



Pragya refuses to move from emergency row, causes flight delay



Mixed response to land rights plan in Assam



Kohli, Rahul and Rohit power India to ODI series win against WI



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President Ashraf Ghani wins a slim majority, on track for second term

page 20



Railway unveils new signalling system

NEW DELHI The Railways will roll out its new signalling system from April 2020 onwards. It is expected to make train travel faster and safer, a senior official said. The implementation will begin with four sections of about 640 route kilometres with an estimated cost of around ₹1,810 crore.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

Jel activist from J&K dies in U.P. jail

SRINAGAR A Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) activist from Kashmir's Handwara district died in a jail in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. A police officer said the family of Bhat, a resident of Handwara's Kulangam village, was informed about his death in a jail located in Allahabad. An official said Bhat was arrested prior to the August 5 move to revoke J&K's autonomy.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGES 18 & 19

Pan-India NRC never on the table, says PM

Modi contradicts Amit Shah's statement in LS, accuses Congress and 'urban Naxals' of spreading lies

JATIN ANAND NEW DELHI

In a twist to the raging controversy over the National Register of Citizens, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared on Sunday that there had been no discussion, no talk on an NRC for India since his government had taken power in 2014.

Mr. Modi's comments fly in the face of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement in the Lok Sabha on December 9: "We are very clear that NRC will happen in this country."

Mr. Shah also said in the House, "Magar maan ke chaliye ki NRC aane wala hai" [but accept that there will be an NRCl.

'In line with SC order'

Addressing a rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan to kick off the BIP's campaign for the Delhi Assembly election, Mr. Modi, however, said the NRC was conducted only in Assam in line with the Supreme Court's order.

He attacked the Congress and "urban Naxals" for spreading "lies and rumours" about the NRC, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and detention centres for Muslims, and followed it up with an appeal to the youth to both read and read up on the NRC and the

"The NRC – what lies are being spread about it... this [the NRC] was made during



In campaign mode: PM Modi, along with BJP leaders Harsh Vardhan, Manoj Tiwari and Vijay Goel, at a rally in New Delhi on Sunday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAF

the Congress era. Were you asleep then? We didn't make it; it didn't come to Parliament, nor did it come to the [Union] Cabinet. Nor have its rules and regulations been formulated. A bogey is being created," he said, towards the middle of his one hour-

'Childish criticism'

and-forty-minute address.

Terming statements by the Congress and its allies "childish", the Prime Minister argued how a government which had succeeded in conferring land and ownership rights on the urban poor "without considering" either the religion or caste of the beneficiaries could make another law in the same session to expel them.

"These are childish statements. The Congress, parties like it and their allies... you're continuing to peddle lies? After the formation of my government, from 2014 till this day, I want to tell the 130 crore citizens of the country, there has been no discussion on the word NRC. There hasn't even been any talk [about it]. Only, after the Supreme Court said so, it [the NRC] had to be done for Assam. What are you talking about? Lies are being spread," Mr. Modi said further.

The CAA, Mr. Modi said. was not for any Indian citizen, whether Hindu or Mus-

"This has been said in Parliament... This law has no connection to the 130 crore citizens of this country... The Congress, its allies and some literate naxals living in urban areas – Urban Naxals – are spreading the rumour that all Muslims will be sent to detention centres. I am amazed that this rumour is leading even well-educated people to ask what detention centres are," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12 **CONG. REJECTS CHARGE** ▶ PAGE 12 **HUGE TURNOUT** ▶ PAGE 12 **SEE ALSO ▶** PAGE 3 **UNDOING HARMS** • EDITORIAL

With 2 more deaths, U.P. toll climbs to 18

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Two more persons, who were injured in firing during protests in Meerut on Friday against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, died on Sunday. Inspector-General of Police Alok Singh identified them as Aalim, of Meerut, and Asif, of Delhi.

The death toll in firing in Uttar Pradesh during the recent protests has mounted to 18. However, Director-General of Police O.P. Singh told The Hindu that the toll

Internet suspended

Internet services remained suspended in large parts of the State, with the police claiming that 108 persons had been arrested for "objectionable posts, rumours and messages" on social me-

The Lucknow administration has set up a panel of four officials to assess the damage to public and private property in the arson and vandalism that took place in the State capital on December 19.

This comes after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's statement that the government would "take revenge"



Police and RAF personnel on a patrol in Lucknow. • PTI

on those involved in the incidents of violence, in which over two dozen vehicles were torched, and seize and auction their property for compensation.

The Rampur district administration said it was taking steps to attach the assets of 25 people, identified as those who had vandalised public property.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visited Bijnor, where two protesters were killed in violence last week.

In Jaipur, close to two lakh people, led by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, took to the streets. Reports of protests and rallies have also come in from Tamil Nadu and Bengal.

OIC VOICES 'CONCERN' ▶ PAGE 12 **DEATHS CAUSED BY ARMS OF**

Food inflation spike transient: **RBI** Governor

RAGHUVIR SRINIVASAN VIKAS DHOOT MANOJIT SAHA

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the recent spike in food inflation looks transient but added that the central bank needed to wait for a confirmation of this. The comments come after the RBI decided to hold interest rates during the monetary policy review earlier this

month. Stating that food inflation is monitored, he told The Hindu, "At this point in time, it [food inflation] also looks transient. And going forward, it should come down, but we need some time to watch...'

On the slowdown, he said there are structural issues which need to be addressed. "We have said in our annual report that it would appear the current slowdown is cyclical. However, there are structural factors also. Without getting into categorisation..., the focus should be on steps [that] need to be taken by the fiscal and monetary authorities. There have to

countercyclical steps."

INTERVIEW

some



⁺ Police turned arsonists in U.P.: Akhilesh

The Samajwadi Party chief says innocent persons lost their lives

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW Holding the BJP government led by Yogi Adityanath responsible for the violence and loss of lives in Uttar Pradesh over protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday alleged that the police deliberately damaged public property, engaged in stone-throwing and set fire to many places, turning a peaceful protest violent.

At least 15 persons have died so far in the State.

Talking to The Hindu here, the SP chief, who has strongly spoken out against the CAA, said the State government and the officials vitiated the atmosphere, "as a result of which innocent persons lost their

"The police deliberately damaged things and set



Akhilesh Yadav

property on fire. Not just in U.P., but in West Bengal and Delhi, news is coming in that policemen themselves pelted stones, damaged things and set fire at many places," Mr. Yadav said.

'Who will compensate?' Referring to the State government's decision to seize the property of those allegedly involved in arson and vandalism at various places, Mr. Yadav asked:

"Who will compensate for the damage done by the

language" and his call for "revenge" was to blame for the escalation in violence and tense law and order situation.

Soon after the protests against the CAA turned violent in Lucknow on December 19, in which one protester died of gunshot wounds, Mr. Adityanath said "revenge" would be exacted from those involved in the arson by seizing their property and auctioning it.

He also accused the Congress, SP and Left outfits of providing patronage to the arsonists.

Mr. Yadav asked: "Is this the language one speaks in a democracy? Thok do, Badlo lo. U.P. chhor do. (Shoot them. Take revenge. Leave U.P.) Whose language is

"The more he speaks improperly, the more the offi-He said Mr. Adityanath's cials act in a wrong manner," Mr. Yaday said

SP not involved

He also dismissed the State government's allegations that his party members were involved in the violence. "No SP members were involved in violence anywhere. They have CCTV cameras everywhere and other things available. If they correctly look at CCTV footage of the people (during protests), they will find what their police were doing. You lathi-charge those who were protesting peace-

fully," Mr. Yadav said. The SP chief said his party was trying to reach out to the families of the "innocent" persons arrested over the violence and provide them legal help.

Trinamool team detained at U.P. airport

SOBHANA K. NAIR NEW DELHI

In high drama at the Lucknow airport on Sunday, a Trinamool delegation, led by former Union Minister Dinesh Trivedi was whisked away from the aircraft and detained for hours at an undisclosed location at the airport. The team had to return by an 8.30 p.m. flight without fulfilling its plan to visit the families of those killed in the protests against the Citizenship (Amend-

ment) Act in U.P. Mr. Trivedi drew parallels with the treatment of Indians during British rule. He said they were detained without any provocation. The delegation included Rajya Sabha members Nadimul Haque and Abir Ranjan Biswas and Lok Sabha member Pratima Mondal.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 13

Jharkhand election verdict today

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

Results of the Jharkhand Assembly election held in five phases are set to be declared on Monday with the ruling BJP finding itself in a spot of bother to retain power in the mineral-rich State.

In the backdrop of exit

polls giving marginal advantage to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led Opposition alliance in a close contest, counting will take place across 24 districts. The postal ballots will be counted first and then the EVMs will be brought in. Paper slips generated by the VVPATs

will also be counted.

The overall voter turnout in this Assembly poll was estimated at 65.23% compared to 66.53% in 2014. The counting will decide victors among 1,216 candidates, in-

DETAILS ON) PAGE 12

'Nobody knows where the bullet came from'

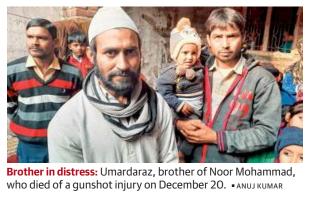
Muzaffarnagar mourns Noor who died of a bullet injury during the anti-CAA protest

ANUJ KUMAR

MUZAFFARNAGAR The wailing of women is heard from a distance. As one steps closer the smell of cooking fills the air in front of Noor Mohammed's dilapidated house in what is ironically called Nayi Abadi in Muzaffarnagar's Khalapar

Guests have come to mourn Noor who died of a gunshot injury on December 20, when the protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act turned violent, leaving one dead and several injured. Noor was buried on Saturday evening at Daurala, a town between Muzaffarnagar and Meerut.

According to Noor's elder brother Umardaraz, the police thought if the body was brought to Muzaffarnagar, it would create a law and order



Nobody knows where the bullet came from.

Umardaraz, who was part of the protest, says gunshots were fired after the local MP and Union Minister Sanjeev Baliyan arrived with his supporters at Mahavir Chowk. "He pushed the police to take action against the peaceful protesters," Umar-

daraz, like many others around him, alleges. "We want to fight back but we know it is a lost battle. Only God is with us now," says Umardaraz. Mr. Baliyan could not be reached for comment.

The youngest of three brothers, Noor used to earn ₹400 to 500 a day by driving private vehicles. "He has left

behind a year-and-a-half old daughter, and a wife who is six months' pregnant. Who will fight his case?" asks Umardaraz who works as a cook at weddings. "We haven't lodged any complaint. There is pressure from the police not to talk about the case," he says. Salman Sayeed, Congress

leader, whose four cars were also allegedly burnt down by the mob, said the administration is "one-sided." "The aim is to ruin the Muslims financially," he says. A local lawyer requesting

anonymity says the local MP was trying to communalise what was essentially an anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protest. "It seems like completing the unfinished agenda of the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013."

to official According

sources, FIRs have been registered against 258 named and 6,000 unnamed persons. Around 57 shops have been sealed by the district administration.

