



Anti-Corruption Bureau gives clean chit to Ajit Pawar in 12 cases

page 11



British Parliament backs Boris Johnson's Brexit deal

page 16



India very strong, can achieve target of \$5 trillion economy: PM

page 17



Anand Mahindra to step down as M&M executive chairman

page 17



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## NEARBY



Govt. using force to tame dissent, says Sonia

NEW DELHI  
Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday accused the BJP of "unleashing brute repression against citizens" and said it is the right of every citizen to protest against any wrong policy of the government. "The BJP government has shown utter disregard for the people's voices and chosen to use brute force to suppress dissent. This is unacceptable in a democracy," she said in a video released by the Congress.

NEWS PAGE 15

## NHRC team visits Jamia Millia Islamia campus

NEW DELHI  
The National Human Rights Commission deputed a fact-finding team to inspect the Jamia Millia Islamia premises on Friday to inquire into claims of human rights violations during the recent police crackdown at the university.

CITY PAGE 3

## Nitish breaks silence on NRC, assures minorities

PATNA  
Bihar CM Nitish Kumar on Friday finally broke his silence on the National Register for Citizens, questioning the need for such an exercise. On Thursday, he assured all protection to the minorities, saying their interests would not be compromised.

NEWS PAGE 14

## No clear winners

Two exit polls predicted a hung Assembly with a slender advantage to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress-Rashtriya Janata Dal alliance in Jharkhand, where the last phase of polling ended on Friday. The results will be announced on December 23



Voters standing in a queue at Dhanbad, Jharkhand. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

EXIT POLLS:	VOTER TURNOUT				
	JMM+*	BJP	AJSU	JVM	Others
IANS-CVoter-ABP	31-39	28-36	3-7	1-4	NA
India Today-Axis-My India	38-50	22-32	3-5	2-4	4-7

\*Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress-RJD

REPORT ON PAGE 14

## Sengar gets life for Unnao rape

Former BJP MLA fined ₹25 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday sentenced former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar to life imprisonment for raping a minor girl in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao in 2017.

"The convict Kuldeep Singh Sengar is hereby sentenced to undergo imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of his natural biological life in terms of Section 376 (2) Indian Penal Code," said the court order. The court also imposed a fine of ₹25 lakh, awarding an additional compensation of ₹10 lakh over and above the ₹25 lakh given as ex gratia to the mother. The amount will be deposited in the victim's bank account as soon as the fine is realised. From the fine amount of ₹25 lakh, on its payment or



Kuldeep Singh Sengar

realisation, ₹15 lakh will be paid to the State government to meet the prosecution and trial expenses.

As directed by the court, the victim and her family members will continue to live for a year in a rented accommodation arranged by the Delhi Commission for Women.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

## Seven killed as protests against citizenship law turn violent in U.P.

Home Ministry says there will be no discrimination against Muslims and undocumented people

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

At least seven people were killed in the protests against the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) turned violent in many parts of the State on Friday.

As protests against the CAA and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) continued across the country, the Home Ministry said there would be no discrimination against Muslims and undocumented people as feared.

A spokesperson said any document relating to date of birth or place of birth or both would be sufficient to establish citizenship.

No firing, says DGP

Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police O.P. Singh said the police did not fire at protesters, while PTI quoted unnamed State officials as saying that the protesters had fired at the police at various places.

Two people were killed in Bijinor and one each in Meerut, Sambhal, Firozabad, Kanpur, according to PTI.

Police tried to disperse crowds with teargas shells followed by rubber bullets. Mr. Singh said over 50 policemen were seriously injured.

The Hindu's U.P. correspondent Omar Rashid was detained in Lucknow for over three hours, despite identifying himself, and released on the intervention of the Chief Minister's Office.

Mobile telephony and data services were restricted in many parts of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and



In flames: A car was set on fire near Delhi Gate during a protest in New Delhi on Friday. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## False info set off violence in Assam: CM

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday said propaganda that the amended Act would grant citizenship to 1.5 crore Hindus currently residing in Bangladesh, and that Indian Muslims would be driven out had led to unrest in the "peace-loving State".

Delhi and the Delhi Metro closed 17 stations. In Assam, Internet was restored after 10 days following a High Court order.

In Bijinor's Nehtaur area, Anas, 22, and Sulaiman, 26, died, allegedly due to bullet injuries. Risalat Hussain,

## Karnataka police detain, free journalists

The Karnataka police released the nine journalists from Kerala, who were detained in Mangaluru on Friday. The city is under curfew after two protesters died in police firing. The police detained them when they reached the hospital where the bodies of the agitators were kept.

the uncle of Anas, who worked as a juice maker in weddings, said his nephew had gone out to buy tea when he was hit by a bullet. "There was a protest going on after the Friday prayers and perhaps he was caught in between,"

## Kerala govt. puts on hold NPR work

Kerala on Friday became the second State after West Bengal to stay all activities associated with the updation of the National Population Register (NPR) "considering the apprehensions among the public that the NPR activities lead to National Register of Citizens".

Mr. Hussain told *The Hindu* over phone. The death toll could be higher. In Meerut, three men, Arif, 25, Zaheer, 40, and Moshin, 25, were killed. Chief Medical Officer, Meerut College, Dr. Dheeraj Raj confirmed to

## Furore over 'Godhra-like' warning

There was widespread criticism of Karnataka Minister C.T. Ravi's remark warning of a "Godhra-like situation" if the majority "loses patience", while talking about the violence in Mangaluru. Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa is said to have reprimanded the Minister.

*The Hindu* that three men were brought dead to the hospital. (With PTI inputs)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14  
RELATED REPORTS ON PAGES 10, 14 & 15

## Death for four in Jaipur serial bomb blasts case

The explosions in 2008 killed 71 people; 200 were injured

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

Four persons convicted of the serial blasts that killed 71 people and left 200 injured in the Walled City of Jaipur in May 2008 were sentenced to death by a special court here on Friday. The four were held guilty of planting the bombs and carrying out explosions, while one of the accused, charged with sending an e-mail claiming responsibility for the blasts, was acquitted.

Special judge Ajay Kumar Sharma awarded the death penalty to Mohammed Saif, 34, Mohammed Sarwar Azmi, 36, Saifur Rehman, 36, and Mohammed Salman, 34, after convicting them on Wednesday under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and the Explosives Act, in eight cases filed by the Anti-Terrorism Squad of the police.

Lucknow resident Shahbaz Ahmed, 43, was acquitted in all the cases for want of evidence.

The ATS had claimed that he had sent an e-mail to media houses on behalf of the Indian Mujahideen two days after the blasts.

The IPC provisions under which the four convicts were awarded capital punishment, life imprisonment, sentences of various terms and fine included Sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 121-A (conspira-



Justice delivered: Police personnel escorting the four convicts out of a court in Jaipur on Friday. • ROHIT JAIN PARAS

cy for waging war against government), 124-A (sedition), 153-A (promoting enmity between groups) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy).

The court held that Saif was involved in the blast at the Manak Chowk Police Station, while Sarwar carried out the blast at the Chandpol Hanuman temple. Saifur Rehman was convicted of planting bombs at five different locations and Salman was held guilty of the blast at the Sanganeri Gate Hanuman temple. All of them hail from Uttar Pradesh.

'Will file appeal'

Defence lawyer Paker Farooq said he would file an appeal against the judgment in the High Court when the case goes there on Monday next for confirmation of the death verdict. "We will challenge the sentence. This ver-

dict is based on conjectures and surmises... There was no direct evidence and the circumstantial evidence was not trustworthy."

Gehlot welcomes verdict

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the judgment should be welcomed. "Those who believe in violence should be taught a lesson... whoever they are," he told reporters on the sidelines of a function.

During the arguments on the sentence, the prosecution demanded the death penalty for the convicts on Thursday, while defence counsel sought leniency, contending that the convicts had already spent 11 years in jail and belonged to decent families with no history of crime. Counsel also claimed that Salman was a juvenile at the time of the offence.

## AAP launches campaign for Assembly polls

Deputy CM gives slogan 'Acche Beete Paanch Saal, Lage Raho Kejriwal'

JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Friday formally launched its campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections here with the slogan 'Acche Beete Paanch Saal, Lage Raho Kejriwal' (Five Years Went Well, Carry on Kejriwal).

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia launched the slogan, which he said was chosen after feedback from the general public, at an event in the presence of AAP MLAs and party leaders. Both Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and political strategist Prashant Kishor, whose advocacy group In-



Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia at the launch of the party's poll campaign on Friday. •PTI

dian Political Action Committee recently came on board for AAP's election campaign, were not present

during what party insiders claimed was a "soft launch". Party sources said AAP's electoral campaign would revolve around the central premise of 'Kejriwal versus whom' in order to project the AAP convenor as the tallest political leader in Delhi facing opponents who were yet to be decided by their respective parties.

Mr. Sisodia said the party's leaders and workers will take the Delhi government's report card - based on the work done by it over the past five years - to an estimated 35 lakh households in the Capital in the city as part of a door-to-door campaign.

"On December 21 and 22 padayatras will be undertaken across Delhi; December 24 onwards, our report card will be taken from door to door. As many as 700 mohalla sabhas and seven big town hall meetings will be held as part of the party's campaign," said Mr. Sisodia.

Senior party leader Gopal Rai, who said Mr. Kejriwal would release this report card next week, further said that the party's door-to-door campaign would seek to answer the "negative politics" of its opponents with the "positive work" done by the AAP government over the last five years.

## 'I wanted police to know that students aren't violent'

Focus should be on the cause, says girl whose rose offering to a policeman went viral on social media

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

Shreya Priyam Roy, 21, pursuing a master's in history from Delhi University, hadn't imagined that a photo of her offering a rose to a policeman at Jantar Mantar would go viral on social media and make her the face of student protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

While some of the new-found fame is welcome, she wants the focus to remain on the cause. "I am just a regular student aspiring to be a stand-up comedian and obviously did not want to go viral this way."

On Thursday, students from JNU, DU, Jamia Millia Is-



Shreya Priyam Roy's photo from Thursday's protest at Jantar Mantar has gone viral. • SAURABH TRIVEDI

lamia and many other institutions staged a day-long protest against the amended Citizenship Act at Jantar Mantar. A photo of Ms. Roy clicked by this correspondent was shared multiple

times on social media and many wondered who the protester showing exemplary courage in offering a message of peace to a policeman in riot gear was. What made her take part

in the protest? Ms. Roy says she was moved after hearing about the police crackdown on Jamia students from a friend who studies there. She decided to raise her voice against the police action, and what better way to convey a message than a rose! "I offered roses to policemen because be it JNU, Jamia, AMU or Assam, they have beaten up students mercilessly everywhere. I wanted them to know that students are not violent, we are opposing government policies in a peaceful way," she says over the phone.

Ms. Roy says she wasn't a part of any group as she went to Jantar Mantar alone and

on the way, she purchased roses to give to policemen in case they beat her up for joining the protest.

On the NPR-NRC issue, she says: "It violates our Constitution and the secular ethos of our country. You will have to prove you are an Indian, no matter how Indian you are."

