criticised the police for thrashing students at Jamia Millia Islamia. But she said: "They did what they did there but here, they should not have been attacked."

Rakesh Chawla, a resident said: "She is the real hero. She saved him, otherwise they would have hurt him very badly".

Efforts were made to identify the official, but details could not be ascertained.

## Thousands protest in Nuh against CAA

Traffic comes to a grinding halt; agitators ride tractors, mini-trucks on highway

ASHOK KUMAR  
NUH

Amid nation-wide protests against the amendments in the Citizenship Act, thousands of residents holding Tricolours, placards and banners, took out an eight-km-long march on Gurugram-Alwar Highway here on Wednesday afternoon to protest against the Act and the National Register for Citizens. The protests remained peaceful, said the police.

Raising slogans demanding the rollback of the controversial CAA and the NRC, people of all ages took over both carriageways of the Highway around noon, bringing the traffic to a complete halt on the busy road. They emerged from the Nuh PWD Guest House to the Idgah at Ghasera village for a public meeting under the aegis of Mewat Vikas Sabha.

While most of them walked on foot holding banners that read, "No to CAA, No to NRC" and "Save Constitution, Save Country", a large number of them rode tractors, mini-trucks and motorcycles with the posse of police personnel in riot gear accompanying them on foot and deployed along the route.

Labelling the CAA and the NRC against the spirit of the Constitution, prominent Muslim leaders addressing the gathering, sought its immediate rollback and vowed that none of the around 80 lakh Muslims in the Mewat region spread across Rajas-



Led by deputy Congress legislative party leader and Nuh MLA Aftab Ahmed, protesters walk towards the Idgah in Ghasera village on Wednesday. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

than, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh would submit their papers to prove their citizenship.

Former Rajya Sabha MP Ali Anwar Ansari termed CAA as an attack on the "soul" of the Constitution and the secular character of the country. He added that the people in power had the mandate, but it did not allow them to distort the Constitution.

### 'Situation akin to 1947'

Referring to the attack on the students protesting against the law, Mr. Ansari said the students were being arrested, beaten up and treated like "enemies". He said that situation today was akin to 1947 when there was chaos and anarchy all around during Partition and Gandhiji had come to Ghasera at that time to make an appeal to the Muslims to stay back.

Deputy Congress Legisla-

tive Party leader and Nuh MLA Aftab Ahmed said religion had never been the criterion for citizenship in India and the country belonged to the people of all religions and communities. He said the ideology of "Nathuram Godse will not be allowed to flourish on Indian soil and the struggle against it would continue".

### Vow not to submit papers

MVS president Salamuddin called upon the audience to not submit their papers to prove their citizenship. He said that none of the 80 lakh Muslims in the Mewat region would give their documents. Salamuddin, an advocate, said that if needed they would not hesitate to walk to Delhi in protest and the demonstrations would continue till the time the "black law" is rolled back.

Shahid Khan, a protester,

expressed apprehension that a vast majority of the Muslims in the region, though staying for ages, might find it difficult to arrange papers to prove their citizenship. He said that most of them were illiterate and did not have proper papers in place.

Mewat RTI Manch president Rajuddin Meo said the law was aimed at creating rift between the Hindus and the Muslims and to gain political mileage.

The traffic on the highway remained affected for more than six hours with the Nuh-Sohna carriageway remaining closed to traffic for long and the vehicles being diverted towards Palwal.

Superintendent of Police, Nuh, Sangeeta Kalia said eight additional companies were sourced from across the State for the protest and more than a thousand police personnel were deployed.

## Police to use AI to counter deepfake videos

'Fake videos shared via social media have contributed to violence in Jamia Nagar'

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

With the help of Artificial Intelligence, the Delhi police will counter deepfake videos circulating on the social media, said a Delhi police officer on Wednesday.

A senior police officer said that during the investigation, it was found that deepfake videos were posted through social media accounts operating out of Delhi and such videos have fuelled the violence. Fake or morphed videos shared via social media have contributed to the violence in Jamia Nagar.

"We are taking the help of cyber experts to detect deepfake videos with the

help of Artificial Intelligence. We have come across more than 30 old videos of violence that happened in U.P., Bihar and other parts of the country that were posted as Jamia Millia Islamia incident. These videos are making rounds in the social media," the officer added.

"We are contacting social media influencers to pass the message about these deepfake videos and appeal to people to maintain peace. False conspiracies like loss of life and police opening fire on students are proliferating via WhatsApp and it has caused a lot of destruction during the Jamia incident," he added.

In a peace meeting with

senior residents of Jamia Nagar on Tuesday, locals suggested the police to spread the message on social media about fake and morphed videos because teenagers are active on social media and the message will directly reach them.

### Accounts identified

A team of cyber experts working in close coordination with Delhi police have identified several Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp and Telegram accounts indulged in rumour-mongering, he added.

"We are also concerned about the fact that the videos of bus burning, stone-pelting and police firing tear gas shells shot during

Jamia protest will be used on other parts of the country to create unrest. Therefore, acting swiftly, a team under supervision of senior police officer has been formed to keep track on such activities and counter them with the help of social media influencers," he added.

On Monday, Delhi Police spokesperson, M.S. Randhawa had mentioned that during investigations, the Delhi police has found that rumours like death of students, students getting injured in police firing, buses being set afire by the police and passing visuals of Patna and Aligarh as Jamia incident have instigated violence and created unrest.

## Sengar likely to serve sentence in Delhi jail

Appeal can be made before Delhi HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Kuldeep Singh Sengar, a former BJP MLA who was on Monday convicted for raping a minor girl in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao in June 2017, may have to serve his sentence in a Delhi prison.

"The trial in the case, as directed by the Supreme Court, took place in a Delhi court. Therefore, the convict will have to serve his sentence in a city jail. An appeal against the conviction can be made before the Delhi High Court," said an official.

The case was initially pursued by the Uttar Pradesh Police. However, alleging police inaction, the victim had approached the Allahabad High Court in February last year and then attempted self-immovable outside the residence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on April 8, 2018.

Days later, the case was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for further probe.

The matter then came up before the Supreme Court in August this year, while all the cases pertaining to the victim and her family members were shifted to Delhi for court proceedings.

Subsequently, on a court

**The trial in the case, as directed by the Supreme Court, took place in a Delhi court. Therefore, the convict will have to serve his sentence in a city jail.**

OFFICIAL

directive, Sengar was shifted from Sitapur prison in Uttar Pradesh to Tihar jail in Delhi, where he is currently lodged.