SSP denies charges

Abhishek Yadav, SSP, Muzaf-

farnagar denies all the charg-

"These are all allegations. There is nothing arbitrary in our action. We are not working under anybody's pressure. We were up against a huge mob. We have photographic and video evidence against people who have been charged. Those who were detained on suspicion are being released. We are still investigating what led to Noor's death. If anybody comes up with a complaint, we will surely register an

FIR," he says.

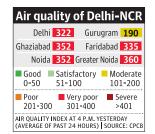


DU invites suggestions for admission process

The Delhi University has invited suggestions for strengthening its admission process and also to make it more student-friendly on the institute's website. The university approved the formation of an admission branch to focus on admissions-related issues earlier this year. Among areas for suggestions, the university officials have asked for inputs regarding rationalising the cut-off for merit-based admissions to control over or under admissions.

MBA graduate arrested for stalking women

A 31-year-old MBA graduate has been arrested for allegedly stalking and sexually harassing women, the police said on Sunday. A resident of Gurugram's Acharyapuri, the accused works as a facility manager at ABW Tower here, they said.



Talk: Mani Kaul Memorial Lecture on the topic "The Multiple Faces of India's Cinemas", will be delivered by Aruna Vasudev at Gulmohar Hall, In dia Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Talk: Lecture on "Human Origin, Health and Disease: Contemporary and Ancient DNA Perspectives" by Prof. K. Thangaraj, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR - Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad at Seminar Rooms I, II & III, Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre (IIC), 6.30 p.m

Dance: "Navutsav" will feature a sarod recital by Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash. This will be followed by a Kathak performance by Pt. Rajendra Gangani at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 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

Exhibition: 92nd Annual All India Craft Society (AIFACS), 1 Rafi Marg, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column

Country facing 'three-pronged attack' from Modi govt.: Brinda

She laments lack of NHRC intervention in 'open violation' of rights during clampdown

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

CPI(M) Politburo Member Brinda Karat on Sunday said the country is facing a "three-pronged Trishul attack" - amended Citizenship Act (CAA), National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) - from the Narendra Modi-led government.

Speaking at a peaceful assembly of anti-CAA protesters at Central Park in Connaught Place here, Ms. Karat said that the ruling government at the Centre does not respect the Constitution.

"You [Centre] are attacking at the heart of the India," Ms. Karat said, while lamenting the lack of intervention of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in "open violation" of human rights during the police clampdown of anti-CAA protesters, especially in Uttar Pradesh.

Peaceful assembly

The assembly, held under the humongous national flag installed at the park, was called by various civil society groups through social media. It saw the participation of a large number of people from



CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat along with members from various civil society groups staging a peaceful protest at Central Park in Connaught Place on Sunday. • PTI

all walks of life, including activists, teachers, college students and children.

Rajesh, a social activist and ex-Jamia Millia Islamia student, who came to the gathering with his child said, 'We don't want anyone to touch the Constitution at all. NRC and CAA are a few symptoms of systematic dismantling Constitution."

Nodding towards his son, Mr. Rajesh said, "He seems rather disappointed. He was expecting people to shout slogans. But this gathering is all about peaceful protest. Something different.'

Asees, who was at the afternoon assembly holding a placard that read 'Disperse CAA, not Crowds' said, "I hope the government realises the country does not want this [CAA]".

She questioned the government's decision to select neighbouring countries under the CAA and leaving out prosecuted minorities from Sri Lanka and Myanmar. She said this will not pass the test of reasonable classification under Article 14 of the Constitution

A student at the National University of Juridical Scienc-

Second year law student es (NUJS) Kolkata, Ms. Asses said she had also participated in the anti-CAA protest in Kolkata. Despite thousands of people joining it, no one was detained, she added.

'Protests getting bigger'

Bharat Kumar, a second year law student at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, said there was a protest at his college a few days ago which was interrupted by hooligans. However, the protests are getting bigger day by day and could escalate to a level similar to that of the freedom struggle, he

Voices from Northeast being ignored, claim protesters

They said their fight is for the rights of indigenous people

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A large group of people from the Northeast gathered at Jantar Mantar on Sunday claiming that the protests against the amended Citizenship Act have been given a Hindu-Muslim colour and that the voices from their region, "which were fighting for the rights of indigenous people", were being ignored.

The protesters, including students and civil society members, said they were deeply hurt and distressed by the police 'brutality against those protesting against the CAA, but said that "their protest is about their rights".

Nyajeel Raji, a student, said that the government should have talked to them before introducing the Act. "We are against illegal immigration as we have suffered it for decades... The government needs to explain how it plans to implement the law... it cannot ask for documents from people who have been living in the country for decades," said Ms. Raji.

"We sympathise with the students of Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim

People from Northeast staging a protest against the amended Citizenship Act at Jantar Mantar on Sunday. • R.V. MOORTHY protest is also about the de-University... we respect their protest. It does not mographic challenges conmatter if you are a Hindu or fronting the Northeast," he

a Muslim, the CAA is going to trigger a massive demographic change in the Northeast," said Kangkiling, a student. Ningthem Meitei, 23,

said the movement against the CAA started from Assam but "it has been hijacked... We are not being represented".

Condemn violence

"We condemn the violence against students and unarmed protesters. We stand with all those protesting against the CAA. But our added.

For the people from Northeastern States, the issue of CAA goes beyond Hindu and Muslim, said Denis, 25. "In Tripura, indigenous people account for only 30% of the population. People from other regions and neighbouring countries are migrating to the State," he added.

The protesters also demanded that the police release RTI activist Akhil Gogoi and others who were arrested for demonstrating

Hundreds gather at Nizamuddin to protest against citizenship law

Most important fight is to save the country: Umar Khalid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Holding a placard saying, "when injustice becomes law, resistance becomes a duty", 22-year-old Khalida heard the speakers at a public meeting here explain the implications of the amended citizenship law and the proposed all-India NRC.

Khalida was among the hundreds of people who gathered at the Musafir Khana Park in Nizamuddin Basti on Sunday to hear what could be the impact of the CAA and the NRC.

"We will follow the path of Mahatma Gandhi. We wiii never use violence but will peacefully oppose the CAA and NRC,"the student said.



Demanding withdrawal of CAA, protesters staging a demonstration at Nizamuddin on Sunday. •PTI

Among those explaining the implications of the CAA was former JNU student Umar Khalid, who said the most important fight right now was to save the country. "No one can scare the peopeople out on the streets,"

Mr Khalid said adding-"How do we prove our loyalty to our own country? The Indian Muslims are not accidental Muslims but are Indian Muslims by choice. It is the attempt of the governple of India. I salute all the ment to distract people from economic issues."

Gurugram sees demonstrations in support of Act

Around half-a-dozen such programmes were held across the Millennium City

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Demonstrations and seminars were held at many places across the city on Sunday in support of the amended Citizenship Act and the National Register of Citizens.

Leading a march in Old Gurugram in support of CAA and NRC, Manay Nav Nirman Sena convener Sumit Sharma said the Opposition was misleading the nation on the issues. He said that CAA was not aimed at taking away anyone's citizenship, but it was a law to grant citizenship. He also supported the need to implement NRC to identify the infiltrators and throw them

Taking a dig at those opposing the law, Mr. Sharma



Manay Nay Nirman Sena workers taking out a march in support of CAA and NRC at Sadar Bazar in Gurugram on Sunday afternoon. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

said that most of them did not even know what CAA is. Holding placards expressing support for CAA and NRC, the demonstrators, amid chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", took out a march

starting from Agarwal Dharmshala Chowk passing through the congested Sadar Bazar and the busy Old Railway Road. Accompanied by a posse of policemen, the demonstrators

starting point. Shankhnad Similarly,

dispersed after reaching the

Foundation, a non-government organisation, organised a march in support of CAA and NRC from Palam Vihar Vyapar Kendra to Rezang La War Memorial. The march saw participation of several local residents, including children.

Seminar on CAA

Similarly, Sanyunkt Hindu Sangharsh Samiti held a seminar to create awareness on CAA and discuss the current situation in the country. The seminar was held at Vivekanand Global School in Sector 7 Extension.

Around half-a-dozen such programmes were held across the city, CID sources said.

Jamia remains the cradle of Gandhi's ideals

True to the dream of its founding fathers, the institution has raised its voice at all critical junctures

NISHAT ZAIDI

s the image of a hijab-clad student pointing her finger at a baton-wielding policeman emerged out of Jamia to shake the conscience of the youth across the country and the world, the institution's bond with its history was rejuvenated. Halide Edip Adivar, a Turkish intellectual who attended the foundation ceremony of Jamia's building after the university shifted its campus from Karol Bagh to Okhla in 1935, recorded her impressions thus:

"The last I saw of Jamia was when its members assembled outside Delhi to lay the foundation stone of their new building. [The students] behaved well...but after a while they became fidgety and began to talk... A little girl of seven restored order. She was a puny creature with sharp black eyes. Her eyes glared and certain ribs felt her sharp elbows stuck into them. She seemed to me a symbol of the modern Indian woman, asserting her rights by proving her ability to make her men

Centenary year

Having celebrated 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi in 2019, Jamia Millia Islamia or the National Muslim University, "the lusty child of non-cooperation Gandhian movement" as Jawaharlal Nehru termed it, has been preparing to celebrate its centenary year in a grand way in 2020. It was exactly a century ago when disenchanted by the pro-British, loyalist stance of Aligarh intellectuals, a handful of its teachers and students responded to Gandhi's call for Khila-



Citizenship Act at Jamia Millia Islamia on December 15. • REUTERS

fat and Non-Cooperation and breaking away from their alma mater started a small educational institution at Aligarh. Prominent among them were Maulana Mehmud Hasan, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, and Abdul Majeed Khwaja.

In contrast to the clerical model of the universities established under the patronage of the colonial regime, which, as scholars like Suresh Chandra Ghosh, Saikat Majumdar and others have pointed out, aimed more at serving the administrative needs of the Empire than acting as cradles of critical thinking, Mahmud Hasan's address at the opening ceremony of Jamia (October 29, 1920)

COMMENT

underscored the necessity of keeping Muslim education free from external control. This, he believed, was a prerequisite for insulating the institution from the "pernicious alien influences in our ideas and beliefs, our morals and action, our character and conduct".