'Regret voting for NDA'

Ms. Roy, who hails from Patna, Bihar, says she regrets voting for BJP's ally Janata Dal (United) in the Lok Sabha polls. "By voting for the JD (U), I indirectly voted for the BJP. This government's policies are dividing the country on the lines of religion."

# 40 detained as protest turns violent

Over 20 injured in lathi-charge; police claim antisocial elements disrupted peaceful march

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

Stones, footwear and bloodstains on streets were the remnants of a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which began peacefully at Jama Masjid but ended with arson two kilometres away near the Daryaganj police station on Friday.

At least 40 people were detained and 21 injured after Delhi police used lathis and water cannon to disperse the protesters who hurled stones at security personnel. Some people, who the police said were "outsiders", set ablaze a car outside the police station near Delhi Gate. The fire was immediately doused with water and fire extinguishers.

Many among those who were detained were heard pleading that they were protesters but not involved in the violence, and had merely



Footwear of protesters strewn on a road in Daryaganj on Friday. •PTI

been caught in the cross hairs.

## Epicentre of protest

The epicentre of the protest was Jama Masjid where a large number of people gathered for Friday prayers, defying prohibitory orders and police clampdown. They started marching peacefully

towards Jantar Mantar and around 2 p.m. they reached Delhi Gate.

"We stopped the protesters at Delhi Gate by putting barricades and told them that they cannot move further," said Delhi Police spokesperson M.S. Randhawa.

At 4.20 p.m., scores of protesters offered prayers

## Police detain minors

NEW DELHI

Parents gathered outside the Daryaganj police station on Friday in search of their children who went missing after violence broke out during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. Kirat Randhawa, a lawyer, said that a few of the parents had gotten word that the police had detained minors. Delhi Police spokesperson M.S. Randhawa confirmed that some minors were held during the protest, "They will be released after a medical exam."

outside a mosque at Delhi Gate opposite the DCP (Central) office. After the prayers, announcements were made by the mosque urging the protesters to disperse peacefully and a large number of them agreed and left the site. "We got inputs that a large group of protesters from north-east Delhi was on its

way to join protest at Delhi Gate. To avoid any untoward incident, we deployed extra force in the area," said a police officer.

"In the evening, suddenly some antisocial elements in the gathering started breaking the barricades and indulged in stone pelting in a bid to march towards Jantar Mantar against the police advice. Police used water cannon and absolutely minimum force to push them back," said Mr. Randhawa.

Abdul Aziz, a local, said their peaceful protest was hijacked by "antisocial elements" who hurled stones at the police personnel.

"We never support violence," he said.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Central) Rajesh Khurana and 11 police personnel received injuries during the violence, said the police.

(With inputs from PTI)

## Group of locals keep vigil at protest site

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

About 50-60 youth at Jama Masjid were present in the crowd to keep a vigil in case anyone tried to incite violence during the protest.

## Locals meet police

The local committees in the area said they met senior police officers ahead of the stir to discuss strategies to ensure a peaceful protest.

A 26-year-old man, Arman, along with a group of locals nabbed a man who had allegedly "almost slapped an officer" during the protest.

The accused was handed over to the police at the Jama Masjid Police Post. "These kinds of people bring us a bad name," said Arman.

He said they have been conducting meetings for the past three to four days especially after violence broke out at Jamia Millia Islamia on Sunday. "We wanted to make sure that nothing of that sort takes place at Jama Masjid. Jo ho, kanoon ke dayre main ho," he said. President of Jama Masjid Old Motorparts and ball bearing association Raisuddin said he and other heads of local associations met senior officers, including Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner, to discuss the strategy.

"We told them that when people see the police in the middle of the protest, they get enraged. So, we suggested that police officers be deployed only on the sides. We said we will ensure that the protest is peaceful," he said.

Mohammed Akram, head of the Matia Mahal Association, said they had speakers to manage the crowd. "We wanted to give a message that a peaceful protest is stronger than a violent one," he added.



Protesters at Jama Masjid in the Walled City on Friday. •SANDEEP SAXENA

## Thousands throng Jama Masjid to protest citizenship law

Police officers use drones to monitor situation at the venue

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

As Friday prayers ended around 12.50 p.m. at Jama Masjid, thousands stood on the steps of the mosque and raised Tricolours while shouting slogans against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The peaceful protest continued till late in the evening as the police stood on the sidelines.

## Slogans raised

Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad was at the protest and held up a copy of the Constitution. He, however, disappeared after a few minutes.

Following this, thousands of protesters continued shouting slogans outside the mosque's gate no. 1. Members of the Bhim Army claimed that Mr. Azad had been detained by the police but later managed to escape. Spokesperson of the Delhi Police, however, said Mr. Azad was never in their custody.

Jama Masjid Imam Syed Ahmed Bukhari, who was absent from the protest, is said to have refrained from speaking about the amended Citizenship Act during his Friday sermon.

Nisha, a protester from Seelampur, said: "From what I know, the government is asking for proof of birthplace or else they will enlist me as a refugee. I have proof but my parents do not, but they were also born here. Why should we live like refugees in our own country? I am an Indian. It is so disheartening that I have to keep saying it."

During the agitation, policemen in anti-riot gear stood to the sides and used drones to monitor the situation. "Yes. Come. Take my picture. I was here," said a protester looking at the drone.

Another protester received a loud cheer from the crowd because of his placard which read: "Jahan



Demonstrators hold placards against the new citizenship law; (below) protesters wave Tricolour. •SANDEEP SAXENA, AP



Demonstrators hold placards against the new citizenship law; (below) protesters wave Tricolour. •SANDEEP SAXENA, AP

**I have proof of my birthplace but my parents do not, but they were also born here. Why should we live like refugees in our own country? I am an Indian. It is so disheartening that I have to keep saying it**

NISHA  
Protester

*paida hue, wahin dafan bhi honge. Jeet gaye to watan mubarak haar gaye to qafan mubarak.*

Supreme Court lawyer Mahmood Paracha, who was also protesting at the site, encouraged members of the Bhim Army to continue the agitation. "We will not leave until Azad comes back," said a member. The initial plan was to march from Jama Masjid to Jantar Mantar but the crowd was denied permission. A minor

argument also broke out between Mr. Paracha and a group that wanted to march to Jantar Mantar but it was later pacified by the lawyer.

Around 4 p.m., when the evening prayers had just begun, Azad reappeared and the crowd broke out into a loud cheer. Again holding up a copy of the Constitution, he asked the protesters to sit on the road. Within minutes, the protesters were asked to begin their prayers and they, including Azad, went inside the mosque.

The protest stopped for around 20 minutes and resumed only after the prayers. It went on till late evening.

Shops in and around the area were all shut. Some of the shopkeepers stood outside their shops while others joined the protest. "Puri zindagi pachtane se accha to kuch paison ka nuksaan hi hai," said Gulam Hassan Sarkar, owner of an eatery - Kashmiri Restaurant - just opposite the mosque.

## Family on footpath next to mosque oblivious of stir

They moved to relative's house out of security concerns

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

Mohammed Taiyyab (15) and his family, who live on the footpath next to Jama Masjid gate number 1, said they mostly slept throughout the protest but went to their relative's house in the evening because of security reasons.

## A usual day

Taiyyab who works at a printing factory in the night, said he usually sleeps during the day. Friday was a usual day for him. He said he does not care about the protest as he has no idea about the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and National Register of Citizens. The teenager said he does not even want to know about it. His father Raees, a mechanic, said his only concern was that there should be no riots.

"Bas danga na ho warna hum kahan jaenge... hum nai jaante CAB ya NRC," he said. Raees said his younger



The family said they are disappointed with the situation but not worried. •HEMANI BHANDARI

son, 7-year-old Mohammed Taha, goes to school in the morning and washes cars in the afternoon. "He is very hardworking and earns ₹50/day. What can we do...we don't stop him from working because we also need the money," he said. Pointing at his four daughters - Sidrah, Taiyyaba, Aisha and Ilma -

all aged between 8 and 14, he said: "They only study and help their mother."

The family said they are disappointed with the situation but not worried.

"We have Aadhaar cards and birth certificates of our children," he said. The family of eight is said to have gone to a relative's house.

## United against Act



Protesters during a demonstration against the amended Citizenship Act at Shaheen Bagh; students staging a silent protest at the Delhi Police Headquarters at ITO on Friday demanding the release of those detained in Daryaganj. •R.V. MOORTHY, SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



## Seventeen metro stations shut amid stir

Entry and exit gates remained closed; some only offered interchange facility

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

In a bid to restrict movement of those intending to participate in demonstrations against the amended Citizenship Act, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Friday closed 17 metro stations across the network following orders from the Delhi Police.

Over the past week, metro stations located near areas where protests have taken place were closed down by the authorities as part of security measures.

Jamia Millia Islamia and Jasola Vihar Shaheen Bagh on the Violet Line were closed



A man trying to come out of Jama Masjid metro station on Friday. •SANDEEP SAXENA

for a couple of hours on Friday morning before they were reopened.

However, later in the day, in view of demonstrations in the Walled City, stations like Chawri Bazar on the Yellow Line, Lal Quila, Jama Masjid, Delhi Gate, Janpath, Khan

Market stations on the Violet Line and Pragati Maidan on the Blue Line were also closed for commuters.

No trains stopped at the stations during this period, the DMRC said.

Meanwhile, entry and exit to two metro stations in north-east Delhi, including Jaffrabad and Maujpur-Babarpur, Johri Enclave on the Pink Line and Dilshad Garden on the Red Line were also closed by authorities following demonstrations in the area.

Entry and exit to major transit stations like Rajiv Chowk, that connects the Yellow and Blue Lines,

Kashmere Gate, which connects the Red, Yellow and Violet Lines and Central Secretariat, connecting the Yellow and Violet Line were also closed. However, interchange facility was available to commuters who were already on the metro network, officials said.

On Thursday, 19 metro stations, the highest ever to be closed at the same time across the Delhi metro network, were shut following protests across the city.

The DMRC said that "owing to sudden safety and security reasons" stations had to be "closed for a few hours this week".

## Tiwari holds public reading of CAA in C.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

BJP State chief Manoj Tiwari on Friday held a public reading of the amended Citizenship Act at Central Park in C.P. here seeking to clear the "confusion" regarding it.

The North East Delhi MP had also invited Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his counterpart from the State unit of the Congress, Subhash Chopra, for the event. Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Chopra, however, were not in attendance. "I had called them [Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Chopra] for a debate in the presence of the media and the local people... but neither of them turned up," he said.

## Demonstration in support of CAA

People took out a march in Inner Circle of Connaught Place

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

While demonstrations against the amended Citizenship Act took place across the national capital on Friday, scores of people gathered at Central Park in Connaught Place in support of the recently passed Act.

Amid chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram", several youngsters assembled with some donning "We Support CAA" T-shirts. Gautam Kumar, a doctor, said: "When we go to medical camps organised for refugees, we get to hear about the atrocities faced by them. They have come to this country leaving behind everything and are ready to live in JJ clusters. All they want is to live peacefully in



People during a demonstration in support of the amended Citizenship Act in Connaught Place on Friday. •PTI

this country. If that opportunity is granted to them, then what is the harm?"