Based on its chargesheet, the court framed charges against Sengar and Shashi Singh, the co-accused in the case. After the trial, the court convicted him. However, the co-accused was given the benefit of doubt and acquitted.

The CBI has sought maximum punishment for Sengar and adequate monetary compensation to the victim.

Section 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, under which he has been found guilty, prescribes a minimum of 10 years and maximum of life imprisonment, besides fine.

The next court hearing on the quantum of sentence is on Friday.

## JNU to conduct take-home end-semester examinations

JNU students' body terms alternative mode of examination announced by the university 'farical'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Wednesday said that the university has decided to follow a 'take-home exam' process to conduct the end-semester in view of the examination boycott called by its students.

The university administration, in a statement, said: "Since the bonafide students are prevented from writing the end-semester examinations by some protesting students, the Deans of Schools and Chairpersons of Special

Centres have decided to give take home exams to students. Those who refuse to write the exams on their own will, in spite of the fact that the university is making every effort to conduct the examinations, will not be able to register in the next semester if they do not fulfil the academic requirements as per university ordinances."

The JNU administration added that a schedule will be prepared by the Deans of Schools and Chairs of Special Centres and released online.

Terming the alternative

mode of examination announced by the university "farical," the JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) said that the move was an attempt to "turn the university into a WhatsApp university."

"The online mode is a cynical way to try and bring disunity among students. However, students have already started taking pledges to boycott the WhatsApp university model. The university shall not succeed in dividing us or breaking this historic movement," a state-

ment issued by the JNUSU read.

The students' body further said that it was "illegal for the administration to push for online exams as per convenience, as evaluations are governed by university ordinances and statutes".

The JNU Teachers' Association (JNUTA), meanwhile, said, "Deans of Schools have no power under the statutory provisions to direct Centres or individual faculty to conduct examinations through such an alternative system. Conducting exami-

nations in the prescribed way would make a complete mockery of our commitment to maintaining high academic standards."

After the question papers were e-mailed, students of M.A. Political Science and International Studies wrote to the authorities stating that the new mode of examinations will "create an indelible blot on JNU's legacy". The students also urged authorities to accept the demands of students for a complete rollback of the proposed hostel fee hike.

### Act as per law against cab aggregators: HC

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Delhi government to act as per law against cab aggregators, like Ola and Uber, if they are found flouting the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

## DUTA marches demanding absorption of ad hoc and temporary teachers

Teachers' delegation meets UGC Secretary on Wednesday

ELISHA VERMANI  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) on Wednesday took out a march from Feroz Shah Kotla to the University Grants Commission (UGC) demanding absorption of ad hoc and temporary teachers and immediate promotions.

A DUTA delegation also met UGC Secretary and urged authorities to fulfil the demands put forth by the

teachers. "The Secretary was categorical in stating that the demand for absorption can only be met by the government as it concerns teachers from universities across the country. The DUTA delegation was also informed that the setting up of a committee to look at the total length of past service for promotion of teachers, can be considered," said Rajib Ray, the DUTA president. Amidst heavy sloganeer-

ing demanding Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Tyagi's resignation, Sant Prakash, an ad hoc teacher at Bhagini Nivedita College said, "We are facing repercussions of the faults that lie within the system. Even after filing the required forms, interviews for permanent positions have not been conducted since 2015."

The DUTA added that a general body meeting will be held on Friday.



**Timings**  
DELHI

THURSDAY, DEC. 19  
RISE 07:08 SET 17:28  
RISE 00:00 SET 12:44

FRIDAY, DEC. 20  
RISE 07:09 SET 17:29  
RISE 00:52 SET 13:21

SATURDAY, DEC. 21  
RISE 07:09 SET 17:29  
RISE 01:55 SET 13:58

**Delhi Weather** max min

Delhi City 18 07  
Safdarjung 18 07  
Palam 16 08

**Delhi Palam Today**  
16°C Dry weather with moderate fog in patches/mist during cold morning. Day will be cool with cool breeze and partly cloudy sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
17°C Rise in day temperature to continue. Moderate fog/mist during cold morning. Day will be cool with partly cloudy sky.

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## MLAs in M.P. to make their assets public

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BHOPAL

In a bid to bring transparency in political system, MLAs in Madhya Pradesh have decided to disclose details of their assets, including those of dependents, by June 30 every year which will be verified by a chartered accountant and put into public domain.

A resolution to this effect was passed unanimously by the legislators of the ruling Congress, Opposition BJP and others in the 230-member Assembly on Wednesday.

As per the resolution, the details of the assets of the MLAs and their dependents would be made public through the website of the Assembly.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Govind Singh presented the government resolution in the House stating that every MLA would submit details of his assets to the Assembly's Principal Secretary before June 30 every year.

# Report puts question mark on number of detained students

Fact-finding team contests official version of only 7 of 27 held being students

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GHAZIABAD

In the preliminary report released by the first fact-finding team that visited Aligarh Muslim University after the clash between the police and students on the intervening night of December 15-16, the number of students detained/missing didn't match with the official figure of seven. The report lists 15/16 students.

"Though we arrived at the figure by speaking to students, it was not seven for sure," said advocate Fawaz Shaheen of Quill Foundation, one of the three members of the team, the others being advocates Aman Khan and Fazal of Human Rights Law Network.

The university and district administration had



A protest against CAA in Jamalpur area of Aligarh on Tuesday. • MANOJ ALIGADI

maintained that out of 27 detained only seven were students, rest were either expelled students or antisocial elements intermingling with the students. All of them have been released now. "Some of those released have complained of custodial torture," said Mr. Shaheen.

Like John Dayal, who visited the campus on Tuesday as part of another fact-finding team, Mr. Shaheen said there were clear signs of police excesses and the decision to call the police by the university administration was uncalled for. The report also says that the police showered communal abuses on

the students and provoked them to come out of the campus.

"Based on several student accounts, around 8 p.m. the police and RAF started firing tear-gas shells, rubber bullets, stun grenades, pellets and other kinds of explosive weapons into the crowd inside the gate. The students were pushed back and fearing for their safety, they started hiding in nearby buildings such as Guest House no. 2 and 3. The situation did not demand any further intervention as the protesters had dispersed and students were hiding in buildings," said Mr. Shaheen.