Setting aside the lure of office, power or authority, Jamia's benefactors like M.A. Ansari, Zakir Husain, M. Mujeeb and Abid Husain chartered a course for the institution that was consistent with Gandhi's vision. Gandhi continued to offer unstinted support to Jamia saying, "The Jamia has to run. If you are worried about its finances, I will go about with a begging bowl." He said, "When I come to Jamia, I feel I have come In these hundred years, the in-

stitution has seen a glorious journey of forbearance, camaraderie, enlightenment and an unflinching commitment to the ideals of plural nationhood and composite culture. Built "stone by stone and sacrifice by sacrifice" (Sarojini Naidu), the raison d'être of Jamia Millia Islamia is best summed up by Professor Mohammad Mujeeb: "We agreed that Muslim or non-Muslim, our student should learn to represent the values of his religion, of his moral and cultural tradition, that he should make him-

Jamia's tarana (university song) written by Khaliq Siddiqui iterates its ideals: Yahan pe shamme hidayat hai sirf apna zamir Yahan pe Qibla-i-iman Kaaba-i-dil hai. [Our conscience is our only guiding light. The Kaaba of our heart, only direction to which we turn our faith.]

self a useful citizen..." Thus aspiring towards harmonious nationhood, Jamia held out a stern opposition to colonial structures of power. The Nation of Lahore called it "Al-Azhar of India". Jamia became emblematic of a philosophy of education that was inherently nationalistic in character, drawing its strength from the idea of communal peace and religious understanding. Jamia offered education right from the nursery to higher levels. Wardha Scheme of education was implemented in Iamia School.

Calling the institution "a laboratory for composite India", scholar Dr. Laurence Gautier writes, "This institution, born under the dual influence of the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movements, constituted for its members a 'laboratory' for the nation. Through their educational experiments and constructive work à la Gandhi, Jamia teachers and students sought to lay the ground for an independence that would be 'meaningful' not only for Muslims but for the entire nation. In so doing, Jamia members claimed the right for Muslims to be recognised as 'unhyphenated Indians', able

to speak for the nation."

True to the dream of its founding fathers, Jamia Millia Islamia has raised its voice at all critical junctures. During the British Raj, it participated in anti-colonial struggles like Bardoli Satyagraha, popularised Gandhian ideals, and in the chaos that preceded and succeeded the Partition of the nation, the institution remained committed to peace, organising relief for victims. Not surprisingly, the institution has always been in the eye of the storm. Jamia's nationalist stance alienated radical Muslims who time and again castigated its intellectual leadership for being prejudicial to Islam and turning the institution into a Hin-

du stronghold. Conversely, the political leadership of Congress regimes too has not been very kind towards Jamia as is evident from the financial crisis that Jamia continues to suffer in Independent India. While Aligarh Muslim University was recognised as one of the first three Central Universities in independent India in 1951, Jamia's struggles continued till 1988 when it became a Central University by an Act of Parliament.

The university has withstood all financial, political and social challenges in the past, braved all assaults on its existence and upheld the ideals of peace and truth. Today, Jamia is one of the premier Central Universities. Its highly reputed centres like Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Dr. K.R. Naravanan Centre for Dalit and Minority Studies, Centre for Comparative Religions and Civilizations, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, AJK Mass Communication Research Centre and a large number of departments and faculties offer a range of curricular programmes. It is currently counted among the top universities in India; its artists, writers, poets and scholars have consistently contributed to the intellectual life of the nation. Jamia's Dr. Zakir Husain Library boasts state-of art facilities.

The Jamia campus, which expanded under the leadership of Professor Mushirul Hasan, bears signs of its progressive ethos and its intellectual commitment with gates, buildings, gardens, and even benches bearing names like Qurratulain Hyder, Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Rabindranath Tagore, Mir Anis among others.

On the fateful night of December 15, when the police barged into the Jamia library and brutally thrashed the students studying there, maining some of them, the shocked Jamia biradari was once again reminded of Gandhi's words from the speech he gave when he first visited the Okhla campus: "I believe that those who gave up their studies at the government institutions did a great service to the country... I am happy that you are trying your utmost to keep the flag flying. You number is small, but the world never overflowed with good and true men. I ask you not to worry yourselves about the smallness of the number, but to remember that however few you may be, the freedom of the country depends on vou..."

Nishat Zaidi is professor and Head, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia.

THE HINDU DELINI
MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2019

Modi accuses Opposition of 'selfishness, politics' over CAA

PM pulls up AAP govt. for water woes; advises youth to read up on citizenship law

<u>JATIN</u> ANAND

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed India's unity in diversity at a rally here on Sunday to kick-start the BJP's campaign for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections.

At the 'Dhanyawad Rally' in Ramlila Maidan, which is located at the intersection of Lutyens' Delhi and the Walled City – just a few kilometres from Daryaganj where a violent confrontation between anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protesters and the police had erupted on Friday – Mr. Modi attacked both the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress on Delhi-related issues without naming either.

He also spoke in favour of the police and said that the force had suffered the brunt of protest-related violence across the country. He, however, did not make any direct reference either to the student-led protests or any incident related to a particular university.

The PM also chose to make an appeal to the youth of the country to read the CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

PM Modi accused both the Congress and AAP of going "to any extent for their selfishness and politics" in relation to CAA protests.

Unauthorised colonies

"This venue has borne witness to many significant developments in its history... here I am happy that I and the BJP are able to get an opportunity to better the lives of over 40 lakh people in Delhi. Words such as 'unbulldozer, authorised. slums', which are often associated with these colonies, need to end," Mr. Modi said, terming the residents of 1,731 unauthorised colonies



A man wears a mask of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a BJP rally at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on Sunday. • shiv kumar pushpakar

"Today, you have gotten complete ownership of your homes, which are the biggest assets you have. Those who attempted to put stumbling blocks in our way [for this project] should bear this in mind... Elections came and went but the promise remained the same," he said.

Those who wanted to "mislead" the residents of unauthorised colonies had "shamelessly" talked about fixing boundaries at properties in such settlements by 2021, he said, adding that this was the time when he decided "this farce cannot be allowed to continue".

With the help of technology, within a short period of time, the boundaries of over 1,700 colonies were delineated and the maps of more than 1,200 of these have been put up on the web, the Prime Minister said.

"Letting problems linger on is not our nature; it is not our training nor is it our habit. The people whom you had turned to for help were helping their rich industrial friends construct 2,000 bungalows in the posh parts of

your city... Previous governments gave the residents of rich colonies concessions but did nothing for your houses," he said.

Blocks in my way: PM

"They tried to create stumbling blocks in my way whenever I tried to seek a solution; they thought they would succeed but this is Modi. Their VIPs may be different but for me, you, the poor are the real VIPs," he said further.

Mr. Modi then blamed "highly placed" individuals in AAP of spreading "rumours" during the recent anti-CAA protests.

"You must have heard the statements that were made, the way people were instigated, the provocative things said. These people have conspired to push not only Delhi but many cities across the country into an atmosphere of chaos and fear. There have been attacks on schoolbuses, passenger buses, trains, people's vehicles have been burnt, government properties have been damaged... their politics tells

the truth," he said

"I want to tell such people that if you want to pelt stones then pelt them at Modi, if you want to burn something, burn an effigy of Modi... do not harm any poor person's property. What will you get by beating a poor auto driver or a bus driver? What will you get by injuring the policemen on whom you are pelting stones?" he added.

Mr. Modi also demanded to know why the Delhi government had not implemented Centre-sponsored schemes. He also attacked the AAP government for the quality of potable water in the Capital. "The people who were making excuses in the name of buses have paralysed public transport in Delhi... The Delhi government is not even concerned about the biggest problem - the problem of water. The government claims that clean water is available everywhere, but the truth is that today the maximum numbers of water purifiers i.e. water purifying machine is sold in the country," he said.

Thousands of armed officers keep tight vigil at Prime Minister's rally

People wearing black mufflers barred from entering venue

SAURABH TRIVEDI

Central Delhi was brought under ground-to-air security cover with thousands of armed personnel keeping a tight vigil for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally at Ramlila Maidan on Sunday.

Fearing untoward incidents or entry of protesters, all roads leading to Old Delhi were blocked. Security personnel did not allow anyone wearing a black muffler or scarf to enter the rally.

Even the entry passes issued to journalists and BJP workers with 'All-Area Access' were withdrawn at the last moment and new passes with restricted access were issued.

"We have strict instructions from our superiors to be vigilant and thoroughly check every visitor entering the ground. Policemen in plainclothes were deployed among the crowd to keep watch on miscreants," said a police officer. Minutes be-



Minutes before PM's arrival at the ground, a helicopter making rounds over the

fore the Prime Minister's arrival at the rally ground, a helicopter made several rounds over the venue and adjoining areas. Policemen were deployed in all high-rises near the maidan and windows facing the venue.

An officer said due to ongoing protests across the city against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, security had to be further increased. On Friday, Delhi Gate, which is located near Ramlila Maidan had witnessed violence during a protest against the Act.

"All roads towards Daryaganj from Ramlila Maidan remained blocked till the time visitors left the rally venue. We took all precautions to prevent any confrontation of locals with visitors. The rally ended peacefully," said the officer.

Even the shops located on the road taken by Mr. Modi to reach Ramlila Maidan were shut by the police for security reasons. A senior officer said 20 companies of outside force were deployed across the city. Each company has 70-80 personnel.

"Twenty DCP-rank officials were handling security. As many as 1,000 personnel from the local police, antidrone teams and NSG commandos were also deployed," the official said.

The buses ferrying visitors to the rally from across Delhi-NCR caused major traffic congestion on DDU Marg. Normal traffic resumed by 4 p.m., said a traffic police personnel.

'People protesting Act misled'

Muslim residents need not worry, say those present at rally

SIDHARTH RAVI NEW DELHI

Not everyone at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally at Ramlila Maidan on Sunday knew what the amended Citizenship Act entailed but everyone *The Hindu* spoke to believed that people participating in the ongoing protests against the law had been misled and falsely instigated.

"It is all a conspiracy," said Prem Prijaprati, who hails from Mathura. "The protests are being orchestrated by jihadists and will be resolved quickly. And if they don't, we are not afraid."

Chants of "shoot the traitors" were heard among

small groups at the rally along with versions of 'Azadi' sloganeering, which came into the spotlight at the Jawaharlal Nehru University protests in 2016. Sixtyfour-year-old Lal Sahib Mishra dismissed concerns of a nationwide NRC, being opposed by the protesters, stating that the proposal had come to Parliament yet. "It will not matter if you do not have a birth certificate. My details in the village register will be enough. Those who are citizens are already in the NRC," he believed.

BJP supporters at the rally said Muslim residents of the country had nothing to worry about. "All those who are citizens of the country, who have been here from before, they have no reason to fear. This Act is not even for Muslims living here," claimed Ramesh Chand, a resident of Janakpuri. Others stressed that the protests against the Act should not have turned violent. "Whatever your concern is, place it before your local MP, let the case be heard. What is the sense in rioting?" said Nehal Kumar, a resident of Rohini.

The Act itself received widespread support among the attendees. "Where else will Hindus go if not come back to their country?" said Mr. Mishra, echoing the view of several others.

'People were expecting registry to start today'

STAFF REPORTER

Reacting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at Ramlila Maidan on Sunday, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the BJP has cheated 40 lakh people living in unauthorised colonies as they were hoping to get registry today "but nothing happened".

"The rally was to mark the passing of the Bill to ensure the regularisation of unauthorised colonies. For the past several weeks, the BJP had been talking about giving permanent registry to at least 100 residents of such colonies at Sunday's rally, but not a single person was given a permanent registry," Mr. Sisodia said.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted: "What happened to the registry? People living in unauthorised colonies have been cheated again... they expected the registry to start today."