The gathering also took out a march at the Inner Circle of Connaught Place due to which traffic movement was allowed intermittently.

Mansi Singh, a second year MBBS student from La-

dy Hardinge College held a placard that read "We welcome our persecuted brother from across the border with open arms."

Besides slogans of "Save the Constitution", ones against political parties "for misleading people" were also raised.

# Protests at Seemapuri, JMI, India Gate and Seelampur

Protesters in north-east Delhi turn violent, allegedly pelt stones at policemen

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Capital on Friday witnessed a wave of fresh protests and demonstrations against the amended Citizenship Act as thousands took to the streets shouting anti-government slogans.

Protests were witnessed in Jamia Millia Islamia, Seemapuri, India Gate and north-east Delhi's Seelampur.

"There were large gatherings in Seelampur, Shastri Park, Jamia Nagar and Shaheen Bagh. Senior officers, with the help of 'respectables' of respective areas, talked to the protesters and they dispersed peacefully," said Delhi Police spokesperson M.S. Randhawa.

Incidents of stone-pelting were reported from Seemapuri where an additional deputy commissioner of police as some other personnel sustained minor injuries, said Mr. Randhawa.

In view of the protests and prohibitory orders, large parts of the city witnessed massive traffic jams



Thousands of protesters seen during a protest soon after the Friday prayers at Seelampur-Jafraabad area in Delhi. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

for the second consecutive day on Friday.

Prohibitory orders were imposed in 12 police station areas of north-east Delhi, officials said, adding that drones were used to keep a tab on the law and order situation. In the morning, police carried out a flag march in Seelampur, which had

seen violent protests on Tuesday, in the wake of intelligence inputs about the security situation.

Delhi Mahila Congress chief and former president Pranab Mukherjee's daughter Sharmistha and some other members of the outfit were detained near Home Minister Amit Shah's

residence during a protest against the new legislation. They were detained at Mandir Marg police station and released after a few hours.

In addition to officers and personnel of the district police, 58 companies were deployed on Friday to bolster strength of the local police, said Mr. Randhawa.

## NHRC team visits Jamia Millia Islamia

Team inquired into claims of human rights violations at the university

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) deputed a fact-finding team to inspect the Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) premises on Friday to inquire into claims of human rights violations during the recent police crackdown at the university.

The NHRC is said to have received multiple complaints alleging illegal detention of students by the police and denial of legal and medical access to the injured students. A team led by Special Superintendent of Police Manzil Saini conducted a spot inquiry to find out "whether incidents in JMI involved violation of Human Rights", the NHRC said in a statement.

Following clashes between the police and protesters opposing the amended Citizenship Act last Sunday, the police barged into the university reportedly chasing certain miscreants who had perpetrated violence. Videos from the incident showed tear gas shells being fired into closed rooms,

while students also alleged police brutality. The incident received widespread condemnation with students, staff and alumni of multiple university in the country and abroad issuing statements in solidarity with JMI.

The team visited all the buildings in the university where damage had taken place including the reading room, toilets and other areas, a university official said, adding that the team only conducted spot inspections and did not speak to any of the students involved in the incident.

Officials were informed that the team would visit the university again.

### 'Preserve footage'

University officials have also been asked to preserve all CCTV footage with them for the purposes of an enquiry if issued by the NHRC.

"The fact-finding team will submit its report, which will be analysed and placed before the Commission for appropriate recommendations in the matter," the NHRC said.

## Jamia V-C reassures students of support

She writes open letter to students

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, Najma Akhtar wrote an open letter to students of the university on Friday, reassuring them of the administration's support and stating that "...we will get through the crisis together and will emerge stronger and tougher."

"I am a mother. I feel the sufferings and pains inflicted on the students with motherly solitude and concern," the V-C wrote, reassuring students that the entire Jamia fraternity was concerned about their safety and welfare.

"It is unfortunate that the police made unauthorised entry into the campus and perpetrated atrocities on our students. Complaints have been lodged with the police and the Ministry. Rest assured that justice will be

provided," she said. The V-C also wrote that she had met with some of the students, who had sustained injuries, and reassured their families that they will be provided with full financial and emotional support.

"Their recovery and return to academics will be our first priority," she said.

Having spoken to those representing the students, the V-C said that their demands had been placed before the administration and several of their ideas are welcome and being looked into.

"What happened on December 15 is a traumatic and upsetting event from which we all are still recovering. I wish the students to rest assured that we will get through this crisis together and will emerge stronger and tougher," Ms. Akhtar said.

## Gridlock: Gurugram Police's 'regret' post a hit

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Following the massive traffic jam that left hundreds stranded on the roads for hours in the Millennium City on Thursday due to the unannounced sealing of Delhi-Gurugram border by the Delhi Police, the Facebook post of Gurugram Police expressing "regret" won many hearts with the people appreciating the efforts of the local police. A few, however, complained about the delay in dissemination of information about the traffic restrictions.

After the locals had a tough day dealing with the traffic chaos on the roads — with many having missed their flights and meetings and others walking miles to their destinations — the Gurugram Traffic Police in a Facebook post late on Thursday night expressed deep regret for the inconvenience and explained that there was little time for them to plan and issue alerts since the Delhi Police informed them at 8.05 a.m. regarding the sealing of the borders.

## Delhi Police on its toes ahead of PM's rally as intel hints at 'threat'

Security of stage to be taken over by Special Protection Group

JATIN ANAND  
SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "thanksgiving rally" will be held at Ramliha Maidan, located at the crossroads between Lutyens' Delhi and the old Walled City, on Sunday under heavy police deployment after intelligence inputs suggesting a "threat" to his safety during the event in addition to the ongoing protests against the amended Citizenship Act in the Capital.

Party sources claimed the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had been apprised of an estimated two lakh attendees from across north Indian States converging at the venue aboard 3,000 buses to be a part of the 'Dhanyawad Rally' on Sunday.

While the ostensible objective of the event was intended to express gratitude to Mr. Modi for the BJP-led Centre's decision to confer ownership rights on an estimated 40 lakh residents of unauthorised colonies, the massive footfall, according to party insiders, will also be utilised for "soft messaging" about the CAA.

### 14 'Digital Rathes' flagged off in BJP headquarters

NEW DELHI  
Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari on Friday flagged off 14 'Digital Rathes' from the party's State headquarters here. It will illustrate to the residents of illegal colonies the "struggle behind regularisation of such colonies" through video screening. The vans are part of the party's campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections.

While party sources chose "not to speculate" about the contents of the Prime Minister's speech, an insider said, however, he was expected to broach the CAA, given the multiple protests against it across the city.

"The Modi government has taken many significant decisions over the last six months which he is expected to talk about," the leader said. The Delhi unit of the party had, in the meantime, formed specific committees to "spread the word on the CAA" prior to Mr. Modi's arrival to the venue.

"There will be pamphlets busting myths about the

CAA and the NRC which dedicated volunteers will personally take to those attending... The objective is to ensure that what they are told about the Act is further disseminated by them in their homes and localities," said a source.

Meanwhile, a major law and order crisis occurring in central Delhi just around 500 metres from the venue of the Prime Minister's rally had the Delhi Police on its toes.

"The security of stage and other vital locations in the ground will be taken over by Special Protection Group but the security of remaining ground area and the area outside the ground is with Delhi police," said a police officer. He added that most of the security personnel are busy in law and order duties at various protest sites. They have asked for deployment of reserved police personnel and paramilitary for security on Sunday.

"We are also coordinating with intelligence agencies and updating them with the situation of protests in Old Delhi area," the officer added.

## Society of Biotechnology of India launched

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Biotechnologists and technocrats — several of whom were once part of the Union Department of Biotechnology — launched a non-profit organisation called the Society of Biotechnology of India (SBPI) on Friday.

At a function organised at IIC here, Renu Swarup, Secretary, DBT, said she looked forward to ideas from it on how to better engage with individuals and industry to advance biotechnology in the country.

The founding members of SBPI include Dr. P.K. Ghosh, president; Dr. George John, vice-president; Divya Rajput, treasurer; Dr. Bindu Dey, general secretary; Dr. B.M. Gandhi, SL Govindwar and T.V. Ramanaiah. In a press statement, the organisation said it would promote transformation changes and approaches towards core research in modern biotechnology so that the outcome could lead to more products and technologies for economic and social gain.

## Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	432	Gurugram	306
Ghaziabad	444	Faridabad	420
Noida	463	Greater Noida	427
Good	0-50	Satisfactory	51-100
Poor	201-300	Moderate	101-200
		Very poor	301-400
		Severe	>401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY  
(AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

## Quake-proof buildings: HC pulls up Chief Secretary

NEW DELHI

The High Court on Friday asked the Delhi Chief Secretary to file an affidavit explaining the reasons for not complying with its previous orders on an action plan to make buildings in the Capital earthquake-proof. The Bench gave a last chance to the Delhi government to notify the action plan.

## Finalise draft regulations within a month, NGT tells pollution board

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Following a plea seeking enforcement of environmental norms by hotels and banquet halls, the National Green Tribunal on Friday directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to finalise the draft regulations within one month.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) to ensure compliance of environmental norms by marriage halls, restaurants, motels, hotels and banquets.

The civic bodies were also directed to issue a certificate pertaining to the adequacy of parking in the areas before the grant of "consent to establish".

"Stringent norms need to be worked out for controlling and regulating parking of vehicles used by the organisers and guests in functions as well as parking of vehicles on roads and public places adding to the pollution. This includes regulation of pick and drop facilities," the Bench said.

The green panel also directed all the States and Union Territories to similarly enforce implementation of the norms and furnish a compliance report to the CPCB within three months.

"The transport departments of all the States and UTs may assess the available parking capacities...in case the number of vehicles exceeds the capacity, there should be action plans for providing adequate additional parking space. If it is not possible, the number of vehicles to be registered must be curtailed," the Bench directed.

## DELHI TODAY

**Talk:** Lecture on "Fifth Edition of State of the Indian Economy" by Prof. Partha Sen, ECGC Chair Professor, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade and former Director, Delhi School of Economics; Prof. Surajit Mazumdar, Professor of Economics, JNU; Prof. R. Kavita Rao, Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy; and Prof. Vikas Rawal, Professor of Economics, JNU at Conference Room I, India International Centre, 6 p.m.

**Talk:** Women in Science & Technology in India series - Disease Diagnostics and Tissue Engineering: A Chemist's Perspective by Dr. Neetu Singh, Associate Professor, Centre for Biomedical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi at Lecture Room - II, India International Centre (IIC), 6.30 p.m.

**Music:** The second day of Nritya Rang, an international celebration of dance will feature the performances of Dumitha Gunawardana (Sri Lanka), Aamrapali Bhandari (Singapore), Afsar Khan (Singapore), Shambhavi Dandekar (USA) at Triveni Kala Sangam, 205 Tansen Marg, Mandi House.