Still, he said, the police moved inside the campus and lathi-charged the students in Sir Syed North and Morrison Court hostels.

## Section 144 enforced in all of U.P. ahead of CAA protest

Internet services suspended in Azamgarh for 48 hours

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Section 144 was enforced in all of Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday night ahead of the scheduled protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on Thursday. DGP O.P. Singh appealed to the parents not to allow their children to participate in any demonstration or march or else they will face action.

Internet services were also suspended in Azamgarh district on Wednesday for 48 hours after protests on two consecutive days against the CAA.

The police resorted to using mild force to disperse protesters in the Mubarakpur area on Tuesday after stones were allegedly pelted at them during the march. A day earlier, a protest march was staged in Azamgarh city



PSPL protest against CAA in Lucknow on Wednesday. • PTI

area.

Azamgarh police said on Twitter that the protesters violated Section 144 and raised provocative slogans. On the basis of videography and CCTV footage, 20 persons had been identified in Azamgarh city and 30 in Mubarakpur tehsil, out of which 10 were detained, police said.

"Those posting provoca-

tive items on social media are being identified. Strict action will be taken against all unruly elements," said the police.

A spokesperson for Azamgarh SP said Internet had been suspended for two days due to the law and order situation

Earlier in the day, district police chief Triveni Singh told a television channel that Internet services could be suspended as "some people are trying to spread rumours through WhatsApp and Facebook."

Meanwhile, ahead of Thursday's scheduled protest march against the CAA in Lucknow by various groups, the president of a local outfit, Rihai Manch, which is one of the petitioners against the CAA in the Supreme Court, was placed under house arrest.

## Biting cold



Commuters make their way on a cold winter morning near Amritsar on Wednesday. • PTI

## Man held for threatening to come drunk at Nitish rally

Alcohol freely available in the State despite ban: accused

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SITAMARHI (BIHAR)

A resident of this north Bihar town was on Wednesday sent to jail after being arrested the previous night for posting a video on Facebook in which he had threatened to attend a public meeting of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in a drunken state, defying the prohibition law.

Thakur Chandan Kumar Singh, an advocate by profession, had caused ripples Tuesday when he posted a video alleging that despite the complete ban on sale and consumption of liquor that was imposed three years ago, alcohol was freely available in the State.

The video was taken strong note of as Mr. Singh

was threatening to break the law. He was accordingly picked up from his house, booked under relevant sections of IPC, the State's Excise Act and the IT Act, Sub Divisional Police Officer (Sadar), Kumar Veer Dheerendra said.

### 14-day remand

He was produced before the CJMs court which remanded him to 14 days in judicial custody, the SDPO added.

In the video footage which has been beamed on a number of regional news channels, Mr. Singh can be heard using objectionable language against the Chief Minister whom he squarely blames for the flagrant violation of prohibition.

"It is an open challenge to you, Mr. Nitish Kumar. You are scheduled to hold a public meeting in Sitamarhi on December 23. I will come there after consuming alcohol. If your police is worth its salt, let it arrest me.

"I would come drunk to spread the message either the prohibition should be enforced or scrapped. We must not have a farce in the name of liquor ban", Mr. Singh says in the nearly five-minute-long footage.

The Chief Minister, who is on a State-wide "Jal-Jeevan-Hariyati Yatra", is currently touring central Bihar and expected to touch this northern town situated close to the Indo-Nepal border next week.

## 'High prevalence of pre-diabetes in Rajasthan'

ICMR study covers State through extensive surveys in both urban and rural areas

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

A new study on diabetes prevalence, sponsored by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has revealed that the number of persons with pre-diabetes in Rajasthan have increased faster than those with diabetes. The prevalence of pre-diabetes at 15.2% in Rajasthan's population is the same as that in 15 more developed States, while the persons with diabetes are lesser in number.

The ICMR-India Diabetes Study covered Rajasthan in its third phase through extensive surveys in both urban and rural areas, in which the data on demographic and socio-economic parameters as well as behavioural aspects, including tobacco use, alcohol use and physical activity, was obtained. The surveyors also collected information on



Principal investigator Dr. Arvind Gupta •

family history of diabetes and heart disease in the cross-sectional study.

The project's principal investigator, Jaipur-based endocrinologist Arvind Gupta, told *The Hindu* here on Tuesday that 5.7% of the State's population was found suffering from diabetes mellitus. "Though the average prevalence of diabetes in Rajasthan has been found to be lower than more developed States, it is greater among the urban,

sedentary and high-income men with hypertension and abdominal and generalised obesity," he said.

Dr. Gupta, who heads the Jaipur Diabetes Research Centre, presented the study's results at the International Diabetes Foundation (IDF) Congress in Busan, South Korea, earlier this month. The five-day event brought together global researchers to tackle a broad range of diabetes issues, from the latest scientific advances to cutting-edge information on education, diabetes care, advocacy and awareness.

### 'Worrying aspect'

Dr. Gupta said the high prevalence of pre-diabetes was a "worrying aspect" of the lifestyle disease, as the people with impaired glucose tolerance could progress to type 2 diabetes, unless controlled

by healthy eating habits and regular exercise. The study factored in body mass index, height and waist circumference and also tested cholesterol for all participants.

The epidemiological study, which was one of the largest in the world, was designed to provide estimates for pre-diabetes, dyslipidemia, hypertension, obesity and the level of glycemic control among the confirmed cases of diabetes. The community-based surveys conducted by the field volunteers covered the adults of either sex aged above 20 years.

About 4,000 eligible participants were identified for assessment of characteristics during the study for multi-stage sampling. Among those found with pre-diabetes, 17.1% were in the urban areas and 14.7% in the villages.

## Dalit woman shot at after failed rape bid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SASARAM (BIHAR)

A young Dalit woman was shot at and critically injured by unidentified assailants at her home in a village of Rohtas district, a couple of days after she had registered an FIR accusing four persons of having tried to rape her, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in a village under Rajpur police station area of the district on Tuesday night where a police party has been camping since Sunday to prevent escalation of tensions that have been running high since the attempted rape.

All the accused Zafar Khan, Farookh Khan, Sharbook Khan and another were arrested on Sunday itself, Superintendent of Police, Rohtas, Satyaveer Singh said.

Sub Divisional Police Officer, Sasaram, Raj Kumar said "As per the family members of the woman who is in her early 20s the attackers were four in number and they requested for an interview with the woman claiming to be journalists. When she arrived, one of them whipped out a firearm and opened fire after which all of them fled.