"Earlier, the Congress used to make false promises, now the BJP is doing the same. But don't worry. We got the development works done in unauthorised colonies, now we will also get the registry done," he added.

Talking about Mr. Modi's comments on the quality of water in the city, Mr. Sisodia said: "We are happy that the PM is concerned about the people of Delhi. He said before the formation of the AAP government in Delhi, only 53% of the colonies used to get water through pipelines, but today [after five years], 93% of the colonies have piped water connections, and clean drinking water has reached across the city."

He pointed out that the PM did not comment on Delhi's 24-hour power availability or its education and health systems.

When push comes to shove

Promise of granting ownership rights to residents of unauthorised colonies and rehabilitation of slum clusters are on the BJP's bucket list before Assembly polls. But what transpires need to be looked into

SHINJINI GHOSH

"VIPs".

Housing, mainly for the urban poor, has emerged as a major poll plank in the Capital with Assembly elections round the corner. Beginning with the promise of granting ownership rights to lakhs of residents of 1,731 unauthorised colonies in November and later connected to the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre's project related to the in situ rehabilitation of slum clusters in Delhi, both projects are a part of a large push towards the government's "housing for all"

According to the BJP insiders, both schemes are symbolic of the party's localised poll slogan 'Ek Vote, Teen Sarkar' (One Vote, Three Governments) for the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls during which it will seek to garner the electorate's support in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ability for governance to return to power in the Capital after a gap of close to three decades.

At public meetings, the party has already begun propagating the benefits of welfare schemes that the citizens are likely to get – in a comparatively shorter period of time – if the same party is in power at the Centre, the State and municipal levels of governance and in-charge of administration.

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister of State (independent charge) Hardeep Singh Puri has said the Centre took up the project of delineating boundaries of the 1,731 colonies after the Delhi government delayed the work for 11 years. Mr. Puri has said in several public appearances and in media interviews, including to *The Hindu*, that the Delhi government had asked for two more years to complete the process

Speaking to reporters earlier the purpose of GIS mapping can this month, Mr. Puri said the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is expected to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "vision" of providing housing to all the purpose of GIS mapping can be contacted by stakeholders. Once the GIS mapping is done, the ID will be sent to the applicant, who can then continue with the rest of the procedure," a senior

TRACKING THE OUTCOME Unauthorised colonies In situ rehabilita

Unauthorised colonies

Number 1,731

Projected number of people to get ownership rights

Total number Over of registrations (till Dec. 20) 18,000

In situ rehabilitation

Number 32

Number 32

Number 18

Clusters is under way

under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) by 2020 - well in advance of its initial deadline of the year 2022.

Process begins

While the application portal for grant of ownership rights was launched on December 16, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the designated nodal agency for the project in Delhi, has received over 18,000 registrations as of Friday.

Senior DDA officials said that after registration on the portal, the applicants are required to obtain their respective geo coordinates. "Once applicants log into the system after filling up the basic details, they are required to provide the respective geo-coordinates. Agencies engaged by the DDA for the purpose of GIS mapping can be contacted by stakeholders. Once the GIS mapping is done, the ID will be sent to the applicant, who can then continue with the

DDA official explained.

DDA official explained.

DDA Vice-Chairman Tarun Kapoor said: "We are ready with everything and now it is up to the people to come forth and register. The main challenge is to get the system in place which is now running. Completing the entire application form can be time consuming as people have to upload relevant documents apart from the coordinate maps."

"Once we start receiving complete applications, we will process the same immediately. We are hopeful that the process of granting ownership rights will begin very soon," Mr. Kapoor added.

The urban body has also completed delineation of boundaries in all 1,731 unauthorised colonies and maps for around 1,300 are available in the public domain. Residents of unauthorised colonies who register for ownership rights are likely to be granted rights within 180 days pending relevant verification processes by the land owning agency.

A total of 1,797 colonies had been identified in 2008, but the current grant of rights excludes 66 colonies deemed "affluent" at that time plus three added later (Sainik Farms, Anant Ram Dairy and Mahendru Enclave). The Delhi government had demanded these affluent colonies be included in the process now. Mr. Puri has said these colonies would be taken up later, as the rates to be charged for them would be different.

In order to facilitate the process, a Bill - the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies) Act, 2019 - was passed in the recently-concluded session of Parliament allowing applicants to use general power of attorney, will, agreement to sale, payment and possession documents to register their properties.

In situ rehabilitation

The DDA has also undertaken in situ rehabilitation projects in JJ clusters across the city. Under the first two phases, officials said, 32 clusters were considered for a total of 18 projects, which includes clusters in Haiderpur, Kalkaji, Kohat Enclave, Moti Bagh, Dilshad Garden, Vasant Vihar and Kirti Nagar.

DDA Housing Commissioner Rajiv Gandhi said: "Tenders for at least five of the 18 projects will be invited in December itself so that work can start. A model similar to that of the Kathputli colony will be followed where residents will be rehabilitated temporarily till the completion of development work." Mr. Gandhi also added that survey of another 160 clusters is currently under way.

"A PPP model will be followed where 60% of the land has to be kept for the in situ rehabilitation while the remaining 40% will be the remunerative component, which means that the developer can utilise the area as per the land use norms," explained Mr. Gandhi. (With inputs from Damini Nath)

PM lead a 'betrayal rally', says Congress

BJP, AAP governments are anti-people: Subhash Chopra

 $\underset{\text{NEW DELHI}}{\underline{\textbf{SPEC}}} \textbf{IAL CORRESPONDENT}$

Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra called Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally at Ramlila Maidan on Sunday a "betrayal rally" as thousands gathered at the venue were told only lies.

"The BJP was supposed to give ownership rights to those living in unauthorised colonies but it has cheated over 40 lakh people as it did not give registry to any of them," he said.

Addressing a rally at north-west Delhi's Narela

and south Delhi's Jaitpur against the BJP and the AAP governments' "anti-people and destructive policies", Mr. Chopra said both the governments have made only hollow promises people.

'Shops will face sealing'

"The BJP government's notification regarding regularisation has created fear among the people. If Section 7A in the notification is enforced, over 700 unauthorised colonies will go out of the purview of regularisation and small shops and

and south Delhi's Jaitpur commercial establishments against the BJP and the AAP will face sealing," he said.

The Congress said a majority of those living in unauthorised colonies hail from Poorvanchal and that the BJP and the AAP governments were conspiring to uproot these people through a "calculated deception".

a "calculated deception".

The Centre has given a blanket licence to the DDA to take lakhs of rupees from those living in these colonies, the party said, adding that people should not believe the government until they get registry papers.



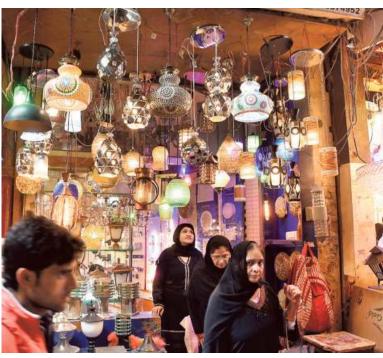




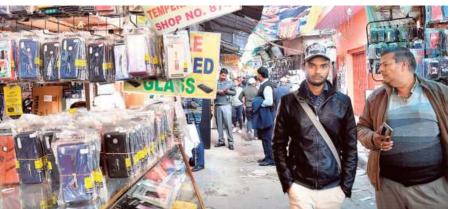
Markets across the city are packed with consumers braving the winter in the hunt for bargains







1	2	3	1,2 and 3: Shoppers in Sarojini Nagar Market						
4	ı	5	 1,2 and 3: Shoppers in Sarojini Nagar Market 4 and 5: Sadar Bazar 6 and 7: Lajpat Rai Market 8: Bhagirath Palace Market in Chandni Chowk 						
6 7		8	PHOTOS BY: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA						





DELHI

MONDAY, DEC. 23 RISE 07:10 SET 17:30 RISE 04:00 SET 15:17

TUESDAY, DEC. 24 RISE 07:11 SET 17:31

► RISE 05:04 SET 16:01 WEDNESDAY, DEC. 25

RISE 07:11 SET 17:31

□ RISE 06:07 SET 16:50

Delhi Weather max min 15 07 Delhi City Safdarjang 15 07

Delhi Palam Today 16°C Moderate fog will prevail. Dense fog will prevail in pockets. A partly cloudy sky lies ahead.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 17°C Moderate fog will prevail during chilly morning. Day will be cool with a partly cloudy

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IN BRIEF

Man wanted in 15 cases of ATM theft arrested

NEW DELHI A 27-year-old man, who was wanted in 15 cases of looting ATMs in different States, has been arrested from south Delhi, the police said on Sunday, Wakil, a resident of Palwal district in Haryana, was absconding for the past one-and-a-half years, they said, adding that he was carrying a reward of ₹50,000 – ₹25,000 from U.P. Police and ₹25,000 from M.P. Police - on his arrest. He was held on Friday following a tip-off, said

DCP (Special Cell).

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When a celebration could easily turn into a tragedy

Delhi Fire Service officials say they do not know how many banquet halls are operating illegally in the city and whether the establishments have taken adequate fire safety measures

SAURABH TRIVEDI

anquet halls in Delhi are openly flouting fire safety norms and seem to have not learnt any lessons from the massive fire in Anaj Mandi that claimed 44 lives earlier this month.

An official with the Delhi Fire Service (DFS) said they do not have an estimate of the number of unauthorised banquet halls operating in the city as it is not their job to check. We only issue No Objection Certificates (NOC) in cases that are referred to us by the civic agencies, which have the power to issue licences, said the officer, adding that banquets halls operating without an NOC are only detected when a fire incident happens.

"All assembly buildings, which include banquet halls, require an NOC from the fire department. There is a list of buildings that are covered under Rule 27 of DFS, 2010," said Atul Garg, DFS director.

Long checklist

The checklist for fire safety clearance for banquet halls is a long one. All fire safety equipment must be in working condition. Any deviation in construction has to be verified by the sanctioned agency. An automatic sprinkler system and a smoke management system has to be installed. A public address system is mandatory in the lifts, which should also have a speaker/telephone. There are many more rules that have to followed before an NOC is issued.

"After going through the long checklist, the NOC is issued for a pe-



Officials say many banquet halls are flouting licence norms by concealing

riod of three years. We always respond to the concerns raised by the civic agencies in terms of violation of fire safety norms in any building," said another fire official.

Banquet halls, which are used for marriages and other functions, are flouting licence norms by concealing their operations. "We have formed a team to randomly check fire safety clearances of various hotels and banquet halls. The report will be compiled soon," he added.

Under the Master Plan of Delhi 2021, banquet halls are permissible

in "industrial and commercial areas, including notified commercial streets under mixed-use regulations." A municipal official said that such facilities require an NOC from the fire department only if they have

an area of over 50 square metres. The halls also have to ensure space for adequate parking. While some have arranged for valet facilities, others are using civic parking facilities and paying a fee the the municipality. The MPD-2021 calls for parking space for three cars for ev-

ery 100 square metres. Such facilities also have to follow various other building norms and ensure proper waste disposal.