**Exhibition:** "The Voice", a group exhibition of paintings and sculptures at Open Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Alchemy of Porcelain", an exhibition of contemporary ceramics by Ted Secombe from Australia at Shridharani Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditor@delhi@thehindu.co.in)

**Timings**  
**DELHI**

SATURDAY, DEC. 21		
RISE	07:09	SET 17:29
RISE	01:55	SET 13:58
SUNDAY, DEC. 22		
RISE	07:10	SET 17:30
RISE	02:57	SET 14:36
MONDAY, DEC. 23		
RISE	07:10	SET 17:30
RISE	04:00	SET 15:17

**Delhi Weather**

	max	min
Delhi City	16	08
Safdarjang	16	08
Palam	16	08

**Delhi Palam Today**  
Generally cloudy sky with Light Rain or Drizzle.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
18°C Moderate Fog.

**IN BRIEF**

**Truck hits car during fog in Jaipur, 4 killed**

JAIPUR  
Four persons were killed on Friday when a container truck ramed into a car on the Jaipur-Delhi national highway in Jaipur rural area due to fog, police said.

# Massive preparations for J&K Investors Summit next year

It will provide an opportunity to allay fears, apprehensions: Chief Secretary

PEERZADA ASHIQ SRINAGAR

The J&K administration has embarked on massive preparations to organise the 'J&K Global Investors Summit-2020' next year to attract investors to the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh, where buying land was restricted prior to revocation of Article 370 and 35A.

"The investors Summit will provide an opportunity to allay fears and apprehensions from the minds of outside business community about investment in J&K. It will present immense opportunities to develop contacts between the local and outside business community and will provide not only

primary employment but also generate secondary and ancillary employment opportunities for youth," said J&K Chief Secretary B.V.R Subrahmanyam, who chaired the first meeting of the apex committee on Thursday.

**Showcasing potential**

The summit, which was earlier scheduled in October but could not take place due to uncertain situation on the ground, will provide J&K a platform to showcase its strengths, strategies and potential in the investment sector. "Participating trade and industry organisations will have an opportunity to know first hand about the business friendly policies of the go-

vernment and identify business opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir," said Mr. Subrahmanyam.

The J&K administration has described the summit as a mega event. "It will see strategic sectoral sessions, round table deliberations, technical presentations, partnerships, one-to-one business meetings and signing of memorandum of understanding," the Chief Secretary said.

Officials said the Confederation of Indian Industry has been selected as the national partner, while Earnest Young, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Expro have been selected as knowledge, media and event partner.

Around 15,000 kanals of land have been identified so far and it will be open for outside investors soon.

An official said Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandar Murmu will be presiding over various pre-event functions in coming weeks.

**KCCI stand**

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries, however, has expressed fears. "The first claim on the resources of Kashmir should lie with the locals. Decisions having any impact on their future should be taken only by them. So far the thrust seems to be on non-local investors and investments," a KCCI spokesman said.

# Ensure foolproof security in all district courts, HC tells U.P. govt.

'If State government can't, we will ask for Central forces'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ALLAHABAD

Amid recurrent incidents of violence in various court premises in Uttar Pradesh, the Allahabad High Court on Friday ordered the State government to ensure a foolproof security in all district courts, complete with the deployment of special security force and installation of CCTV camera there.

A Bench of Justices Sudhir Agarwal and Sunit Kumar gave the direction to the government with the State's Home Secretary and Inspector General of Police (law and order) attending the hearing in response to summons to the State police chief and Additional Home Secretary.

The Bench asked the government to make security arrangements in all district

courts by December 31. It also directed government to get boundary walls built around all district court premises, besides installing CCTV cameras and deploying special police force there by January 15 next year.

After issuing directions, the Bench fixed January 2 as the next date to hear the matter further.

**Bijnor court shooting**

The Bench issued directions while adjudicating an incident of violence in a Bijnor courtroom that the High Court had taken suo motu cognisance of on Wednesday. One murder accused was killed and three others were injured in the December 17 attack.

"It seems there is complete failure of law and order

inside court premises in the State. The most incompetent police professionals are deployed for security of court premises in the State. Is the government serious about court security? Are top officials even aware about these incidents which happened in recent past in different courts of Uttar Pradesh?" the Bench had asked on Wednesday.

The Bench had told the Additional Advocate General that strengthening court security in the State was an issue pending with it since 2008 but nothing much seems to have been done.

If the State government cannot provide adequate security in court premises, we will ask Central government to deploy central forces for it, the Bench had said.

# 'Oppose CAA through posts, memorandums'

Unlike other parties, we do not believe in vandalism, says BSP chief Mayawati

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LUCKNOW

The Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati said on Friday that her party "does not believe in vandalism" and requested its members to express their opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act "through posts and mail and by handing over memorandum" instead of coming out on the streets.



BSP chief Mayawati

"Unlike other parties, we do not believe in vandalism. We hold protests but do not

indulge in violence," she said.

"I request my partymen that in view of the emergency-like oppression do not come on the streets. Instead, they should express their opposition to the said act through posts and mail and by handing over memorandum to DMs, CMs and Governors," she said.

A BSP team met President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday

over the Citizenship Act and the violence that ensued over the issue.

**Judicial probe sought**

The delegation, led by the party's national general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra, met the President and sought a judicial inquiry into Sunday violence at Jamia Millia Islamia and withdrawal of the contentious law.

# Separate narcotics bureau for Haryana: Vij

Our aim is to completely stop the drug trade in the State, says Home Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij on Friday said that a separate "Haryana Narcotics Bureau" would be set up within a year in an attempt to curb drug menace in the State.

Mr. Vij was talking to journalists after presiding over a review meeting of 'Operation Prahar' here.

'Operation Prahar' is a Ha-



State Home Minister Anil Vij

ryana police drive, started a month ago, to fight organised crime and growing drug me-

nace in the State.

"Under this operation, the police have so far registered 281 cases and arrested 319 people," he said.

"Our aim is to completely curb the drug trade. We are also contemplating to bring about a change in the law so as to take stern action against those involved in the smuggling of drugs and also attach their property besides im-

pounding the vehicles involved in the illegal trade," he said.

On the issue of Citizenship Amendment Act, Mr. Vij said that the Opposition parties, who he alleged were behind ongoing protests over the CCA - should be booked for violence, arson and killing of people during these protests in various parts of the country.

# Mobile Net ban lifted in Assam

Airtel, BSNL, Reliance Jio, Vodafone resume services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA GUWAHATI

Mobile Internet service resumed in Assam on Friday morning, the 10th day after it was banned during protests against the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Though the Gauhati High Court had ordered its restoration by 5 p.m. on Thursday, the State government had not issued any instruction to the mobile operators. "We did not receive any communication... to continue with the ban, so we resumed the service," a senior official of private operator Airtel said.

Other operators, like the State-owned BSNL, Reliance Jio and Vodafone, too have resumed their services.

State Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said on Thursday evening that the service would resume from Friday.

A Division Bench of Justices Manojit Bhuyan and Saumitra Saikia gave the

direction after hearing four PILs filed by journalist Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, and advocates Bonoshri Gogoi, Randeep Sharma and Debakanta Doley.

**Messages, notifications**

With resumption of mobile Internet, hundreds of WhatsApp messages and social media notifications clogged the cell phones of users.

Assam witnessed violent protests with three rail stations, post office, bank, bus terminus, shops, dozens of vehicles and many other public properties being set ablaze or totally damaged.

Already five persons have lost their lives in the violence.

Several towns and cities were placed under indefinite curfew, including Guwahati, the epicentre of protests, besides Dibrugarh, Tezpur and Dhekiajuli. Night curfew was imposed in Jorhat, Golaghat, Tinsukia and Charaideo districts.

With the situation returning to normalcy, curfew has been lifted from several cities and relaxed in the rest.

The Gauhati High Court on Friday rejected the State government's plea for reimposing the temporary ban on mobile Internet services for the sake of security.

The court had on Thursday ordered the government to restore the services suspended since December 12.

The Assam police subsequently announced a WhatsApp number asking people to post a screenshot of provocative or objectionable contents posted on social media platforms.

"We are monitoring social media for abusive posts and will not hesitate to take action against people spewing venom. A few cases have already been registered," a police spokesperson said.

(With inputs from Rahul Karmakar)

# NPF notice to MPs for vote on CAB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOHIMA

The Opposition Naga People's Front has served show-cause notice to its two MPs - K.G. Kenye and Lorho S. Pfoze - for voting in favour of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Parliament in defiance of the party resolution not to support it. They have been asked to reply within se-

ven days. Meanwhile, Mr. Kenye on Friday said that he has tendered his resignation from the post of party's secretary general.

He claimed that the Citizenship Act strengthens the Inner Line Permit and continuation of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873, because of which he supported the

passage of CAB in the Parliament.

Mr. Kenye voted in favour of the Bill along with NPFs Lok Sabha Member from Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency, Dr. Pfoze.

Various civil societies and tribal bodies in the State have condemned the two MPs for voting in favour of CAB.

**Anti-CAA protests in Manipur**

IMPHAL  
Hundreds of youths converged at the Khwairamban Keithel area, the main business centre of Imphal, on Friday to protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. They shouted slogans and carried placards against the CAA. They demanded that all the Northeast States, including Manipur, be exempted from the Act.



## A SPACE MARKETING FEATURE

Resurgent  
SOUTHA hub of  
higher  
education

Over the decades, south India has emerged as the go-to destination for quality higher education. The south boasts premier institutions such as the Indian Institute of Technology, Indian Institute of Management, Indian Institute of Science and National Law School. Leading private institutions are attracting talent from across the country and abroad, both in terms of students and faculty, turning them into multicultural campuses.

Self-financing engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana constitute a significant percentage of technical institutions in the country. They have been instrumental in catering to the manpower needs of manufacturing and IT companies. Besides deemed universities, standalone private institutions specialising in the areas of management, finance and banking and coaching centres for civil services aspirants have carved a niche for themselves prompting students to head south for their higher educational and career needs.

## Telangana proves naysayers wrong

After surpassing expectations, the youngest State now gets set on a consolidation course

At the time of its formation a little over five years ago, not many gave Telangana an outside chance to make it big on the industrial landscape, leave alone turning a strong competitor to industrially developed States.

Moving fast, the K. Chandrasekhara Rao government put in place various measures, setting at rest apprehensions of a flight of capital. One of the key measures was the Telangana State Industrial Project Approval and Self-Certification System (TS-iPASS).

At the core of this rather radical system is time-bound clearance for projects. If applications are not approved within a timeframe, the project is deemed to have been approved.

Aiding the State government's quest for industrial growth was the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi's promise of job creation and a keenness to prove the naysayers wrong and Hyderabad's relatively better infrastructure.

**On the move**  
Little wonder then in the five years of TS-iPASS, around 11,600 projects with investments totalling ₹1.73 lakh crore were cleared.

This and other policy reforms helped Telangana stay among the top few States in the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings. Add to this is the growing preference of global technology



**Flagship facility:** A view of Amazon's largest campus in the world, at Gachibowli in Hyderabad. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

## Cheaper housing options

Facilitating the progress of Hyderabad is the relatively affordable housing. A strong growth in the office sector is keeping residential sentiment high, real estate consultancy JLL's Q3 2019 report said. New launches fell by 12% year on year to 3,509 units (3,972 units), while sales continued its healthy streak and increased by 10%.

firms to site their development centres in Hyderabad. Microsoft, Google, Apple, Facebook, Uber, Intel and OnePlus are just a few names who had made the city their second home. Another

perception of those settling in Hyderabad, especially from Chennai and Bengaluru, is of more choices at prices within reach. Making decision making easy is the robust transport system. A Metro rail network complements the MMTS (rail) and bus services and the State has mooted an elevated bus rapid transit system.

er marquee name is home furnishing firm IKEA.