"The bullet pierced through the side of the woman's neck and she was rushed to the local PHC by a police party which rushed to her home upon hearing the sound of gunshot. Her condition required surgery so she was referred to a hospital in the district headquarters," the SDPO said.

## Release GST compensation every month, says Manpreet

Punjab Finance Minister also requests Centre to continue procuring wheat and paddy at MSP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal on Wednesday said that the cash flows of the State have been seriously impacted by the unilateral decision of the Central government adopting a new pattern in transferring the devolution of the State share in taxes as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission and also the transfer of State share in Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST).

He was participating in the pre-budget meeting of Finance Ministers of all States and Union Territories with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi

Mr. Badal said Punjab has been hit hard by the unending delay in release of its compensation of assured revenues of GST.

"In the first two years of implementation, bimonthly release of GST compensation by the Central government to the States had been adversely affecting their ability to meet their committed and



Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal •

regular outflows," said Mr. Badal, urging for monthly release of such compensation to enable the State to timely and efficiently plan their ex-

penditures.

"The non-release of the bimonthly GST compensation to the State even after the expiry of 4 months is severely affecting the State's fiscal management cycle," he added.

Mr. Badal also urged the Centre to continue the procurement of wheat and paddy at minimum support price from Punjab, besides ensuring procurement of maize and alternate crops to promote crop diversification and to address the problem of depleting groundwater table. Also for crop residue

management the Centre should make provision in the provisional cost sheet at ₹100 per quintal over and above the MSP, he added.

### Groundwater depletion

Amid the growing concerns on the depleting groundwater levels and a dire need for the management of waste water, Mr. Badal asked the Union Finance Minister to formulate a special scheme for the establishment of water treatment plants and rejuvenation of village ponds in the forthcoming Union Budget.

## Daily prayers resume in Srinagar's Jamia Masjid

Closed for 19 weeks since August 5

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Daily namaz were resumed on Wednesday in Srinagar's historic Jamia Masjid after remaining closed for a record 19 consecutive weeks since August 5, as security forces thinned out from outside the premises.

"Constituents of the Anjuman-e-Auqaf held a meeting on the resumption of prayers on Tuesday. It was decided that the mosque should resume prayers as the shops in the local mar-

ket has begun to reopen and the security presence outside has also come down," Shams-ul-Haq, spokesperson of the mosque's head priest Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, told *The Hindu*.

### 'Immense relief'

"We were able to offer noon and late afternoon prayers on Wednesday. It has brought immense relief to the local population who were yearning to pray at this historic mosque," he added.

# Not as happy as I should be, says Sahitya Akademi Award winner

I am distressed at the prevailing condition in Assam: Joyasree Goswami Mahanta

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUWAHATI

Novelist and former Asom Gana Parishad Rajya Sabha member Joyasree Goswami Mahanta on Wednesday said, "I am not as happy as I should be" with the news of winning the Sahitya Akademi Award. She also promised to distribute the prize money among the families of those killed during the anti-citizenship law protests in Assam.

In a dig at the AGP for supporting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, she said she is deeply hurt at the betrayal by "those elected by the people" as the law is not acceptable to the people of Assam.

"I received the news... but I am not as happy as I should



**Young people have lost their lives for a cause... I have decided to pay my tribute to them by distributing the prize money among their families**

JOYASREE GOSWAMI MAHANTA  
Novelist, ex-MP from AGP

be on hearing it due to the prevailing troubled situation in the State," Dr. Mahanta, wife of former Assam CM and senior AGP leader Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, said.

Dr. Mahanta was chosen for the Sahitya Akademi award for her novel *Chanyakya*. Twenty-two other writers and poets will receive the award, which comprises

an engraved copper plate and ₹1 lakh cash prize, on February 25, 2020, in Delhi.

"Young people have lost their lives for a cause and for their homeland and I have decided to pay my tribute to them by distributing the prize money among their families," she said.

"I am deeply distressed and hurt at the betrayal by

those elected to Parliament from the State and to the Assembly on the CAA issue as it is not acceptable to the people of Assam," she added.

"I will be grateful to the families if they accept it. This my humble way of honouring them," Dr. Mahanta said.

## Criticism for AGP

Mr. Mahanta has been vocal in his criticism against the party leadership for not opposing the Act in public and its lone Rajya Sabha MP Birendra Prasad Baishya for voting in its favour.

Dr. Mahanta has to her credit several books including *Dronacharya*, *Sreshta Bideshi Galpo*, *Ekuki Dhemi Sadhu* and some volumes on the Assam agitation.

## Curfew relaxed for 14 hrs. in Shillong

Mobile Internet services remain suspended for the 8th day

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHILLONG

Curfew was relaxed for 14 hours in two police station areas in Meghalaya's capital Shillong on Wednesday while the suspension of mobile Internet services remained in force for the past eight days, officials said.

There is no fresh trouble over the new Citizenship Act in the hill city for the past several days.

According to a district administration official, East Khasi Hills District Magistrate M.W. Nongbri on Wednesday issued an order relaxing the curfew for 14 hours from 6 a.m. in areas under Lumdingjiri police station and Sadar police station.

"As precautionary measures, the curfew would be reimposed in these two police station areas from 8 p.m. on Wednesday till further orders," the official added.

**Meghalaya Cabinet approved a resolution to bring the State under the Inner Line Permit regime**

All banks, shops and markets, educational institutions were open and vehicles were plying on the roads. Agitators protesting the amended Citizenship Act were planning to hold a prayer meeting at the Students' Field here later in the day.

After protests against the new law, curfew was imposed in Shillong and its outskirts on December 11.

Another official of the Chief Minister's secretariat said that the Cabinet meeting chaired by CM Conrad K. Sangma on Tuesday had approved a resolution to bring the State under the Inner Line Permit regime.

"The Cabinet resolution would be moved at the one-

day special session of the Assembly on Thursday," the official added.

Mr. Sangma last week had led a delegation of the ruling Meghalaya Democratic Alliance to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah and demanded to introduce the ILP in Meghalaya.

"We discussed the ILP issue and other problems of Meghalaya with the Home Minister and he assured us with positive approach," said Mr. Sangma, who is also the chairman of the MDA.

The ILP, which is now in force in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and in Manipur, was notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873, to allow inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited and stipulated period. The new Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, would not apply to the ILP areas.