Staff of banquet halls in Mayapuri said that the establishments have taken various fire safety precautions.

At Grand Dreams Nouveau, the employees pointed to the separate entry and fire exit gates in every hall, and the availability of fire fighting equipment such as extinguishers. At the Clay Grand, which stands between factories, the staff said that a water sprinkler system had been installed throughout the building, and an NOC had been received. Most of them argued that tent houses were at greater risk of fire due to excessive use of synthetic material.

While some had arranged valet facilities to ensure adequate parking, others used the MCD's parking facilities to meet their requirements and paid the civic body a fees for the same. Despite this, parking in the area becomes difficult with several banquet halls on the road, and not everyone sticking to the prescribed

Lakhs join Congress rally in Jaipur

Markets remain closed, public transport grounded, mobile Internet suspended

MOHAMMED IQBAL

A large number of people, led by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, took out a massive march on the roads of Jaipur on Sunday with the demand for withdrawal of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and pledged to oppose the National Register of Citizens. Members of the Congress and several political parties as well as activists and common people of all communities participated in the march, called the 'Samvidhan Bachao Rally'.

Markets remained closed, mobile Internet services were suspended, public transport was grounded, traffic was diverted to alternative routes and elaborate security arrangements were made in the capital city. The participants, including women, carried the national Tricolour and banners and placards with slogans against CAA and

Mr. Gehlot affirmed that the amended citizenship law was not only against the Constitution, but it also formed part of an agenda of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to make India a 'Hindu Rashtra'. "The Rajasthan government will neither implement the CAA, nor will it comply with the Centre's directive to initiate the process for NRC,"

Besides Mr. Gehlot, leaders of the CPI, the CPI(M), the



Aam Aadmi Party, the Samajwadi Party, the Janata Dal (Secular) and the Rashtriya Lok Dal also addressed the rally. The speakers included Loktantrik Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav, RLD leader Jayant Chaudhary and Jamaat-e-Islami Hind State president Mohammed

According to police sources, nearly 3 lakh people attended the march, which covered a distance of about three kilometres between the iconic Albert Hall and Mahatma Gandhi Circle.

'Undeclared emergency'

While demanding an immediate repeal of CAA, Mr. Gehlot said the violence during the agitation against the amended legislation had taken place only in the BJP-

ruled States. "Lakhs of people gathered at places like Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad, but nothing untoward happened there. What does it indicate?" he asked.

Separately, Mr. Gehlot took strong exception to Prime Minister Narendra Modi taking his name at a rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan while claiming that he had written to the Home Ministry during his previous term for giving citizenship to Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan. "What was wrong in writing a letter? Why is Mr. Modi misleading the country in my name?"

Mr. Gehlot asked. While Deputy CM Sachin Pilot said the BJP-led government at the Centre was not interested in addressing the real challenges of economic slump, Mr. Sharad Yadav said the nation was passing through a difficult phase and there was an undeclared emergency. Social activist Aruna Roy said the people's struggle would not stop until the law was withdrawn.

'CM created fear'

Later, Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia alleged in a statement that Mr. Gehlot had created fear among the people of the State by leading a crowd belonging to "a particular community". "Mr. Gehlot wants to create anarchy in Rajasthan by showing an ugly side of democracy. As a responsible CM, he should have explained to the people that the CAA gives citizenship to the persecuted people rather than taking away anyone's nationality," he

Curfew relaxed for seven hours in Jabalpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Curfew imposed in some parts of Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh after violence during Friday protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was on Sunday relaxed for seven hours from 1 p.m., police

Curfew was imposed on Friday at four police station areas in Jabalpur after protesters pelted stones, clashed with the police and indulged in destruction of property, an officer said. These areas are part of Gohalpur, Hanumantal, Kotwali and Adhartal police stations.

'Internet restored'

"Curfew was relaxed for seven hours on Sunday from 1p.m. in four police station limits. Mobile internet service has also resumed in the city. Curfew was relaxed so that people could but essential items," said Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar Tripathi.

Curfew was relaxed for one-and-half hours on Saturday.

Meanwhile, BJP vicepresident Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday told Mr. Kamal Nath to resign as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister before leading a CAA protest march scheduled in Bhopal on December 25.

Congress starts padayatra in Assam against CAA

Assam will never accept it, says party's State chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA GUWAHATI

Protest against the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act continued on Sunday with the Opposition, the Congress, kicking off an 800-km-long padayatra from Sadiya to Dhubri.

Sadiya is a far east town of Assam and Dhubri is the headquarters of the western-most district, which is located along the India-Bangladesh border.

'Anti-Assam Act'

"We have been stating it very clearly that Assam will never accept this Act. It is anti-Assam and anti-Northeast. The Congress is with the people of Assam," Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Ripun Bora said. Addressing a huge crowd, the Rajya Sabha MP said that the agitation will be further intensified till the Act is repealed.

Meanwhile, a public funeral service in memory of teenager Sam Stafford, who was killed in the firing by the security forces, was organised in Guwahati on Sunday.

Hundreds of people, including All Assam Students' Union leaders, celebrities, writers, artistes and general



Protesters holding placards and raising slogans against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Sonitpur on Sunday. • PTI

public, attended the service and condemned the "government's brutality".

"The Chief Minister and his forces are engaged in killing innocent children. Sam is the first martyr of the anti-CAA movement. We will not forget him and we will not sit down until the Act is repealed," AASU president Dipanka Kumar Nath

Protests in tea gardens Protest marches were organised at several tea gardens in upper Assam, while a huge gathering took place in Rowta of Udalguri district. People and artistes came out in large numbers in Guwahati and other places during the day.

Assam has witnessed one of the worst violent protests by the public in its history with three railway stations, a post office, a bank, a bus terminus, shops, dozens of vehicles and many other public properties being set ablaze or totally damaged.

Already five persons, including four in firing by security forces, have lost their lives since December 11 when the Rajya Sabha passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

Shillong curfew lifted, Internet restored

People flock to buy essential items

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Curfew was on Sunday morning lifted in Shillong, as no report of violence or arson over the amended Citizenship Act was reported from any part of the city, officials said.

Streets decked-up

People were seen flocking to local shops to buy essential items and Christmas goodies and gifts. Streets in the State capital were being decked up in Christmas lights and festoons since morning.

Currew was imposed in areas under Sadar and Lum- had earlier this week unanidiengjri police stations in the city since December 12 as anti-citizenship law protests turned violent, leaving several injured and properties vandalised.

Over the past few days, prohibitory orders were relaxed during the day, but night curfew was still in

Sunday. Mobile Internet and

force to avoid break-down of law and order. East Khasi Hills District Magistrate M.W. Nongbri said the curfew was completely lifted from 4 a.m. on

messaging services, which were withdrawn as a precautionary measure to prevent circulation of fake news, were also restored on

Friday night.

Inner Line Permit

The Meghalaya Assembly mously adopted a resolution to urge the Centre to extend the Inner Line Permit regime to the State to keep it out of the purview of the contentious law.

Four held for beating youth to death

STAFF REPORTER

A group of people allegedly beat a tribal youth to death at a village meeting accusing him of indulging in sorcery. The incident took place at Intaguda village under the Kalimela police station limits in Odisha's Malkangiri district on Saturday night.

According to Kalimela police sources, four persons were arrested in this connection on Sunday. Investigation is on to find out other persons involved in the case. The deceased was identified as Irma Kartami (25). The accused alleged that the deceased had used black magic to cause the death of Jaga Madhi (23) at Intaguda on Saturday.

The villagers attacked Kartami with lathis and he died on the spot.

CAA, NRC not against Muslim community: Athawale

RPI(A) leader says protests are being triggered by a great deal of misapprehension

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

The countrywide protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) are unfortunate, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale said on Sunday and urged the minority community not to be perturbed as the CAA and the NRC are not directed against them.

"These protests [against the CAA and the NRC] are being triggered by a great of misapprehension...the vandalism and loss of life in these protests is truly unfortunate. I urge the Muslim community to remain calm and maintain peace as the CAA and the NRC are not against them at all," said Mr. Athawale, Republican Party of India (A) president, while backing Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mr. Athawale, whose party is an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre and in the State, was speaking to reporters at VVIP Circuit House following a meeting of his party's executive committee and



Taking pot shots at the CM, Ramdas Athawale asked when the Cabinet expansion and portfolio allocation of the new government would take place. ■ FILE PHOTO

workers. His press conference was briefly interrupted by the sudden appearance of BIP leader and former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, who exchanged pleasantries with the RPI (A) chief.

Declining to answer questions, Mr. Fadnavis merely said he was in the city to attend some programmes and Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government led by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, saying the alliance partners - the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress – make strange bedfellows and that ideological schisms are already apparent in this coalition.

"The Sena and the Congress are already at odds over the issue of according respect to Vinayak Damodar 'Veer' Savarkar…the two parties ought to part ways right now instead of remaining partners in an uneasy coalition," he said.

Taking pot shots at Mr. Thackeray, Mr. Athawale asked when the impending cabinet expansion and much-anticipated portfolio allocation of the new government would take place.

"While Mr. Thackeray has announced an ambitious farm loan waiver scheme, it remains to be seen from where he will get the funds to implement it," said the

Commenting on the expansion of his party, Mr. Athawale said his objective in the coming year will be to increase his party's membership to one crore.

Gadkari hits out at Cong. for vote bank politics

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said the Citizenship Amendment Act is not against the Muslim community in India. He said by bringing the new law, the NDA government is not doing any injustice to Muslims in the country. Mr. Gadkari also accused the Congress of spreading misinformation over the issue for vote bank

He was addressing a rally in support of the NDA government's decision to enact a new law, which seeks to provide citizenship to persecuted minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The rally organised by a local body and supported by the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"The decision taken by the government to give justice to religious minorities from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh is not against the Muslim community of India. We are not talking about sending Muslims out of the country," Mr. Gadkari said.

He said the government's only concern is foreign intruders living in the country. The minister said Muslims should understand that the Congress cannot help in the development of the community. "What has it (Congress) done for you? I rethe Muslim community of the country to understand the conspiracy. Your development can be



done only by the BJP and not the Congress."

"You used to ride cyclerickshaw, we gave you erickshaw and helped vou stand. The Congress considers you as a vote machine so that it can rule afterwards. Don't fall for this misinformation," he said.

"We all are one, our legacy is one. You go to masjid, we don't oppose it. We all will live together and work according to the Constitution framed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. This is what we have been saying, not anything new," the minister said.

Mr. Gadkari said before 1947, there was an "Akhand Bharat". After partition, Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared Pakistan as a Muslim nation. "But, in our country, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, it was accepted that our nation would not be a 'Hindu Rashtra', but a 'secular nation' for all communities." But, when this was decided, Mahatma Gandhi was asked that Pakistan is an Muslim country and there were 22% Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis and Christians there, and where would they go if they faced injustice and persecution, he said. "Gandhiji replied that minorities in

It is written in the Constitution that when Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from Pakistan and Afghanistan go to India they would be referred as 'refu-

Pakistan and Afghanistan,

whenever they will require

support, India will help

gees', the BJP leader said. "You will ask why Muslim community members are not called 'refugees'. Dr. Ambedkar has clarified that in the Constitution.'