The Amazon campus is spread over 9.5 acres with three million square feet of built area, making it the largest campus

building anywhere for the e-commerce giant.

Another factor attracting more investments to Telangana, especially Hyderabad, is the talent pool. Through its Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK), the State government had also been helping maintain the pipeline.

Hyderabad has been for long a hub for defence research and development and pharmaceuticals, with globally leading names such as Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and Aurobindo Pharma having plants. Contributing to the strengthening of the ecosystem are higher education institutions, including an IIT, IIIT and ISB.

The State government is keen on making a mark in the manufacturing sector. Industries and IT Minister K.T. Rama Rao said the government would bring in more textile, electronics and food processing industries to the State as these sectors have abundant scope to create jobs for the unemployed youth.

The mega textile park project in Warangal recently got a ₹900 crore investment commitment from Korean major Youngone Corporation, a move that will see creation of 12,000 direct employment opportunities. One of the projects likely to give a big boost to Telangana on the manufacturing front is the Hyderabad Pharma City, an integrated facility poised to take off.

## CEO SPEAK

"Telangana State provides one of the best industrial climates in the country with ease of doing business and a policy that is proactive, responsive and investor friendly. With a single window and quick clearance of project proposals called TS-iPASS, the investor will experience several cost advantages in the implementation and running of business. Having been consistently adjudged as the best city to live in the country, Hyderabad offers a variety of academic and industrial strengths, that will ensure a healthy competition along with cost, quality of doing business."



**JAYESH RANJAN, IAS**  
Principal Secretary to Government and CIP, I&C, ITE&C Departments, Government of Telangana

"Rau's IAS is considered the benchmark institution for Civil Services Exam coaching. Our research based pedagogy and superior teaching practices produce positive transformation in the knowledge and personality of all our students. Our focus is not on dissemination of information alone. We focus more on helping our students convert information to knowledge. After classroom teaching, we engage with all our students through our learning application. The app helps our students in the continuous learning of current affairs, testing their Prelims and Mains test taking skills and improving their chances of clearing the IAS exam. Our ethos of 'personal attention' and 'mentoring' help us build leaders for our society."



**V. P. GUPTA,**  
Chairman & MD, Rau's IAS Study Circle

"The heart and soul of higher education is quality research, where the focus should be on rigour, relevance, policy, and benefits it gives to the society. Universities which are considered as the cradle of academic discourse, should promote seminars for sharing ideas, preparation of working papers, and publication in quality journals. Quality research makes one a quality teacher and thus making classroom experiences interesting and inspiring. Quality research would benefit society and can catapult universities in South India into world class institutions."



**DR. J. MAHENDER REDDY,**  
Vice Chancellor, ICPAI Foundation for Higher Education

A SPACE MARKETING FEATURE



## Karnataka eyes the next level of tech growth

State aims to grow the sector to a \$150-billion industry

Bengaluru is now home to over 1,500 tech firms, 1,400 global capability centres of MNCs, hundreds of R&D outfits and over 4,000 start-ups. Cumulatively, these organisations employ around a million tech workers.

A rapid expansion of the tech ecosystem has placed Karnataka, and Bengaluru, on the global tech map and global enterprises and investors come seeking collaborations. But none of its achievements made the State complacent or made it rest on its laurels.

In fact, it recently set an



ambitious 3X growth mandate for the technology sector, its flagship industry. The State wants to grow its tech business to a \$150-billion industry in the next four or five years from over \$50 bil-

lion currently, to help the country achieve its target of a \$1-trillion digital economy.

C.N. Ashwath Narayan, Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of IT, BT, S&T, said: "We have set a target to grow our tech business to a \$150 bn industry in the next four to five years. The government will introduce several initiatives to boost the industry and take it to the next level of growth."

To boost the growth further, the State would set up a Technology Development Board to support GIC and R&D ecosystems.

## A.P.'s renewed thrust on industrial corridors

The industrial sector in Andhra Pradesh has started its journey afresh with the government laying a renewed thrust on the development of the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC) and the Chennai-Bangalore Industrial Corridor (CBIC) which hold tremendous potential for development in this predominantly agrarian State. Besides, it brought out path-breaking legislation for providing 75% job reservations in industries to local candidates.

Kadapa Steel Plant (KSP), for which Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is scheduled to lay the foundation stone next week, is another milestone in the State's in-

dustrial landscape. While striving to achieve a greater degree of efficiency on the energy front, the government has undertaken a review of the power purchase agreements with the argument that the State has the right to do that and it was in public interest. The government is following up the proposed establishment of a major port at Ramayapatnam in Prakasam district.

Both the KSP and the seaport are among the assurances given by the Central government in tune with the A.P. Reorganisation Act. The State is going to sign an agreement with the National Mineral Development Corporation for sourcing iron ore for the KSP.

## Kerala takes to the skies

With the commissioning of the Kannur international airport in December 2018, Kerala achieved the distinction of having four world-class international airports.

The Kannur airport – the gateway to Malabar and the largest airport in Kerala – has given a fillip to the development of the northern districts. The airport, operated by the Kannur International Airport Ltd., has catered to the needs of around 1.35 million flyers, helping to increase the tourist footfall and create a brand equity. KIAL managing director Va-

sudevan Thulasidas said 50% of the flyers from Kannur were domestic passengers. "We could have done better if foreign carriers were allowed to operate," he said.

The quest of Kerala for better air connectivity has not ended with the Kannur airport. The demand for airstrips in tourist destinations and in far-flung areas is on the rise, with the State supporting all the initiatives.

The ground work for an airport in Kottayam, closer to the hill shrine of Sabarimala, has commenced.

## IN BRIEF



## Kerala NCP president Thomas Chandy dead

KOCHI Thomas Chandy, Kerala president of the Nationalist Congress Party and legislator in the Kerala Assembly from Kuttanad, died at his home here on Friday. The 72-year-old had been battling cancer for some time. He is survived by wife Mercy, two daughters and a son. He held the Transport portfolio in the current LDF government for a few months in 2017 before being forced to step down following allegations of land grab and lake reclamation for a resort promoted by a company in which he was a director.

## HC dismisses plea for reviewing load test order

KOCHI A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Friday dismissed a plea by the State for reviewing the court's order to conduct a load test on the Palariavattom flyover for determining its structural stability and load-bearing capacity before demolishing it. Expert opinions and reports obtained by the government said that no useful purpose would be served by a load test as the flyover was already in a "distressed condition."

## Telangana HC may take a call on second autopsy

HYDERABAD The Telangana High Court is likely to take a call on Saturday on conducting re-post-mortem examination of the bodies of four persons killed in the Shadnagar firing on December 6. A division bench of Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy directed the Gandhi Hospital superintendent to be present on Saturday during the hearing. Bodies of the four accused had been preserved following the HC direction.

## Uneasy calm prevails in curfew-bound Mangaluru

No untoward incident; 7 held for Thursday's violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MANGALURU

An uneasy calm prevailed in curfew-bound Mangaluru on Friday, a day after two persons were killed in firing by police on a group protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

City Police Commissioner P.S. Harsha said the day passed off without any untoward incident and seven persons had been arrested for Thursday's violent incidents.

Bodies of Nushin, 23, and Jalil Kudroli, 49, who were killed in police firing were buried in their respective Jams in the evening, after post-mortem was conducted at the Government Wenlock District Hospital. The police are yet to announce the exact cause of death, but the relatives of the victims and other eye-witnesses said they were killed by the police bullets.

Talking to reporters in Mangaluru, Dr. Harsha said that curfew imposed on the entire Commissionerate limits till Sunday midnight would continue and any decision to relax it to allow people to buy daily essentials would be taken depending upon the situation on Saturday.

Curfew was relaxed for two hours to allow people to offer their Friday prayers, he said.

As many as 33 police personnel were injured, including some critically, during the violence while five civilians were undergoing treatment for their injuries in hospitals, he said.



No action: A scene in the Bunder area of Mangaluru during curfew on Friday.

## Warning of 'Godhra-like' situation leads to furore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

A Minister warning of a "Godhra-like situation" if the majority "loses patience", while talking about the violence in Mangaluru, drew sharp criticism not just on social media platforms but also from Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa himself.

Responding to a statement made on December 17 by Congress MLA U.T. Khader that "Karnataka will burn if the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is implemented," Minister for Kannada and Culture C.T. Ravi drew a reference to Godhra riots of 2002. Recalling the burning of a train coach in Godhra and the violence that followed, he said, "I think Mr. Khader knows what happens if there is a reaction. He has seen what happened when people responded to

Godhra." He went on to say that "the majority community's patience" was being tested. "Our patience is not weakness," he said.

The statement came close on the heels of the BJP, led by national general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santhosh, blaming the Congress and Mr. Khader for the violence in Mangaluru.

Mr. Khader, meanwhile, clarified that his statement had been taken out of context and "misrepresented deliberately" by the BJP to escape responsibility for the violent turn of incidents. "The State will burn" is a figure of speech in Kannada and not meant to be taken literally, he argued.

Mr. Yediyurappa is learnt to have reprimanded Mr. Ravi for his statement, and directed all Ministers and MLAs to be careful of their statements.

## 'Police burst tear gas shells inside hospital'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MANGALURU

A day after two people were killed in police firing in Mangaluru, CCTV camera footage has surfaced that purportedly shows the police bursting tear gas shells in the corridor of Highland Hospital on Falnir Road and beating up relatives and friends of those who were admitted to the hospital after being injured in the violent incidents.

The Congress too alleged on Friday that the incident in the hospital was testimony to "police handedness".

Police Commissioner P.S. Harsha on Friday, however, termed it as "mere allegations".

According to the Commissioner, five civilians were injured in the incidents on Thursday.

## Updating of National Population Register put on hold in Kerala

K.S. SUDHI KOCHI

Following in the footsteps of West Bengal, the Kerala government has decided to put on hold the proceedings for updating the National Population Register (NPR).

The decision comes after *The Hindu* broke the news of updating of the NPR on Friday, and in the wake of apprehensions that the update would lead to the preparation of a National Register of Citizens (NRC).

A government notification stalling the proceedings was issued on Friday, sources confirmed.

The government's green signal for updating the NPR in Kerala, which has vehemently opposed the Citizen-

## Journalists held, released

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/KOCHI

The Karnataka police have released nine journalists they had detained in Mangaluru early on Friday. The city was under curfew since Thursday following the death of two anti-citizenship law protesters in

police firing. The police detained the presspersons from Kerala when they reached the hospital where the bodies of the agitators were kept.

The internment of the presspersons by the Karnataka police prompted concerns for their safety.

ship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the NRC, has come as surprise, especially when the ruling Left Democratic Front had joined hands with the Opposition United Democratic Front to stage a protest in the capital. Incidentally, the Principal

Secretary (General Administration Department) had republished a notification issued by the Registrar General and the Census Commissioner of India on the updating of the NPR in connection with the 2021 Census.