## CPI(M) demands land rights papers for tribals

'They may get exploited by outsiders'

STAFF REPORTER  
BERHAMPUR

The Odisha unit of the CPI (M) has demanded that the State government immediately start providing *patta* or documented land rights to the tribal inhabitants of 'Swabhiman Anchal', the erstwhile cut-off area of the Balimela reservoir.

State CPI(M) secretary Ali Kishor Patnaik said lack of proper land rights is a major obstacle in the path of development of people of this underdeveloped area. "Unless their land rights are protected, these tribals will again get exploited by outsiders," he said.

The Balimela reservoir in Malkangiri district got direct road communication only after the inauguration of Gurupriya bridge in 2018. But till now a large number of

villages in the region do not have any road connectivity. A CPI(M) activist from Malkangiri, Braja Majhi, said that locals fear people from outside will reach their area to procure land.

According to the Left party, tribals here have not yet received benefits of housing schemes for the poordue to lack of *patta*. "The government should declare how much land of Swabhiman Anchal is part of the Balimela project area. If the police station and government offices at Chittrakonda could come up on project land, why not provide land rights to the tribals," said Mr. Patnaik.

The party also suggested that the State government initiate cooperative fish farming inside the Balimela reservoir and horticulture.

## Bengal Gov. wants to visit violence-hit districts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Expressing his satisfaction over the briefing provided by senior officials of the West Bengal government on Wednesday, Governor Jageep Dhankhar said that he would like to visit the areas affected by violence after taking the State government into confidence.

"The fact that the Chief Secretary and the DGP briefed me is very positive indication that we can work together in future," Mr. Dhankhar said after CS Rajiva Sinha and DGP Virendra called on him at Raj Bhawan.

Over the past few days, the Governor had sent a number of communications to the State government that senior officials should come and brief him about the prevailing law and order situation. After the meeting, Mr. Dhankhar said that he was hopeful that situation will improve.

On the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, he said, "it is the law of the law and must be respected by all."

"I appeal to all to abide by it. The Act is not against any citizen of India. It does not deprive any citizen in any manner whatsoever," he said. Mr. Dhankhar said any misinformation has to be dispelled and any redressal against it should only be in "judicial domain".

## Tarun Gogoi appears as lawyer in SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Former Assam Chief Minister and veteran Congress leader Tarun Gogoi was seen in lawyer's black robes on Wednesday to witness the crucial proceedings in the Supreme Court which decided to examine the validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Mr. Gogoi, 83, was seen in the crowded courtroom of Chief Justice S.A. Bobde.

### On Twitter

The news that Mr. Gogoi would be appearing as a lawyer in the case pertaining to the validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was shared on Twitter by his son and Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi, who represents the Kaliabor Lok Sabha constituency.

THE HINDU  
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IN BRIEF



**Khadse unhappy, but will pacify him: Mungantiwar**

**NAGPUR**  
Former minister Sudhir Mungantiwar on Wednesday admitted that senior BJP leader Eknath Khadse was unhappy with the party, but said all efforts will be made to pacify him. There has been speculation that Mr. Khadse might join the NCP. "Khadse saab will not leave the BJP. Our party is in his DNA," Mr. Mungantiwar said. PTI

**Engineering student hurt in acid attack in Gondia**

**MUMBAI**  
A 20-year-old engineering student was seriously injured in an acid attack at Mundipar bus stand in Gondia on Wednesday, the police said. A resident of Khalbandha village, the victim studies at a college in Nagpur. The two motorcycle-borne assailants had covered their faces and fled the spot. A suspect has been detained, additional superintendent of police Gondia Atul Kulkarni said. PTI

**Three senior citizens killed by speeding car**

**GODHRA**  
Three senior citizens, Suresh Patel (62), Gunwant Patel (60) and Ranchhod Mahanbhai (60) on a morning walk, were killed after being hit by a car at Rena Morva village in Gujarat's Godhra taluka on Wednesday. The driver lost control of his car and in a bid to evade an oncoming vehicle hit the trio, an official from Shehra police station said. The driver fled the scene, he said. PTI

# Nagpur Mayor shot at while driving, escapes unhurt

Two assailants open fire as Joshi was returning from anniversary celebration

GAUTAM S. MENGLE  
MUMBAI

Nagpur Mayor Sandip Joshi, a close friend of Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis, escaped an attempt on his life after unidentified assailants opened fire at his vehicle in the early hours of Wednesday.

According to the Nagpur Police, the incident occurred on Outer Ring Road near Jamtha cricket stadium a little after midnight. The police said Mr. Joshi, his family members and a group of around 35 friends had been out to celebrate the Joshi couple's marriage anniversary and were on their way back when the attack occurred.

"Mr. Joshi was driving his official vehicle with a friend in the passenger seat, while his family was following in another vehicle. The two assailants, who were on a motorbike, drew up behind his car near the junction of Outer Ring Road and Wardha Road, and fired three rounds from what we suspect to have been a country-made handgun," an officer with the Beltarodi police station said.

The officer said all the three rounds hit the vehicle but did not cause any injuries to its occupants, while the shooters sped away. Mr. Joshi immediately pulled over and informed the police, after which he drove down



**Relieved:** Sandip Joshi Mayor of Nagpur, arriving at Vidhan Bhavan on Wednesday. • S. SUDERSHAN

to the Beltarodi police station and registered an FIR.

**Threat letter**

With the winter session of the legislature under way in Nagpur, the incident sent shock waves through the city and elicited outrage over the

state of law and order.

The police have deployed additional personnel in the area and provided police protection to Mr. Joshi. The investigation into the case has been transferred to the Nagpur Crime Branch. Officials said five teams are cur-

rently working on the case, scanning all available CCTV footage and making inquiries with suspects.

"Mr. Joshi had received a threatening letter a few days ago, after he started an anti-encroachment drive in the city. We are trying to ascertain whether the attack stemmed from the same issue. Inquiries are being made with all those who stood to sustain any losses due to the anti-encroachment drive," the officer said.

A police official also said that Mr. Joshi's official vehicle was stolen from his residence last month, but was found within a day, and one person was arrested in connection with the theft.

The police have registered a case of attempt to murder against unidentified persons under the Indian Penal Code, along with sections of the Arms Act.

**Attack condemned**

Mr. Fadnavis condemned the attack on his party colleague, while senior BJP leader Sudhir Mungantiwar raised concern over the incident in the Assembly. "It is a serious matter that the first citizen of Nagpur has been attacked in this way. This indicates the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government's failure to maintain law and order in the State," Mr. Mungantiwar said.