Pakistan and Bangladesh are Islamic nations and there are over 100 to 150 countries which have declared themselves as Islamic or Muslim nations, he pointed out.

Dr. Ambedkar said in the Constitution that Muslims of these countries, if they want to leave their country, they have 100 to 150 alternatives and they can get shelter in any Muslim country of the world, he said. "But, Hindus, Sikhs, Indian Buddhists, Christians, and Jains have no nation to go," the minister said, adding "our country ac-

Ex-CM blames some parties for spreading falsehood

Former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is not against any community or religion, and alleged that some political parties are spreading falsehood about the new law to create unrest in the country.

Addressing a pro-CAA rally organised in Nagpur by a local body Lokadhikar Manch, he said people are now coming out on streets in support of the amended citizenship law.

There have been anti-CAA protests across the country with several of them turning violent, leading to arson and damage to property. Under the new law, non-Muslim refugees who came to India before December 31, 2014, to escape religious persecution in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indian citizenship.



had to immediately proceed

to Kolhapur. "I reached the

Circuit House after attend-

ing to my engagements in

the city and learned that Mr.

Athawale, too, was holding a

press conference. Hence, I

dropped by to meet him be-

fore leaving for Kolhapur,"

hit out at the Maharashtra

Meanwhile, Mr. Athawale

Mr. Fadnavis said.

Dispelling the myth: BJP supporters taking out a rally organised by Lokadhikar Manch in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Nagpur on Sunday. •s. sudarshan

"People are supporting the amended citizenship law in huge numbers. The Act is and it is not against any coming people and trying to

munity or religion," Mr. Fad-

"But some political par-

create unrest in the country," he said. People have now come out on streets to CAA, the BJP leader said.

'Cong. wrongly portraying BJP as communal'

them.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Goa Deputy Chief Minister Chandrakant Kavlekar has accused the Congress of wrongly projecting the BJP

as a communal party. In an interview to PTI, Mr. Kavlekar said the BJP is committed towards development and takes along everyone. Mr. Kavlekar was among the 10 Congress MLAs who switched was later inducted into the Pramod Sawant-led Cabinet and appointed Deputy Chief Minister.

"I spent 22 years of my political career in the Congress. Its leaders are always busy spreading wrong notion about the BIP that it is a communal party. They keep hammering this thought in the minds of their leaders," he

alleged.

he and his nine other colleagues, including eight Christian faith, ioined the BIP, they saw a different picture than what was portrayed by the Congress.

'We were welcomed instantly. The BJP is not communal, but a party that takes along everyone. It is a pro-development party," the former leader of opposition in Goa Assembly said.

leaders in the Goa Congress unit were busy fulfilling their "own interests" due to which the party was unable to form government in 2017, despite it then emerging as the single largest party in the State polls.

"Some senior leaders in the Congress, who have enjoyed their share of power, are unwilling to let others prosper," Mr. Kavlekar

Hunar Haat

inaugurated by

Koshyari, Naqvi

Maharashtra Governor

Bhagat Singh Koshyari

and Union Minister Muk-

htar Abbas Naqvi on Sun-

day inaugurated a Hunar

Haat at Bandra Kurla

The Haat, a platform made available by the Un-

ion Minority Affairs Minis-

try led by Mr. Naqvi to

promote works of artists

and craftsmen from mi-

nority communities, is be-

ing held at the MMRDA

20 and will go on till De-

It began on December

More than 180 stalls

have been set up, where some 400 master artisans, including a substan-

tial number of women, and craftsmen from across the country are

participating, a statement issued by Mr. Naqvi's of-

Ground in BKC.

cember 31.

fice said.

Three killed as wall collapses

Complex in Mumbai.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shinde to take stock of law and order situation in Gadchiroli

TANVI DESHPANDE

State Home Minister Eknath Shinde will be touring sensitive areas in Gadchiroli to take stock of the security situation in the Naxal-affected district. The government under Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has been reviewing several projects in Vi-

During the winter session of the Assembly, the CM first started with a review of Amravati district in the backdrop of crop losses due to unseasonal rains. He reviewed various water management schemes and other projects. He directed officials to take measures to supply pure drinking water



to Bhandara city as it suffered from water contamination, ordered that the Dhapewada irrigation project in Gondia district be completed soon, and announced a steel project in eastern Vidarbha and ₹253 crore for an

At a review meeting of Gadchiroli district, the CM directed an iron ore mining project to be expedited. Assembly Speaker Nana Patole has too been reviewing projects in Vidarbha also because he is a former Member of Parliament from the region.

Even as the Assembly session is now over, Mr. Shinde will be touring Gadchiroli district to assess the law and order situation.

The naxal-affected district saw an IED blast earlier this year which killed 15 jawans. He will hold discussions with law enforcement officials especially in remote

Sweet harvest



Ready for crushing: Farm labourers busy in harvesting sugarcane at Karad in Maharashtra on Saturday. • RAJU SANADI

irrigation project in Yavat-

More plastic pollution on Maharashtra

beaches than Karnataka, Goa: study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beaches in Maharashtra are more polluted with micro plastics and macro plastics than those in Goa and Karnataka, according to a study conducted by a research institute. The study has blamed plastic industries located near the shore and increased tourism activities for the pollution.

"The highest abundance of macro and micro plastic contaminants is found on beaches in Maharashtra at the high tide line as compared to Karnataka and

Goa," said the study carried out by Goa-based National Institute of Oceanography

"Such a phenomenon of finding macro and micro plastics in abundance on Maharashtra beaches suggests that the contaminants are land-based, like (coming from) near shore plastic industries, port areas, petroleum industries, and high tourism activities," it said.

The study, titled 'Assessment of macro and micro plastics along the west coast of India: abundance, distribution, polymer type and toxicity', was published in Netherlands-based journal 'Chemosphere' last week.

The researchers conducted the assessment of macro and micro plastic contamination for two years on 10 beaches along the western coast of India and their toxic effects on marine organisms.

The plastic contaminants on these beaches were found in various colours like white, pale yellow, dark brown, green, blue and red, said the study, led by NIO scientists Mahua Saha and Dushmant Maharana.

Six fishermen rescued from flooded boat rushed to provide assistance

Six fishermen stranded on a flooded boat in the Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast were rescued in the early hours of Sunday, the Indian Coast Guard said.

The Coast Guard operations centre received a distress call on Saturday evening following which its team, which was on a routine patrol on a ship in the waters,

to the fishermen, a release issued by the Coast Guard said. The boat, named 'Vismita', with six fishermen on board, got flooded in the waters following which its engines stopped working. The fishermen were stranded about 24 nautical miles in the sea from Porbandar.

"The Coast Guard ship C-445, which was on a routine patrol, was immediately diverted to render assistance to the distressed boat," the release said.

Technical personnel of the rescue team stopped flooding by plugging the crack in the boat hull and then carried out de-flooding. "The boat was then safely towed to the Porbandar harbour by another fishing vessel under escort of the Coast Guard ship around 3 a.m. on Sunday," the release said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Three people, including a father-son duo, were killed and two others injured after a compound wall fell on them during its demolition at Palitana town in Gujarat on Sunday.

Farooq Deraia and his son Toufiq, both contractors, died on the spot, while the third victim, a labourer, succumbed to injuries at a hospital.

'The incident occurred at Taleti locality of Palitana town in Bhavnagar district when an old compound wall being demolished. Eight labourers were engaged in the task of pulling down the wall, while the Deraias were overseeing the work," a police official said.

"At least five people were trapped under the wall," he said.

Court had ordered the se-

cond autopsy. The bodies

have been kept at the Gand-

hi Hospital as per an earlier

order of the court on peti-

tions alleging extra-judicial

A Division Bench directed

that the autopsy be conduct-

ed before December 23 and

the report submitted to the

Registrar-General of the

High Court. The doctors

were advised to express an

independent view on the

The charred body of the

25-year-old woman was

found on November 28. The

four accused were arrested

the next day and gunned

down on December 6. The

police said its personnel re-

sorted to "retaliatory" firing

when two of the accused

snatched their weapons and

fired at them. Their first

post-mortem was conduct-

ed on December 6 in a Ma-

habubnagar hospital.

basis of their finding.

killing of the men.

AIIMS team to conduct

second autopsy today

Bodies kept at Hyderabad hospital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The All India Institute of

Medical Sciences (AIIMS)

has formed a team of three

forensic doctors to conduct

the second autopsy on the

bodies of four men accused

of the gang-rape and mur-

der of a veterinarian near

Hyderabad. They were

killed by the police on De-

The team will conduct

the autopsy at the mortuary

of the government-run

Gandhi Hospital in Hydera-

bad at 9 a.m. on Monday, a

by Sudhir Gupta, head of fo-

rensic at the AIIMS. Dr.

Adarsh Kumar and Dr. Abh-

ishek Yadav are members.

Dr. Varun Chandra will as-

sist the team in the post-

mortem, said an AIIMS com-

muniqué to the Telangana

The Telangana High

Special Chief Secretary.

The medical board is led

NEW DELHI

cember 6.

source said.



Pejawar seer continues to be critical

MANGALURU The condition of the 88-yearold Vishwesha Tirtha Swami of Peiawar Mutt, who is being treated for pneumonia at Kasturba Hospital in Manipal, "continues to be critical". "He is on ventilator support," a statement from the hospital said on Sunday. Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri visited the hospital.

Sahitya Akademi winner Nanjundan found dead

BENGALURU

Eminent translator and Sahitya Akademi award winner G. Nanjundan, 58, was found dead at his residence here on Saturday. The police suspect Dr. Nanjundan died of cardiac arrest around four days ago. He earned recognition for translating more than a dozen books from Kannada to Tamil and was working as a lecturer. PT

Shashi Tharoor to appear in court today

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Congress MP Shashi Tharoor will approach a court here on Monday to clarify his nonappearance in a defamation case filed against him by a lawyer in connection with his 1989 novel The Great Indian Novel. The additional chief judicial magistrate had issued an arrest warrant against Mr. Tharoor for not heeding a summons, which he claimed did not specify a date.

Man kills neighbour's dog with air gun

Irked by the barking of his neighbour's dog, Avinash Karan, 38, a branch manager of a private bank, allegedly killed the animal with his air gun at Babu Nagar here on Sunday. On a complaint by its owner, Seemala Raju Yadav, a case was registered against Mr. Karan. He was arrested and sent to judicial custody.

CAA supporter stabbed in Bengaluru

The BJP member, who was attacked while returning from a rally, is out of danger, say police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A BJP member was stabbed while he was returning home after participating in a pro-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) rally at Town Hall on Sunday.

Varun Bopala, 31, a resident of J.P. Nagar, was riding a two-wheeler when he was attacked with "sharp objects" near the Bamboo Bazaar area around 12.25 p.m., the police said.