## Espionage racket busted, 7 Navy men, hawala operator arrested

Honey trap bears the stamp of Pakistan's ISI: police official

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE RAJULAPUDI SRINIVAS VISAKHAPATNAM/VIJAYAWADA

Seven naval personnel were arrested for alleged espionage and suspected links with Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). A suspected hawala operator was also arrested. Director General of Police D. Gautam Sawang told *The Hindu* that the arrests were made in a joint operation - "Dolphin's Nose" - conducted by the State, Naval and Central intelligence agencies. "An espionage racket has been busted and a case has been registered," he said.

However, police and intelligence officials refused to divulge details of the accused. It is learnt that two of the personnel were from the Eastern Naval Command

(ENC) and the rest from the Western Naval Command (WNC).

According to sources, the personnel in question were honey-trapped through social media sites. "This is a clear operative method of the ISI and there are a few more persons involved," said a senior police officer.

## Under surveillance

The accused officers had been under surveillance for quite some time.

This is the second such case in Visakhapatnam. In 2001, the city police had arrested three naval personnel, including a chief security officer of the Naval Armament Depot, on the charge of spying. One of the key accused later committed suicide in the Central Jail af-

ter he was denied bail in the case. The importance of the ENC has grown with the presence of the Ship Building Centre, which builds the Arihant-class nuclear submarines. The ENC also has a number of projects lined up, including the strategic Naval Alternative Operations Base (NAOB), which is coming up at Rambilli in Visakhapatnam district. The NAOB and the Arihant Project are listed under the "top-secret" strategic weapons projects and are directly under the control of the Prime Minister's Office.

Pakistan has been eyeing these projects and the Scorpene-class submarine project of the WNC quite some time now, said a senior naval officer on condition of anonymity.



Arrangements in place: Pathanamthitta Collector P.B. Noohu inspecting the Pulmedu path on Friday.

## Sabarimala continues to witness heavy rush

More pilgrims take Pulmedu route

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SABARIMALA

Sabarimala has been witnessing a heavy rush for the past two days as hundreds of devotees from different parts of south India undertake their annual pilgrimage in the last lap of the 41-day Mandalam season.

The pilgrims had to wait for seven to eight hours in the barricades on the trekking path and at the Valiya Nadappanthal to ascend the 18 holy steps to the Ayyappa temple premises on Friday.

The Travancore Devaswom Board and the Ayyappa Seva Sanghom served the waiting pilgrims with medicated drinking water and biscuits.

The pilgrim flow to Sabarimala from Vandippery, through the Pulmedu route, has considerably increased in the last lap of the season, sources said.

## Special buses

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation has been operating special buses to Vandippery-Sathram from Kumily.

The Forest Department has restricted the movement of pilgrims at night through this path that cuts across thick forests.

Pilgrims are permitted to undertake the pilgrimage through the Sathram-Pulmedu-Sannidhanam path

## Thanka Anki procession on Monday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PATHANAMTHITTA

The annual ceremonial procession carrying the Thanka Anki for the Mandalapuja at Sabarimala will set off from Aranmula Parthasarathy temple on December 23.

The presiding deity at Sabarimala will be adorned with the Thanka Anki, the golden attire offered to the Ayyappa temple by the late Sree Chithira Thirunal Maharaja of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom in 1973, prior to the Mandalapuja.

only during the day. The Department has also deployed specially trained elephant squads and additional forest guards on this path to protect the pilgrims from wild animals.

## Path inspected

Pathanamthitta Collector P.B. Noohu, accompanied by Thiruvalla Sub-Collector Vinay Goel, inspected the Pulmedu path on Friday.

The police have taken special security measures on this route.

## Principal, teachers held for assault on student

They were booked under POCSO Act

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

The Bengaluru police have arrested the principal and two teachers of a school in Koramangala in connection with the assault on a 13-year-old student, attempting to bribe his parents so that they wouldn't approach the police and threatening his sister with sexual assault.

Based on a complaint by his mother, Koramangala police, on Wednesday, registered a case against the principal and the staff charging them under various sections of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and for criminal intimidation.

Later, they arrested principal Shaji Sebastian, maths teacher Reshma and the class teacher Mathew.

The mother told the police that her 13-year-old son,

who was physically assaulted, and her 15-year-old daughter are enrolled in the school.

"On December 16, while she was at work, she received a call from the PT teacher informing that her son had a minor accident. She went to the school and met the principal and her son, who was in her office," said the police.

The principal claimed that he had fallen in PT class and sustained a head wound. "However, her son accused the math teacher of hitting him with a duster," the police added.

On December 17, the principal and another senior school official called on the family and requested the mother not to file a police complaint.

They allegedly offered to waive the remaining school fees, and also offered her money.

## Panel for Legislature in Amaravati, HC in Kurnool

It recommends Secretariat, HC Bench, summer Assembly in Visakhapatnam

STAFF REPORTER VIJAYAWADA

The expert committee on development strategies for Andhra Pradesh led by retired IAS officer G. Nageswara Rao has recommended that the Secretariat, the Chief Minister's camp office, summer Assembly and a High Court (HC) Bench be set up in the Visakhapatnam metropolitan region; the State Legislature, HC Bench and the Governor and Ministers' quarters in the 'Amaravati-Mangalagiri complex'; and the HC and allied courts in Kurnool as per the Sribagh Pact.

It also suggested that iconic buildings that would have an everlasting impact could

be built in the upland area in the vicinity of Acharya Nagarjuna University and A.P. Special Police 6th battalion at Mangalagiri and infrastructure developed in the existing capital region not vulnerable to floods.

## 4 commissionerates

Another significant recommendation is setting up of four commissionerates comprising Visakhapatnam-Srikakulam-Vizianagaram (north coastal), East Godavari-West Godavari-Krishna (central coastal), Guntur-Prakasam-Nellore (south coastal) and Anantapur-Chittoor-Kadapa-Kurnool (Rayalaseema) regions for the sake of administrative convenience

## In perfect sync



A Central Industrial Security Force contingent marches during Dikshant Parade at the Training Institute Ceremonial Ground, Hakimpet, in Hyderabad on Friday. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA



Residents of Mandadam in A.P. cooking on the streets in protest against the 'three capitals plan'.

on the lines of the pattern followed in Karnataka.

## Protests continue

Meanwhile, protests against the Chief Minister's proposal of three capital cities continued on Friday. Farmers

squatted on the roads and blocked traffic in 29 capital villages, including Velagapudi, where the Legislature and Secretariat are located. The farmers cooked food on the streets and shouted anti-government slogans.

## 'A.P. willing to return land to Amaravati ryots'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI

Minister for Panchayat Raj and Mines Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy on Friday said the Andhra Pradesh government was inclined to return the land pooled in excess by the TDP regime from farmers of Amaravati for constructing a mega capital.

Addressing a media conference here, Mr. Ramachandra Reddy wondered why a capital required 33,000 acres of land when Hyderabad had mere 200 or so acres to house the Assembly and Secretariat buildings.

He said the proposal was

nothing new as Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had promised to farmers much before elections that he would return their land on coming to power. "All the land was not voluntarily pooled, but forcibly acquired from gullible farmers for the capital city the TDP government envisaged. The government will readily oblige such farmers."

Moreover, such huge land pool in Amaravati was unnecessary when the government contemplated setting up legislative, executive and judicial capitals in Amaravati, Visakhapatnam and Kurnool respectively.



**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Saturday:** Dense fog in isolated pockets likely over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, south Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, north Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and sub-Himalayan West Bengal. Cold day conditions likely in some pockets over Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	.....	20.0	12.0	Kozhikode	.....	35.0	24.0
Ahmedabad	.....	28.0	15.0	Kurnool	.....	31.0	20.0
Aizawl	.....	19.0	8.0	Lucknow	.....	18.0	7.0
Allahabad	.....	20.0	7.0	Madurai	.....	30.0	23.0
Bengaluru	.....	26.0	16.0	Mangaluru	.....	36.0	23.0
Bhopal	.....	25.0	11.0	Mumbai	.....	30.0	17.0
Bhubaneswar	.....	27.0	12.0	Mysuru	.....	28.0	17.0
Chandigarh	.....	17.0	10.0	New Delhi	.....	17.0	6.0
Chennai	.....	30.0	25.0	Patna	.....	19.0	8.0
Coimbatore	.....	30.0	20.0	Port Blair	.....	30.0	25.0
Dehradun	.....	22.0	9.0	Puducherry	.....	29.0	21.0
Gangtok	.....	14.0	8.0	Pune	.....	29.0	16.0
Goa	.....	32.0	23.0	Raipur	.....	28.0	15.0
Guwahati	.....	23.0	12.0	Ranchi	.....	22.0	7.0
Hubballi	.....	28.0	18.0	Shillong	.....	15.0	6.0
Hyderabad	.....	29.0	17.0	Shimla	.....	12.0	5.0
Imphal	.....	23.0	7.0	Srinagar	.....	6.0	-3.0
Jaipur	.....	22.0	9.0	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	0.1	27.0
Kochi	.....	33.0	24.0	Tiruchi	.....	30.0	22.0
Kohima	.....	17.0	6.0	Vijayawada	.....	30.0	21.0
Kolkata	.....	22.0	12.0	Visakhapatnam	.....	29.0	21.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing						Yesterday
CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	46	37	17	227	162	■
Bengaluru	4	26	53	66	97	■
Chennai	7	34	27	102	.....	■
Delhi	10	57	109	484	452	■
Hyderabad	3	76	44	166	.....	■
Kolkata	14	57	36	232	156	■
Lucknow	29	8	47	372	.....	■
Mumbai	17	109	33	247	185	■
Pune	81	30	74	216	142	■
Visakhapatnam	9	35	54	133	113	■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Noida, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 463 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 29.

**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.  
**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

# Irrigation scam: Ajit Pawar gets all clear

ACB says 'no criminal liability' has been found in its affidavit before Bombay HC

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Anti-Corruption Bureau has filed an affidavit before the Bombay High Court stating that “no criminal liability has been disclosed” on the part of Nationalist Congress Party leader Ajit Pawar in its investigations into 12 irrigation projects in Vidarbha during his tenure.

The affidavit, filed before the Nagpur bench of the High Court on Thursday, was signed by ACB Director-General Param Bir Singh and is in response to a demand by Atul Jagtap, whose petition

before the HC led to a Special Investigation Team being formed to probe the alleged irregularities.

Mr. Jagtap had demanded that the probe be transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation, as the ACB investigation was very slow. The ACB's affidavit details the investigation conducted so far as well as its results, on the various tenders awarded by the Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation (VIDC).

**24 FIRs filed**  
“Investigations have been completed into 102 tenders



Ajit Pawar

by the Nagpur SIT and 57 tenders by the Amravati SIT so far. Some of those tenders are of high value. Where cognisable offences are disclosed, FIRs have been registered. So far, we have registered 24 FIRs and re-

ferred 14 matters to the Water Resources Department for permission for registration of FIR as required under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Open inquiries into 45 tenders have been closed,” the affidavit said.