(With PTI inputs)

# Patil warns of tax hike if GST compensation is not paid

Govt. will be compelled to seek remedies, says minister

SHARAD VYAS  
MUMBAI

State Finance Minister Jayant Patil has warned of an imminent tax hike to shore up revenue on account of implementation of the goods and services tax (GST) regime in the State. The State government will be compelled to seek various remedies, including increasing general taxes, if the Central government does not pay the committed GST compensation at the earliest, he said, following a consultation meeting for the Union Budget 2020-21 in New Delhi.

The meeting, chaired by Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman, was followed by a discussion of the GST Council on Wednesday. The Maharashtra delegation, which Mr. Patil led, urged the Centre to contribute ₹14,000 crore towards damage caused by natural calamities. "On behalf of the Government of Maharashtra, we have asked Government of India (GoI) to help to the tune of ₹14,000 crore for all damage caused by natural calamities. I will be proposing various measures on behalf of several stakeholders of Maharashtra," Mr. Patil said.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi government's coalition partner Shiv Sena has already warned of a 'conflict' with the Centre if it does not pay compensation for



Jayant Patil

revenue losses in the States on time. During the discussion, Mr. Patil requested the GoI to pay the promised Central assistance, which is pending for a long time. The demand of ₹14,000 crore includes pending assistance, he said. "In addition to this, there are various projects which the GoI is supporting but funds are not reaching us on time."

The minister confirmed participation in a discussion on the rationalisation of rates and changes in slabs during the GST Council meeting with finance ministers of other States. Mr. Patil said States will have to take a "considerate" view on the issue of raising the tax slabs since revenue is falling in the past few years owing to adjustments in GST rates. "At various points before some elections, the GoI reduced taxes. This has affected the revenue of various States, and Central support to bridge this gap is not hap-

pening," he said. Maharashtra will look to shore up revenue, including focussing on compliance, and hike taxes as a last resort to remedy the situation, he added.

An editorial in the Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* on Saturday had warned that the compensation for loss of revenue from implementation of the new tax regime must be shared immediately or a new 'struggle' could start between the Centre and States. The failure to pay the compensation and haphazard of implementation of economic policies by New Delhi has resulted in 'economic anarchy', *Saamana* said.

The Sena mouthpiece had said Ms. Sitharaman had assured that the Centre is committed to paying GST compensation but earlier, the government had promised payments of compensation would be made every two months. "The Centre had promised to pay ₹50,000 crore to States to compensate them on account of revenue loss due to GST implementation. But the States have not received the compensation for the past four months," the editorial said. "The money belongs to the States and any further delay can spoil their financial situation. The States will have to raise their voice against the Centre if their rightful share in resources is not passed on to them," it said.

For the farmers



**Seeking relief:** Bharatiya Janata Party MLAs raise slogans demanding compensation of ₹25,000 per hectare to rain-affected farmers, outside the Assembly in Nagpur on Wednesday. • S. SUDERSHAN

# Thousands bid adieu to Havildar Chougule

Soldier laid to rest with full military honours at Gadhinglaj in Kolhapur

SHOUJOIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

With grief and fortitude, the relatives and loved ones of Havildar Jotiba Ganpati Chougule, who died on Monday in a ceasefire violation by Pakistani troops in Kashmir's Gurez sector, performed his last rites amid a sea of mourners in Kolhapur's Gadhinglaj taluka on Wednesday.

The soldier's mortal remains reached Kolhapur in the morning on a special military plane from Jammu. The funeral, which was to have taken place on Tuesday, was delayed as poor weather had prevented the plane from flying out of Jammu.

Mourners followed the funeral cortege bearing Chougule's remains, draped in the Tricolour, as it made its journey from Kolhapur city to his ancestral village in Mahagaon-Umarwadi.

All shops and establishments in Mahagaon and Um-



**Final goodbye:** Nine-year-old Atharva Chougule after lighting his father's pyre on Wednesday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

barwadi downed shutters as a mark of respect to their fallen brave heart. Thousands of residents from neighbouring villages converged at the funeral in Mahagaon to partake in the sorrow of the Chougule family.

In a particularly poignant moment, the soldier's eldest son, nine-year-old Atharva,

saluted the funeral pyre after lighting it and bid adieu to his gallant father as he was laid to rest with full military honours.

The pyre was lit amid chants of "*Shahid Jotiba Chougule amar rahe* (Long live martyr Jotiba Chougule)."

The 37-year-old soldier,

who sustained bullet injuries while manning a forward post in Gurez sector in Bandipora district, is survived by his wife, Yashoda, and two sons.

Chougule's relatives recalled his spirit of self-sacrifice and burning ambition to join the armed forces right from childhood, while local residents reminisced about his helpful nature and capacity for hard work. His dream was realised when he joined the Army in April 2002.

All senior officials from the Kolhapur district administration, senior police officers, soldiers of the Maratha Light Infantry and Army personnel of other ranks were present at the funeral.

"Havildar Chougule had been home on leave barely a fortnight ago. This brief spell of happiness was shattered on Monday when the news of his death reached the family," said a district official.

ASSEMBLY BACKBENCHER



## Night scare

Legislators staying in the Nagpur MLA hostel were in for a fright on Tuesday night after an intoxicated man banged on the door of a BJP MLA's room, asking for money. Sachin Kalyanshetty of Akkalkot complained about a

group of drunk men barging into the hostel. "There was no guard at the door. I had to go and wake up the security personnel and inform them. If MLAs are facing this, what about common citizens of the State?" he asked

## Pawar point

Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis, in his speech on the Governor's address in the House, brought along copies of Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* with headlines criticising NCP chief Sharad Pawar. Interestingly, the BJP leader, who during the poll campaign had declared Mr. Pawar's political career to be over, spent much of his speech talking about the



NCP chief. As one NCP MLA said with a sly smile: "Time changes rapidly."

# HC seeks State response to PIL on deaths of sewage workers

'Increasing number of deaths show rules not being followed'

SONAM SAIGAL  
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the State government to reply to a plea highlighting the deaths of sewage workers.

A Division Bench of Justices Ranjit More and S.P. Tade was hearing a criminal public interest litigation (PIL) filed by lawyer Abha Singh following increasing cases of deaths of sewage workers. The alarming frequency of deaths, the PIL says, indicates that the provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, are not being implemented.