He was taken to Victoria Hospital for treatment. Later, he was shifted to a private hospital in J.P. Nagar. He was said to be out of danger, the police said.

According to the police, Varun was alone when one of the attackers followed him before knocking down his bike. Varun fell on the road when two more men on two-wheeler stabbed him multiple times before fleeing from the spot. Passers-by alerted the police, who took him to hospi-



Commissioner Bhaskar Rao

said he had directed the pol-

ice to investigate the inci-

tal. The Kalasipalyam police have registered a case of attempt to murder and a search is on for the accused.

dent. "The investigation is in Speaking at a press confethe preliminary stages and it rence in the evening, Police is premature to comment on

this," he added.

Tejasvi Surya, Bengaluru South MP, and Ramesh Banoth, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), visited Varun at Victoria Hospital.

Curfew relaxed in Mangaluru

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

After three days of curfew following violent incidents which claimed two lives in police firing on December 19, Mangaluru is limping back to normality.

Day curfew was lifted from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday and was re-imposed at night.

There will be no curfew under the jurisdiction of Mangaluru Police Commissionerate on Monday. However, prohibitory orders will be in force till 6 a.m. till December 24.

Educational institutions will function as usual from Monday.

Mobile Internet data services were restored late on Saturday evening.

Youth arrested for rape, murder of girl in Hassan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A nine-year-old girl who was found dead in a tank in Hassan district of Karnataka on December 16 was allegedly raped and murdered, Superintendent of Police Ram Nivas Sepat said on Sunday.

Suresh, 21, of Madaba village has been arrested in the case, Mr. Sepat said. The accused allegedly raped the girl, killed her, and threw the body in the tank.

The preliminary report of the post-mortem conducted at the Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences stated that the death was due to "asphyxia as a result of smothering with signs of recent sexual assault," he said in a press release.

The girl, a Class 4 student, went missing after she went to take part in a festival near Channarayapatna with her brother and friends on December 14. As she did not return, her mother and relatives searched for the girl and later filed a police complaint on December 16. The same day she was found dead in a tank at Madaba

After the post-mortem report, the police registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and the IPC.

In favour: Supporters of the Citizenship Act gathering near the Town Hall in Bengaluru on Sunday SAMPATH KUMAR GP

Kerala govt. playing to the gallery, says Minister 'CM, Opposition leader behaving like anarchists'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala are behaving like "anarchists" by protesting in the streets and instigating the people to agitate against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan said on Sunday.

The Kerala Government's decision to put on hold activities related to the National Population Register (NPR), he said, would serve only to deprive the citizens of benefits that were based on such records.

Mr. Muraleedharan, who

was here to inaugurate the 27th State conference of the Kerala PSC Employees' Sangh, said neither Mr. Vijayan nor Mr. Chennithala, in their positions as Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition respectively, had the right to protest in the

"It's a call for revolt'

"I'm not saying that you should not air your opinions. But the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition hitting the streets and exhorting the people to agitate



V. Muraleedharan

is a call for revolt. Every position has also its limitations. The democratic mechanism moves ahead by respecting those limitations. Otherwise, there will be anarchy."

In a rare show of solidarity, Mr. Vijayan and Mr. Chennithala had led a joint LDF- December 15 in Thiruvananthapuram.

UDF protest against CAA on

The Kerala government was playing to the gallery in declaring that it would not enforce CAA, Mr. Muraleedharan said. "Everyone is aware that the State government has no role in enforcing the CAA," he said.

The Act did not apply to any Indian citizen nor did it seek to deprive anyone of their citizenship, he said. In protesting against it, the Congress and the Left were, in fact, contradicting the positions taken by their own leaders in the past, he said.

We should differentiate between people who come to India seeking refuge and reasons such as employment, he said, "Despite their high literacy level, Keralites have proved themselves vulnerable to deceptions such as fake currency frauds. The ruling and Opposition fronts are using the gullibility of the common people of Kerala to sell them fake impressions about the CAA," he said.

people driven by economic

Freezing NPR-related activities would serve only to deprive the citizens of benefits, he said. The people should not be used as "bargaining tools" for the petty benefits of political leaders. Mr. Muraleedharan al-

leged that the media also was being taken for a ride on the issue of the CAA.

Curry leaf farmers in A.P. gear up to produce oil

G.V.R. SUBBA RAO

Two years ago, a few farmers joined hands to form the Prakruthi Udyana Utpattidarula Sangham, a farmer producer organisation (FPO), in Agiripalli of Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district.

The association, which has been exploring options available for export of horticultural products, is now eyeing curry leaf oil extraction.

The FPO, with about 100 members now, came up with the idea after suffering losses owing to the recent heavy rainfall and poor sales during the slack season - March to July when prices dip to as low as ₹3 to ₹5 a kg.

Crop surplus

The farmers associated with the organisation are cultivating curry leaves on about 100 acres. As the production touched 20 tonnes per acre, they had to look for alternatives, apart from supplying dried leaves to companies that make herbal medicines. "Hence we are planning curry leaf oil," says sangham president M. Sridevi.

The Department of Horticulture has come forward to provide financial assistance to the FPO to set up the infrastructure. The society members will be sent to the CFTRI for training, officials say. It is expected that three to five litres of oil can be extracted from a tonne of curry leaves, says Ms. Sridevi.

Essential oils like curry leaf oil are primarily used in cosmetics and toiletries, food items and beverages. There is a demand for the oil in European countries, the Middle East and Asian countries, Horticulture Commissioner Chiranjiv Chowdary said.

A ND-NDE

Support pours in for protesting A.P. farmers

Agitation against plan to shift capital enters fifth day

Protests continued in the villages around Amaravati the capital proposed by the previous regime - on the fifth day on Sunday. The support for agitating farmers grew with students, lawyers, doctors and others participating in them.

A large number of protesters, including families from various villages, reached the area where the foundation stone had been laid for Amaravati by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and staged protests against the Jagan Reddy government's plan to shift the capital.

Some of the protesters sought the intervention of Mr. Modi as the State government did not respond to their pleas for justice till



Uddandarayunipalem on Sunday. • V. RAJU

date. They held placards and banners with pictures of Mr. Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Meanwhile, doctors belonging to various 'capital villages' ioined the relav hunger strike by the farmers at Velagapudi village. They

audio bulletin even on

the brain behind the

newspapers," says G. Ravi,

initiative. He is a teacher of

alleged that only the ruing party was against Amaravati and the fight should continue legally.

Students detained

Students who joined the protests took out a rally from Mandadam village to the Secretariat at Velagapudi. They were stopped by the police, and some of them were detained. Later in the evening, some farmers carrying black flags tried to climb the water tank at Velagapudi, but were held back by the police.

TDP leaders Prathipati Pulla Rao and Kollu Ravindra visited the protest camps and extended their support. "The government should think about the future of the farmers who gave land for the capital," Mr. Ra-

Pet parade



Models taking part in 'Santa Bow Wow-2019', a dog show held at the Cubbon Park in Bengaluru on Sunday. •v. SREENIVASA MURTHY

News bulletin for the visually challenged

WhatsApp group Vartha sends 40-minute audio clip to 4,500 listeners daily

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

At 8 o'clock every morning, a 40-minute audio clip will reach the mobile phones of hundreds of visually challenged Keralites. The clip, containing a news bulletin and a section on books, has around 4,500 listeners on WhatsApp.

Since June 3 this year, a WhatsApp group, Vartha, has been posting the audio clip daily. Since there is a limit to the number of members in a WhatsApp group, eight separate groups have been created and three of them are based in the Middle East.

200th bulletin On December 19, Vartha posted its 200th bulletin.



School Vengapatta and is on deputation as a trainer to Samagra Shiksha Keralam in holidays by depending on Kozhikode. the online editions of three He is supported by C.K.

Vinodan, a retired AEO; Divya Damodaran, lecturer, DIET, Kozhikode; and Surendran Puthancherry, a

teacher who looks after the book segment.

From The Hindu The news bulletin focusses on development and avoids political gossip. The news stories are picked from *The* Hindu and two prominent Malayalam dailies.

In the section on literature, a book or a story is introduced. "This group is unique and

greatly helpful to the visually challenged. The book section encourages us to read," says N. Aswathy, a guest lecturer at Central University of Kerala in Kasaragod, and who has overcome visual impairment to earn an M.A. in English Comparative Literature.

Flying squads will monitor projects in villages, says KCR

Telangana Chief Minister warns lax officials, sarpanches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

After launching Palle Pragati, a programme aimed at comprehensive development of rural areas, the Telangana government has focused its attention on ascertaining the quality of works by constituting flying squads.

The squads would undertake surprise checks of the projects launched from January 1 and submit reports from time to time.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said the squads would consist of IAS, IPS and IFS officers and each would be given the charge of inspecting works in 12 mandals randomly allotted to them. These checks would



K. Chandrasekhar Rao

not only reveal the progress but also enable the government to elicit suggestions to improve works.

Mr. Rao, who reviewed the progress of works along with senior officials on Sunday, said the inspections could be construed as a test tives. The government would not hesitate to initiate stringent action against officials as well as non-performing sarpanches if they were found wanting in the discharge of duties. A release quoted Mr. Rao as saying that Palle Pragati, launched for enhancing

of performance of the offi-

cials and elected representa-

green cover and clean villages, received overwhelming response from people. While there was active participation of the people in improving their surroundings and creating infrastructure, the government got a feedback that the elected representatives were not evincing much interest in the programme.

the Government High

IN BRIEF



Five rescued from massive fire in Mumbai

Five persons trapped in a major fire in Mumbai were rescued on Sunday night. The fire broke out on two floors of a residential building in Vile Parle and raged for almost two hours. Nobody was injured in the incident. said rescue personnel. PTI

Odisha man tied to tree, beaten, urinated upon

BHUBANESWAR A youth was tied to a tree and brutally thrashed by two men who also urinated in his mouth in Odisha's Khurda district, said police. The incident came to light after the video of the incident went viral on social media. The police have arrested the two accused — Rajendra Bhuyan and Gatia Paltasingh — of Kaipadar village and a case has been lodged. IANS

Panchayat promises gold to taxpayers

In a move aimed at increasing tax collection, the gram panchayat of Wangi village in Sangli district of Maharashtra has announced a lucky draw scheme, under which three taxpayers can win gold items like rings and coins. Villagers who clear their tax dues by March 15 next year will be short-listed for the lucky

Woman injured as guard shoots arrow

A security guard in Uttarakhand's Pauri district iniured a woman Raini Devi. 35, by firing an arrow at her for allegedly drying clothes on the boundary wall of a plot he was manning, police said on Sunday. Ms. Devi was rushed to a hospital as the iron arrowhead hit her in the chest, police said. The guard, identified as Ramlal, has been

Railway unveils new signalling system

Project will be tested on four of the busiest routes

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA NEW DELHI

The Railways will roll out its new signalling system from April 2020 onwards. It is expected to make train travel faster and safer, a senior official said.

The implementation will begin with four sections of about 640 route kilometres with an estimated cost of around ₹1,810 crore.