The affidavit also submitted that detailed questionnaires were provided to Mr. Pawar in connection with the 12 projects for which he was under the scanner, and his responses, along with the other evidence, had been examined.

“The ACB has also recommended departmental action against the concerned officials where procedural and administrative lapses are noticed. As regards the role of Respondent No. 7 (Mr.

Pawar), no criminal liability is disclosed during the course of enquiry/investigation by the Special Investigation Team,” the affidavit said.

**Delay in probe**  
The document further refuted allegations of a delay in the probe, citing the time it takes for careful examination of various documents, statements of witnesses and legal aspects pertaining to the projects.

The development comes less than a month after the ACB ruled out Mr. Pawar's involvement in nine other applications seeking an inquiry against him during his tenure as Irrigation Minister as well as the Chairman of the VIDC.

# Army to sign deal for six Apache attack helicopters

22 of them are being inducted by the Air Force

**DINAKAR PERI**  
NEW DELHI

The deal for six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for the Indian Army, estimated to cost around \$930 million, is likely to be signed early next year, Army sources said on Friday. These are in addition to 22 Apaches being inducted by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

“It is in advanced stage and the file is now with the Cabinet Committee on Security. We expect the deal to be signed early next year,” an Army source said. The helicopters should start coming in by 2022, the source added.

In August 2017, the Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by the then Defence



**Taking wing:** The Apache helicopters will replace the ageing Russian Mi-35 attack helicopters. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Minister Arun Jaitley, approved the purchase of six Apache attack helicopters from the U.S. for the Army.

For this, India is exercising the optional clause in the original deal for 22 Apaches, that has a provision for 11 helicopters. The Army had made a pitch for all of them, but the government had limited it to six.

The IAF has recently inducted the first batch of eight Apaches based in Path-

ankot. All the 22 Apaches are expected to be delivered by 2020 and will replace the ageing Russian Mi-35 attack helicopters in service.

Currently, the Army Aviation Corps operates only smaller Cheetah and ALH (Advance Light Helicopters) that weigh less than five tonnes.

All the bigger helicopters, including the Mi-35s and fixed wing aircraft are operated by the IAF.

# CBI court convicts rape accused after swift trial

Hearing finished in just over a month

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

A special CBI court in Ranchi on Friday convicted 23-year-old Rahul Raj for rape and murder, on the fourth anniversary of the Nirbhaya case, in a swift trial that was completed in a little over a month, officials said.

Special CBI judge A.K. Mishra found Raj guilty of raping and then murdering the victim, who was an engineering student at a college in Ranchi.

The quantum of punishment will be pronounced on Saturday, a CBI spokesperson said.

The body of the victim was found on December 16, 2016, in her house in the Booty Basti area, where she lived alone, said CBI officials.

The agency took over the case after over a year, when

the Central government issued a notification on January 25, 2018.

The case had triggered huge student protests in Ranchi and the victim had been named “Ranchi's Nirbhaya.”

**Several cases**

During its investigation, the CBI came to know that Raj had 10 cases registered against him in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, officials said. He was arrested in Patna for an alleged sexual attack on a minor and was in judicial custody for over three years after he had jumped the bail.

The conviction came on the same day the CBI secured life imprisonment for expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar for raping a minor girl in Uttar Pradesh's Unao district on June 4, 2017.

# Will form Ayodhya trust soon: Centre

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has said it is working on the modalities for setting up a trust for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, as mandated by the Supreme Court.

In its November 9 verdict, the court asked the Centre to set up a trust within three months. As per the judgment in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, the Centre must formulate a scheme with provisions for the setting up of a trust with a board of trustees or any other appropriate body, the functioning of the trust, the powers of the trustees, land transfer to the trust and all incidental and supplemental matters.

“A trust will be set up within the stipulated time,” a senior official said.

# Villagers skip public hearing on JSW project

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BHUBANESWAR

A public hearing for a proposed steel project of JSW Utkal Steel Limited on land previously acquired for a POSCO project was held at Odisha's Jagatsinghpur on Friday. However, about 80% of the residents of the Nuagaon, Gadakujang and Dhinkia gram panchayats did not participate.

Congress leader Lalatendu Mohapatra said the administration and the company were trying to move ahead with the project without consulting the residents, who had opposed the POSCO project for several years in the past.



## Whither Amaravati?

There was a time for the idea for three capitals in Andhra Pradesh, but it is long past

Sometimes ideas can sound good, but when it comes to implementation they need to be tested for feasibility and, importantly, timing. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy hinted on Tuesday that the South African model of three capitals was best suited in his State and that his government would work towards this. In South Africa, the administrative capital is in Pretoria, its national legislature in Cape Town and its judicial capital in Bloemfontein. Mr. Reddy's idea seems to stem from the reasoning that a distribution of executive, legislative and judicial governance across Visakhapatnam, Amaravati (the current capital) and Kurnool would allow for "a decentralised development of the State". The location choices are in the upper, central and lower geographical regions. Such an arrangement follows the recommendations of the expert committee appointed by the Home Affairs Ministry in 2014 to study alternatives for a new capital. Chaired by K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, the panel had argued against the need for a greenfield capital city and to instead focus on distributing locations of governance beyond the Vijayawada-Guntur-Tenali-Mangalagiri urban area, while utilising the time period of 10 years to continue functions from Hyderabad after bifurcation. The Chief Minister's idea has got support from the government-appointed G.N. Rao committee; it has recommended that the Assembly's location be retained at Amaravati, and the Secretariat and High Court moved to Visakhapatnam and Kurnool, respectively.

Despite the expert committee's recommendations, the A.P. government led by the Telugu Desam Party had decided to build a grand capital in Amaravati, and had acquired large parcels of land from farmers. The Secretariat and Legislative Assembly were shifted to Amaravati in 2016, while the High Court began functioning in the beginning of 2019. Amaravati, which still requires significant development, has become a functioning State capital for all purposes now. But it is no surprise that many farmers, who had agreed to give up fertile land for the expansion of the capital as part of a land pooling scheme and were to have received residential and commercial plots among other forms of compensation, have protested the decision to decentralise capital functions. If the government limits Amaravati to hosting only the Assembly, it must take into account the concerns of affected farmers. That said, the fact that considerable work has been completed in Amaravati to utilise the fledgling city as a functioning capital must be taken into account before embarking upon the "decentralisation" idea, which was best served before the works in Amaravati began. Abandoning the plan that is already in place will render the grand city an unviable one. As in politics, in governance, timing is everything.

## Net loss

Disruption of connectivity should be resorted to only in the face of specific threats

The shutting down of the Internet in Delhi and several States as a response to growing protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, is unsophisticated and deeply damaging to social life and the economy. Meghalaya, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh were entirely cut off, and parts of Assam, West Bengal, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh were deprived of Internet access, in clumsy attempts to quell demonstrations. Such ham-handed interventions have won for India a place at the head of the table among intolerant countries that routinely shut down the Internet to block criticism of the government. Jammu and Kashmir is now acknowledged globally as a dark spot on the Internet, with service there blocked since August 4. After protests against the CAA began, other States are also experiencing shutdowns, and the fate of connectivity is being decided by officers empowered by the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017 under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, or Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. A disruption is an extreme measure, and should be countenanced only for a specific threat, and as an interim measure as official communications fill the information vacuum. A case in point is the spreading of rumours on child lifters on social media, which resulted in several lynchings. The net blackout of the kind being witnessed now, however, has little to do with rumours, and is clearly aimed at muzzling the protests.

The Prime Minister, who has fashioned himself as a digital first leader, issued a Twitter appeal to people in Assam on the CAA, but they did not get it as they had no net. The NDA government should also be aware that the connectivity chokehold applied on J&K is proving lethal to entrepreneurship, crippling a new generation running start-ups and promoting women's employment. A disrupted Internet is dealing a blow to digital financial transactions across several States, to e-governance initiatives, and economic productivity. It affects education and skill-building, as the Kerala High Court affirmed in an order holding access to the net a fundamental right that could not be denied arbitrarily. The court pointed out that the apprehension of a gadget being misused is not a legitimate ground for denial of service, and the government should act on specific complaints. Yet, since 2015, shutdowns have been rising - 134 in 2018 - and the NDA seems unwilling to change course. It seems to matter little that blunt interventions make the ambitious goal of growing into a \$5-trillion economy even more unrealistic, or that India is losing face as a democracy because it chooses to sit with authoritarian regimes. That is the wrong road to take. Reform and progress vitally need the net.

# The virtual effacement of civil liberty

The judiciary needs to determine whether the executive has provided a reasoned order when it directs an Internet ban



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

A study of India's civil liberties record will only desiccate its status as a republican democracy. Even given that narrative, the ongoing repression of freedom in the Kashmir Valley is extraordinary. Not since August 4, 2019, have most residents in the region had access to the Internet. On that fateful day, in the lead up to India's unilateral decision to revoke its compact with the State of Jammu and Kashmir, a total communication and information blockade was placed on the region. The exercise was so clinically executed that even the orders imposing the restrictions were kept under wraps.

### The import of a ruling

On the ensuing day, the Indian government went about dramatically altering its relationship with Jammu and Kashmir. Article 370 of the Constitution, which granted the State elements of administrative autonomy, was, for all practical purposes, severed. But with a complete curfew placed on movement in the region, Kashmiris were deprived even of any means of finding out what was actually transpiring. Remarkably, this state of affairs has scarcely changed since. While certain limited channels of communication have been opened up, access to the web remains elusive. By many accounts, this might well be one of the longest bans imposed on the Internet by an ostensibly democratic government.

It is these facts - and the devastating consequences that they

have had on daily life in the region - that form the backbone of Anuradha Bhasin and Ghulam Nabi Azad's challenges in the Supreme Court of India. A three-judge Bench, which has heard oral arguments in the case, will sometime during the course of the coming weeks pronounce its verdict. Although, in answering the constitutional questions raised, the judges will heed to their past decisions, the case presents the court with its first real opportunity to rule decisively on the purport and reach of the right to access the Internet. The ultimate ruling, therefore, is likely to serve as a precedent of some value. And given the growing ubiquity of the Internet, and the state's increasingly whimsical use across India of blockades on the web, how the judgment goes will also doubtless have a bearing on the endurance of the constitutional promises of liberty and equality.

### Deleterious effects in Kashmir

Ms. Bhasin's arguments rest on a simple premise: that the blackout of the Internet impinges on her right to freedom of expression. In her case, the force of the communications ban was almost instantly felt. The *Kashmir Times*, a daily newspaper which she edits, which has been in regular circulation for more than five decades, went altogether unpublished between August 6 and October 10. Today, despite the partial lifting of some restrictions, with journalists hamstrung by the absence of the Internet, only a pruned version of the newspaper is published. These facts, Ms. Bhasin argues, evince how a denial of access to the web poses a direct threat on the liberties of the press.

The impact that the Internet ban has had on free expression is, however, only the tip of the iceberg. As Mr. Azad, the Leader of the



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, highlights, there are also other deleterious results that have emanated out of the measure. These include a denial of the right to health care caused by people's inability, among other things, to access government schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, and a withdrawal of education to students at different levels, occasioned by the seemingly interminable closure of institutions. What is more, the shutdown has inflicted startling economic damage on the region. Even conservative estimations released by the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry show that the State economy has suffered a loss of no less than ₹15,000 crore since the dilution of Article 370.