The PIL mentions the increasing number of sewer deaths in the city despite the fact that manual scavenging and unprotected sewer operations are banned under the law since 1993. It further says that manual scavenging is modern day untouchability and in violation of Article 17 (abolishes the practice of



Bombay High Court

untouchability) of the Constitution.

The PIL says that on January 9, two conservancy workers and a contractor died of asphyxiation in a Panvel sewage manhole/CIDCO; on January 16 three labourers died after inhaling toxic gas in a civic sewage treatment plant at Mira Road; on March 16, five BMC workers inhaled poisonous fumes, one of whom died, in a 15-feet manhole at Nana Chowk; on May 3, three people died while cleaning a

septic tank in Nallasopara; and later in May three men died in a septic tank at a housing society in Thane.

"Lack of protective gear has been cited as the reason for death. Till date, not a single criminal conviction regarding these deaths has been reported and most are classified as accidental deaths by the police. This is in stark violation of certain sections of the Act which provides for imprisonment if manual scavengers are employed or humans are made to clean sewers," the PIL states.

The PIL also refers to an RTI query, to which the BMC replied that no deaths have taken place. Moreover, as per information about the safety measures, as provided by the BMC, safety equipment does not contain full body suits, oxygen cylinders, and gas masks. It is an accepted practice in other countries like China, U.S., and Japan to use such protective gear.

# 'Worn canals causing Jayakwadi dam water to leak in transit'

Experts emphasise need for major repair of network

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
AURANGABAD

The poor structural condition of the Jayakwadi dam water canal network in Marathwada is causing 35-40% of water to leak in transit, according to experts.

Corroborating their claim, an Irrigation Department official said on Wednesday that almost 70% of the canal network needs major restoration.

"Canals taking water from the Jayakwadi dam to rural regions of Marathwada region need major repairs. The resultant water loss due to leakages has reached 40%, as the weak canals cannot carry the dam water to their fullest capacity," water analyst Y.R. Jadhav said.

"Some years ago, the Irrigation Department told courts that it needed ₹7,000 crore for a major overhaul of this system. Unfortunately, none of the governments listened," Mr. Jadhav claimed.



**Urgent overhaul:** An irrigation official said almost 70% of the Jayakwadi dam network needs major restoration. • FILE PHOTO

Dam expert Pradeep Purandare said the govern-

ment should repair these canals and bring down water losses. He said new projects, such as a water grid, are needed in the region. "These canals were never repaired. Minor repairs are not sufficient," Mr. Purandare said, adding that public pressure need to be created to revive the dam network in the absence of a third party monitoring the matter.

An Irrigation Department official said almost 70% of the Jayakwadi dam network needs major restoration.

"The structures like aqueducts are leaking while the canal network is not performing to its fullest capacity. Moreover, the present water losses of 35-40% are increasing day by day. We are never sure that this dam will fill to its entire capacity every year," he said. The damage is also affecting irrigation potential in the region, he said.

Jayakwadi project executive engineer Rajendra Kale, too, said the canal system needs to be repaired.





**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Thursday:** Cold day conditions in some pockets likely over east and west Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim. Dense to very dense fog likely in isolated pockets over south Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	.....	24.0	13.0	Kozhikode	.....	35.0	24.0
Ahmedabad	.....	26.0	15.0	Kurnool	.....	32.0	19.0
Aizawl	.....	20.0	8.0	Lucknow	.....	13.0	8.0
Allahabad	.....	18.0	9.0	Madurai	.....	27.0	23.0
Bengaluru	.....	27.0	17.0	Mangaluru	.....	37.0	22.0
Bhopal	.....	18.0	8.0	Mumbai	.....	31.0	23.0
Bhubaneswar	.....	29.0	17.0	Mysuru	.....	28.0	14.0
Chandigarh	.....	13.0	8.0	New Delhi	.....	17.0	7.0
Chennai	.....	30.0	24.0	Patna	.....	16.0	13.0
Coimbatore	0.4	27.0	19.0	Port Blair	.....	31.0	25.0
Dehradun	.....	22.0	7.0	Puducherry	.....	30.0	21.0
Gangtok	.....	12.0	6.0	Pune	.....	29.0	17.0
Goa	.....	34.0	22.0	Raipur	.....	26.0	15.0
Guwahati	.....	25.0	10.0	Ranchi	.....	20.0	8.0
Hubballi	.....	29.0	18.0	Shillong	.....	16.0	6.0
Hyderabad	.....	29.0	18.0	Shimla	.....	13.0	3.0
Imphal	.....	23.0	5.0	Srinagar	.....	8.0	-4.0
Jaipur	.....	19.0	7.0	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	33.0	23.0
Kochi	.....	33.0	24.0	Tiruchi	0.1	29.0	22.0
Kohima	.....	18.0	6.0	Vijayawada	.....	30.0	21.0
Kolkata	.....	23.0	13.0	Visakhapatnam	.....	29.0	23.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	Pollutants in the air you are breathing					Yesterday
	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	
Ahmedabad	39	30	26	119	102	.....
Bengaluru	4	61	93	85	97	.....
Chennai	18	40	36	140	.....	.....
Delhi	4	73	62	339	199	.....
Hyderabad	18	62	34	226	.....	.....
Kolkata	13	56	30	187	148	.....
Lucknow	5	7	45	307	.....	.....
Mumbai	19	49	31	172	132	.....
Pune	96	30	59	165	120	.....
Visakhapatnam	9	36	60	141	114	.....

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** 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<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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

## Tharoor wins Akademi's 2019 award for English

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Sahitya Akademi on Wednesday announced its annual literary awards for 2019 for works in 23 languages, including one for Shashi Tharoor's non-fiction book about British rule in India.

The Akademi announced that it would honour seven books of poetry, four novels, six books of short stories, three of essays and one each of non-fiction, autobiography and biography. The award, including ₹1 lakh in cash, would be presented at a ceremony on February 25, 2020, the Akademi said in a statement.

'An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India' by Mr. Tharoor, who is a Congress MP, was selected in the English category.

The awards honour works of poetry by Dr. Phukan Ch. Basumatry (Bodo), Dr. Nand Kishore Acharya (Hindi), Nilba A. Khandekar (Konkani), Kumar Manish Arvind (Maithili), V. Madhusoodan Nair (Malayalam), Anuradha Patil (Marathi) and Prof. Penna Madhusudan (Sanskrit).