### Government's stand

In its defence, the government makes two primary arguments: first, it claims, that there is no obligation on it to disclose the orders through which the restrictions have been imposed; and, second, it contends that judges must grant the state substantial leeway in matters of national security; that once the executive believes on the basis of "some material" that freedom ought to be restricted, the court must not review the validity of such measures, even when those actions involve a wholesale blocking of the Internet.

On any reasonable examination, however, the state's argu-

ments fail. Its order imposing the Internet ban, we now know, was made under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. This law requires the executive, among other things, to provide a reasoned order when it directs the withdrawal of the Internet. That such a direction exists, in and of itself, must make it clear that access to the web cannot be shut out through the issuance of furtive instructions. In a democracy, orders are made to be published.

### Issue of rights

There is here, of course, an even greater principle at stake: the promise of free speech preserved in Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. As the Supreme Court has held, this guarantee contains both an inherent and an instrumental value. The first because it is important to respect every individual's equal right to personal autonomy and dignity, and the last because of the consequences of promoting free speech, that is that better dialogue stimulates a more informed polity. It was the instrumental value of speech that prompted the court, in *Sakal Papers* (1961), to hold that no policy of the state can so much as regulate the circulation of a newspaper, as any such programme will directly impinge on the right to freedom of expression.

Today, publishing a newspaper without access to the Internet is almost a Sisyphean task. Hence, much like the restrictions that were struck down in *Sakal Papers*, a blanket ban placed on the web will also transgress the guarantee of free speech. And in this case, the human costs go even further. For instance, a report in *The Hindu* ('Ground Zero' page, "In a land without Internet", December 7, 2019) shows that, with jobs already hard to come by, there has been

a staggering 80% loss of employment among start-ups in Kashmir that rely on the Internet.

Now none of this means that there can be no restrictions ever placed on the web, or that terrorism does not require counteractive actions. But what the law demands is this: that any measure taken by the state in restricting a fundamental right is necessary and proportionate to the goal that it seeks to achieve. To determine whether the limitations imposed in Kashmir meet this test, the court need not, as the state warns, perform the role of a super-executive. It merely needs to scrutinise whether a wide-ranging ban on the Internet on an entire populace is justifiable, when, even according to the government, it is only a "minuscule minority" who are likely to commit violence.

Indeed, the state has, in the past, segregated people possessed of a potential to terrorise from others, based on their registered mobile phone numbers. In these circumstances, to permit a blanket closure of the Internet, given its impact not only on free speech, but also on other rights, including on people's rights to livelihood and health, would amount to a virtual effacement of civil liberty.

Stifling the mere hint of dissent through bans on the Internet will only send us racing towards a bottomless pit. Already, as a recent report in *Live Mint* underscores, 67% of the documented cases of web shutdowns around the world last year took place in India. Should these bans be upheld, we will be entering an abyss from which there can be no return. When that happens, our Constitution, and the hallowed promises it enshrines, will be found withering by the wayside.

Suhrit Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

# A premature denouncement of the Citizenship Act

Its critics must appreciate the need to bring closure to the consequence of religious theocracy in India's neighbourhood



SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

Pinarayi Vijayan, senior leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Chief Minister of Kerala has written in *The Hindu* (Editorial page, "Time to defend India's secularism", December 18, 2019) on why he opposes the recently enacted Citizenship (Amendment) Act [CAA], 2019. He gives three reasons for his opposition to the legislation.

In order to take up and rebut these reasons, the aims and objects of this legislation passed by both Houses of Parliament by a large majority, and the historic context for the legislation need first to be made clear.

### RESPONSE

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was introduced in 2019 after long deliberation by the Joint Select Committee of Members of Parliament. A Report of the Committee was adopted by a majority of Members of Parliament and placed on the table of both Houses in 2016. But Lok Sabha elections intervened and so the Bill had to be re-introduced in December 2019.

### Ground realities

The need for this Bill arose partly because the Islamic theocratic na-

tions of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan have brutally persecuted non-Muslim minorities since 1947. This has led to a sharp fall in the proportion of the non-Muslim minorities in the total population of these countries.

Those who survived forcible conversion escaped and illegally entered India. They were Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Christians, and Parsis and they were categorised as illegal migrants. As of December 31, 2014, they numbered 31,313: Hindus (25,447), Sikhs (5807), Buddhists (2), Christians (55), and Parsis (2). Those belonging to two religions were not in this list: Muslims and Jews. A small number of Jews migrated to Israel. No Muslims or Jews came to India over the last 70 years on grounds of religious persecution.

### Political concern

Over the past 70 years, many leaders of different parties expressed concern over the appalling conditions of living of this category of illegal immigrants. Not having citizenship or passports or Aadhar cards, they could not avail themselves of any proper employment and so lived in conditions of poverty and squalor.

The first authority to express concern over this state of affairs was the Working Committee of the united Congress Party. The Committee adopted a resolution on November 25, 1947 urging citizenship and "full protection to all those non-Muslims from Pakistan who have come over to India or may do so to save their life and honour". An affirmation of this view came



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from Dr. Manmohan Singh, the then Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha, on December 18, 2003 (a video clip is available in the Parliament Library). Dr. Singh said then: "After the Partition of our country, minorities in countries like Bangladesh have faced persecution, and it is our moral obligation that if circumstances force people - these unfortunate people - to seek refuge in our country, our approach for granting citizenship to these unfortunate persons should be more liberal." The same view was expressed in writing in 2014 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by the then Chief Minister of Assam, Tarun Gogoi.

Chief Minister Vijayan thus seems not to have appreciated the historical context of the CAA and the need to bring to closure the sad consequence of religious theocracy in our neighbouring nations. Instead he advances three reasons to denounce the CAA: First, that it is *ultra vires* the Constitution of India, especially Articles 5 to 11 and also 14. Second, that it is divisive, and violative of human rights because it discriminates against Muslims. Third, that the Bharatiya Janata Party's aim is

to establish a Hindu nation and that aim underlies the CAA.

The first reason is baseless. Articles 5 to 10 have nothing to do with the CAA. Article 11 in fact empowers Parliament to bring such an amendment as the CAA. As for the CAA violating Article 14, we need to look at the letter of Article 14 but also at judgments galore of the Supreme Court of India on the interpretation of this Article.

A simple example to contradict Mr. Vijayan's contention is of a Brahmin claiming reservation in education and schools on a par with Scheduled Castes because of Article 14 guaranteeing "equality before law". The Supreme Court has repeatedly made it clear that equality before law is only for those equally placed. Here on religious persecution, the Muslims of Pakistan etc., are not similarly placed.

Mr. Vijayan further adds that "Article 14 applies not only to citizens but all persons within the territory of India." Do we know of a single example of a Muslim citizen of Afghanistan, Pakistan or Bangladesh who entered India due to religious persecution and can be identified as an illegal migrant by the official agencies to qualify for citizenship under the CAA? The Union Home Ministry, in the list prepared of this category of illegal migrants, did not discover a single such Muslim from these three countries.

It should be made clear that there are five ways a foreigner can become a citizen of India under the Citizenship Act, 1955, namely, by birth, descent, registration,

naturalisation, and incorporation of territory. The CAA, 2019 adds a country-specific exception to the naturalisation section. However, any Muslim can become an Indian citizen under the naturalisation section.

### Hindutva and Constitution

Mr. Vijayan makes a "final point", that "the agenda of Hindutva and the ultimate goal of establishing a "Hindu Nation" underlie the Citizen (Amendment) Act". Unfortunately, the present Indian Constitution cannot be amended beyond the Basic Structure of the Constitution as defined by the Supreme Court of India. So there is no need for anyone to unduly worry about it.

For persons like myself, who are committed to teaching Hindutva to our divided Hindu society (on a caste, language, and regional basis), Hindutva is already incorporated in large measure in the present Constitution. For example, the use of Sanskrit vocabulary [Article 351], official promotion of the Devanagari Script and its modified numerals [Article 343], the ban of cow slaughter [Article 48], the uniform civil code [Article 44], and faith as part of the unamendable basic structure. This is enough to usher in a Hindu Nation, because Hinduism is the only religion that formally accepts that all religions lead to God (Sarva Dharma Sama Bhava). Hence Hindutva is not contradictory to secularism.

Dr. Subramanian Swamy is a Member of Parliament and a former Union Minister of Law and Justice

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### At risk of being left out

Regarding Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), one misleading argument is that it will not affect Indian Muslims. Under the National Register of Citizens (NRC), proving citizenship will come down to production of documents, which many Indians, especially the poor and illiterate people in rural areas, may not have. If two families - one Hindu and one Muslim - thus get excluded, the Muslim family will be left more vulnerable. The Assam exercise, where a soldier who fought the Kargil war and an ex-President's relatives were left out, is an example of how such an

exercise is bound to cause unfair exclusion. Since 2014, all this government has done is ask citizens stand in lines, first to deposit notes and now to submit documents. Earlier, citizens were asked to prove that they don't have black money; now, they are being asked to show that they are not infiltrators.

D.C. DIAS,  
Taleigao, Goa

The CAA-NRC combination is no doubt against the Indian Constitution and against the vulnerable sections of our society who may not be able to produce documents. The government should have instead focused its attention on finding

solutions to issues like economic slowdown, unemployment and Non-Performing Assets in banks. Hope the nationwide protests allow better sense to prevail and make the government revoke the legislation.

TARUNPREET MALHAN,  
Ludhiana, Punjab

The main issue with the CAA concerns the Northeastern States; their composition, culture, languages, tradition, everything is at stake. Many Indians living there see migrants as a threat to their existence. The Act is possibly the result of the Assam NRC, where many long-time residents were not able to

produce sufficient documents and were rendered stateless. The Central government's rigidity has not helped matters.

RIVA SHUKLA,  
New Delhi

"If you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind" - this adage explains well the country's situation after giving a majority to the Bharatiya Janata Party. The insensibility of the 'despotic duo' to the concerns of citizens is alarming. It is shameful that entire India has to now prove that they are citizens. Ideally, the ones should be on the state to prove that we are not citizens. An NRC will not only affect the Indian

Muslims but also the political marginals across the country. Such an exercise, coupled with the CAA, will trigger a country-wide crisis and bring in its wake untold hardship and misery to the people.

M. JAMEEL AHMED,  
Mysuru

### Not in good taste

The centre-page cartoon of December 20 was not in good taste. As a neutral reader, I am hurt the paper is

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the IPL graphic on the Sports page (Dec. 20, 2019), the "additions" list in the Kings XI Punjab outfit was erroneously repeated in the list for Rajasthan Royals. The correct list for Rajasthan Royals is: Jaydev Unadkat, Robin Uthappa, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anuj Rawat, Akash Singh, Kartik Tyagi, Ishan Porel, David Miller, Oshane Thomas, Aniruddha Joshi, Andrew Tye and Tom Curran.

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publishing news and articles with a one-point agenda of faulting the ruling regime at the Centre. The demonstrations are limited to a few States and are mostly being organised by students, some of whom may not even be aware of what they are protesting against.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,  
Chennai