Novels by Dr. Joysree Goswami Mahanta (Assamese), L. Birmangol Singh (Manipuri), Cho. Dharmar (Tamil) and Bandi Narayana Swamy (Telugu) were also among the winners.

Books of short stories by Abdul Ahad Hajini (Kashmiri), Tarun Kanti Mishra (Odia), Kirpal Kazak (Punjabi), Ramsawroop Kisan (Rajasthani), Kali Charan Hembram (Santali) and Ishwar Moorjani (Sindhi), an autobiography by Dr. Vijaya (Kannada) and a biography by Prof. Shafey Kidwai (Urdu) were also among the winners.

## EC to lodge new FIR in R.K. Nagar bribery case

Poll body cites new report from IT Dept.

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.  
CHENNAI

The Election Commission on Wednesday informed the Madras High Court that it had received a fresh report from the Income Tax Department on October 18 regarding the April 2017 R.K. Nagar bypoll bribery issue, and a decision had therefore been taken to get a new FIR registered by the police.

The submission was made before Justices M. Sathyanarayanan and R. Hemalatha, who were seized of writ petitions seeking a CBI probe into the issue since an FIR registered by the city police in 2017, at the instance of Election Commission, had been quashed by a single judge of the High Court in March 2018, without the knowledge of the poll watchdog.

Wondering if the quashing of that FIR could be grounds to order a CBI probe, the judges had directed the Election Commission to disclose what other legal remedies it proposed to seek.

In response, the Election Commission continued to update the court about the decisions taken by it from time to time, with a request not to disclose them in public "in view of the sensitive nature of the issue".

Such non-disclosure forced senior counsel P. Wilson, representing a petitioner N. Maruthu Ganesh of DMK (who was defeated in the bypoll), to file a memo last month insisting upon disclosure of all documents related to the issue. Following this, the judges had directed EC counsel Niranjan Rajagopal to obtain necessary instructions from the commission within a month.

Accordingly, Mr. Rajagopal on Wednesday submitted a letter written to him by EC Undersecretary Rajiv Ranjan on Monday.

The letter stated that the commission had received a report from the Department of Revenue on October 18



The Madras HC had in 2018 quashed an FIR filed by the Election Commission.

and, on the basis of the report, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Tamil Nadu had been directed on October 21 to lodge a police complaint.

The CEO was specifically instructed to get an FIR registered against those suspected to have been involved in bribing voters, and indulging in electoral corrupt practices, following recovery of incriminating documents during searches conducted at the residence of Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar and other places in April 2017.

However, CEO Satyabrata Sahoo sought certain clarifications on October 25. Subsequently, the commission wrote to the Central Board of Direct Taxes seeking to know the current status of income tax assessment proceedings initiated against Mr. Vijayabaskar pursuant to the searches and also sent a reminder on December 5, but the information was still awaited, the letter read.

After the judges perused the letter, senior standing counsel for the Income Tax Department, A.P. Srinivas, told the court that the I-T department was expected to complete the assessment proceedings by December 31. In the meantime, the Health Minister had filed a writ petition before a single judge of the High Court insisting upon cross-examining witnesses, he said.

The Division Bench was also told that Justice Anita Sumanth was expected to hear the Minister's writ petition on Thursday.

## SC rejects review plea of Nirbhaya case convict

It denies extra time for filing of mercy plea

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by one of the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case to review its May 5, 2017 judgment confirming his death penalty.

The court refused Akshay Singh's plea to grant him three weeks' time to file a mercy petition before the President of India.

The Delhi Police said the law allowed a death row convict only a week's time. The court said it would not express anything in this regard and it was open for the convict to avail whatever time the law prescribes for the purpose of filing mercy plea.

A three-judge Review Bench led by Justice R. Banumathi said a review petition did not mean hearing "over and over again" the same arguments made in the appeals.

At 1 p.m., Justice Banumathi, flanked by Justices Ashok Bhushan and A.S. Bopanna on the Bench, read out excerpts from the judgment pronounced merely a couple of hours after they finished hearing the oral arguments made in the review petition earlier in the morning.

During the review hearing, advocate A.P. Singh, counsel for Akshay, submitted that "executions only kill criminals, not the crime." "The State must not simply execute people to prove that it is attacking terror or violence against women. It must persistently work towards systematic reforms to being about change," Mr. Singh said.

Countering the review for the Delhi Police, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that the death penalty was the law and as long as it remained in the statute book, the punishment had to be followed.



Long struggle: Nirbhaya's parents arriving at the Patiala House Court in New Delhi on Wednesday. •PTI

## 'Time to take stock of implementation of law'

Atrocities against women still high: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

It is "time to take stock" if the Nirbhaya case is the best the country's law enforcement and judiciary could do to bring the guilty to justice for crimes committed against women, the Supreme Court said in an order on Wednesday.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde said there was no let-down in the atrocities against women.

The latest data from National Crime Records Bureau shows 32,559 rape cases were registered in 2017 alone.

In the 18-page order, the court said the rising crime graph was despite the sweeping amendments made to criminal law, especially anti-rape laws, in 2013 and 2018. "Delay in recent times has created agitation, anxiety and unrest in the minds of the people," it acknowledged.

'Not an isolated case'

"The Nirbhaya case is not an isolated case where it has taken so long to reach finality.

In fact, it is said that it has been one of the cases where agencies have acted swiftly taking into account the public outrage... We are, therefore, of the view that it is necessary to take stock of the implementation of provisions of criminal law, including amendments relating to rape cases and other sexual offences," the Bench, also comprising Justices B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant, observed.

The court directed the Supreme Court Secretary General to call for information from the Chief Secretaries and police chiefs of all States on the status of affairs regarding investigation, prosecution, medico-forensic agencies, rehabilitation and legal aid in cases of rape and other sexual offences.

The court also asked whether the 60-day deadline each for investigation and trial is being adhered to; whether women judges preside over trials concerning crimes committed against women and if such cases were being tried in special courts designated for the purpose.

## Plea in SC against felling of 64,000 trees

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought a response from the Centre and the State of Uttar Pradesh on a petition claiming that

64,000 trees are being proposed to be felled in Lucknow by January 15 to hold a defence expo.

A Bench led by Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde issued notice on a petition filed by

activist Sheela Barse that the cutting of the trees amounts to intergenerational injustice. The loss of green cover would not only affect the current generation but future ones too, it said.