This is expected to be a pilot project for pan-India implementation of the nearly ₹78,000 crore project to modernise the signalling sys-



Tech upgrade: The new systems will reduce congestion and improve safety, line capacity and punctuality. ■PTI

tem, which was included in the works programme of

net Committee on Economic "We are yet to get approval Affairs (CCEA)," Pradeep Kufor this [entire project] from mar, member (Signal & Tele-

com), Railway Board, said. The four sections where the plan will be implemented first are the Renigunta -Yerraguntla section of the South Central Railways, the Vizianagaram-Palasa section of East Coast Railway, the Jhasi-Bina on North Central Railway and the Nagpur-Badnera on Central Railway.

Modern technologies

"These four sections are some of the busiest routes on Railways, with heavy traffic. These will act as a pilot for signal modernisation across the 70,000 km network of the Railways," Mr. Kumar said.

The modernisation of the signalling system will include implementation of technologies such as the automatic train protection system that helps in adhering to permissible speed limits without driver intervention and the 4G-based mobile train radio communication system, which can be used for emergency communications.

The implementation of these new systems will improve safety, reduce congestion, increase line capacity and improve punctuality, Mr. Kumar said.

Besides a centralised traffic control system similar to the air traffic control system, a remote diagnostic and predictive maintenance system will be implemented.

Forecast for Monday: Cold day conditions likely in isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Dense fog in some pockets likely over Uttarakhand, Raiasthan, Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, south Assam and Meghalaya. Thun-

derstorm accompanied with lightning likely over West Madhya

Pradesh and Vidarbha.

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

CITY	KAIN	WAX	IVI I IVI	CITY	KAIN	IVIAX	IVIII
Agartala		23.0	11.0	Kozhikode		35.0	24.0
Ahmedabad		29.0	16.0	Kurnool		32.0	20.0
Aizawl		19.0	80	Lucknow		23.0	10.0
Allahabad		23.0	10.0	Madurai		31.0	23.0
Bengaluru		28.0	18.0	Mangaluru		37.0	23.0
Bhopal		25.0	12.0	Mumbai		32.0	22.0
Bhubaneswar		28.0	15.0	Mysuru		28.0	18.0
Chandigarh		14.0	10.0	New Delhi		15.0	7.0
Chennai		30.0	22.0	Patna		21.0	9.0
Coimbatore		28.0	21.0	Port Blair		31.0	25.0
Dehradun		23.0	7.0	Puducherry		30.0	21.0
Gangtok		11.0	5.0	Pune		28.0	19.0
Goa		34.0	23.0	Raipur		30.0	18.0
Guwahati		21.0	13.0	Ranchi		24.0	12.0
Hubballi		29.0	19.0	Shillong		15.0	5.0
Hyderabad		28.0	18.0	Shimla		15.0	3.0
Imphal		23.0	4.0	Srinagar		8.0	1.0
Jaipur		24.0	9.0	Thiruvananthapuram		35.0	23.0
Kochi		32.0	23.0	Tiruchi		31.0	22.0
Kohima		16.0	6.0	Vijayawada		31.0	21.0
Kolkata		21.0	13.0	Visakhapatnam		29.0	21.0
(Rainfall data i	n mm;	temper	ature in (Celsius)			

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

.31 21 ..111 .1058 184 89 ..391 .283 ..232 .72 46 ..313 .196 .74 80 ..407-.74 80 ..407-.87 32 ..243 .192 .17 50 ..212 .149 Visakhapatnam ..9 .38 50 ..133

indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI) 502: 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

NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

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 prematur death in people with heart or lung disease

Told to change flight seat, Pragya complains

Airplane gets delayed by 45 minutes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Lok Sabha MP Pragya Thakur refused to move to a non-emergency seat despite being wheelchair-bound, delaying her SpiceJet flight from Delhi to Bhopal, according to the airline.

The MP was on board SpiceJet flight SC 2498 (Delhi to Bhopal) on December 21 and had pre-booked a frontrow seat. But when she boarded the flight in her wheelchair, she was requested to move to a different row as emergency rows are not assigned to passengers on wheelchairs as per the Directorate General of Civil Aviation norms.

The MP refused to comply for nearly 45 minutes, until other passengers grew restless and asked her to be

On reaching Bhopal, Ms. Thakur filed a complaint



Pragya Thakur

"As Ms. Thakur had come with her own wheelchair and had not booked through the airline, the staff wasn't aware of this fact that she was a wheelchair passenger. She was requested by the crew to shift to 2 A/B

with the airport director.

(non-emergency row) due to safety reasons but she refused. The duty manager and other staff also requested her to move to another seat," SpiceJet said in a

Officers Training Academy in Gaya to shut down

Sikh Light Infantry Regimental Centre will relocate there

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NITI Aayog, the extended

Railway Board and the Cabi-

The Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Gaya is being shut down as it is not used to its full potential and the Sikh Light Infantry Regimental Centre, which is strapped for space at Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh, will shift there, Army sources said.

"It is not closure. It is relo cation," a senior source said. The OTAs in Chennai and Gaya are under-utilised now because the intake has increased through other schemes like the Technical Entry Scheme (TES).

The OTA, Gaya, was set up in 2011. The officer cadets there will be trained at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun.

Earlier, the Centre was supposed to build a new regimental Centre for the Sikh Light Infantry. The move is



Lot of room: The OTAs are under-utilised because the intake has increased through other schemes. • R.RAGU

expected to save expenses and enable utilization of readily available infrastructure.

Space constraints

Presently, the Rajput and Sikh Light Infantry Regimental Centres are located at Fatehpur, and are pressed for space. To address the problem, the Army has acquired 150 acres at Sitapur for a new Sikh Light Regimental Centre. "Instead of spending

₹1,000 crore, why not move to Gaya?" the source said.

Regimental Centres require a large parade ground for training and other facilities, which are readily available in Gaya. Once the Sikh Light Infantry Regimental Centre moves to Gaya, the Rajput regiment can take over the space at Fatehpur.

JeI activist from J&K dies in jail

A Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) acti-

A police official said the

death in a jail located in Allahabad.

An official said Bhat was arrested prior to the August 5 move to revoke J&K's autonomy. He was a basic member of the socio-religious organisation, which was

It was followed by rounding up of its leaders and

The police said it was in

Arunachal to mark schools as 'hard' and 'soft'

The Education Department has been facing difficulties in posting teachers in remote areas

Arunachal Pradesh will soon have schools marked 'hard'. 'soft' and 'medium'. Geography, lack of infrastructure and reluctance of teachers to work beyond their comfort zones are the reasons for this

categorisation, officials said. Teacher absenteeism has been a major issue across 3,513 government schools, including 211 community schools, in the State. The student-teacher ratio has conse-

quently been skewed in favour of urban centres with better connectivity.

A government spokesperson said that under the new policy, all government schools will be divided into three categories - hard, medium and soft - based on topography, accessibility and degrees of difficulty in staving at the place of posting. "All new recruits will be given a hard posting for a mandatory three years, inclusive of their probation period.



The teacher-student ratio is skewed in favour of urban centres in the State.

The next five years will be in schools with levels of medispokesperson said. The Education Departculties in posting 16,594 reg-

um difficulty, followed by

posting in soft schools," the

ment has been facing diffiular teachers in remote areas where schools have adequate students, but hardly anyone to teach them.

Last week, a meeting of the Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, approved the Arunachal Pradesh Teachers' Transfer & Posting Policy, 2020, for en-

suring "need-based distribution of teachers to protect the academic interest of students and optimise job satisfaction among the teachers in a free and transparent manner." The policy also entails transfer of teachers through online requests.

"We are taking steps to revitalise the sector through a policy that will ensure each school, no matter how remotely situated, has adequate teachers," Mr. Khandu

Contraband worth ₹150 cr.

Coast guard nabs 6 from Myanmar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Coast Guard apprehended six people from Myanmar with banned contraband worth approximately ₹150 crore, about 125 nautical

the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act,

operating east of Little Anda-

The vessel was not responding on Very High Frequency (VHF).

Asaf Ali, on patrol, was diverted for investigation, the force said in a statement on Sunday.

Quick seizure

"At about 6 p.m. on December 20, ICGS Aruna Asaf Ali sighted the boat 125 nautical miles from nearest land, Lit-

weighing 1 kg each and 106

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Three members of a family, including a father and son, were electrocuted when an overhead electric wire snapped and fell on a farmland at a village on the outskirts of Tiruchi in Tamil Nadu on Sunday.

A. Ramamurthy, 54, had gone to his farm at Navalurkuttapattu Keezhakadu vil-

He stepped on a live wire, which had fallen from a power pole and was electrocuted.

His son R. Gunasekaran, 23, and the latter's grandmother A. Oppayee, 70, who rushed to his rescue, too were electrocuted. Police have registered a case.

vist from Kashmir's Handwara district died in a jail in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.

family of Bhat, a resident of Handwara's Kulangam vil- banned by the Centre on lage, was informed about his March 1 this year.

members.

touch with the Uttar Pradesh police to initiate the process of handing over the body of Bhat to the relatives. There was no official word on the cause of the death.

seized near the Andamans

They were detained under

The people were held about 125 nautical miles east of

packets weighing 500g each were recovered from the

The total weight of the contraband is approximately 303 kg. Each packet contained a white crystalline substance. The total worth is approximately ₹150 crore, an official said.

A Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) team from Kolkata carried out preliminary investigation and reported that the substance is believed to be banned drug methaqualone, ICG said.

This is the second major recovery of contraband by the Coast Guard in the Andaman and Nicobar region in the last three months.



lage to spray fertilizer on his paddy crop.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

miles east of Little Andaman.

Around noon, on December 20, a Dornier aircraft sighted a non-Indian vessel

Coast Guard Ship Aruna

tle Andaman. The vessel failed to stop on being challenged by the ship. The ship fired three warning shots in the air and forced the vessel to stop," the statement said. A total of 250 packets



Undoing harms

Making the CAA non-discriminatory is the only way to dispel fears

s the Centre tries to fend off criticism that its Citizenship (Amendment) Act excludes Muslims I from its beneficial provisions and quell strident protests, it must look for ways to undo the incalculable harm caused by fears set off by the law. Indications that it is open to suggestions on the rules to implement the CAA are welcome. However, these should not be confined to the proposed rules. The government must heed the call for meaningful changes that would dispel fears gripping the country, especially minorities. The stated objective is the fast-tracking of applications from minorities from three Muslim-majority neighbourhood countries for citizenship by naturalisation. Can't this be achieved without violating the Constitution or its secular ideals? A first step would be to further amend the Act, even by an ordinance, to drop its religion-specific wording, and make it explicit that the benefit would be open to all undocumented migrants who can prove persecution in their home countries. For allowing a Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Jain, Buddhist or Parsi to apply for citizenship after staying in the country for six years, there is no need to bar Muslims from making a similar claim. It is only an enabling law and does not oblige the government to grant citizenship to anyone. And Muslims and atheists have been persecuted in these and other countries by authorities and dominant sections.

Regarding others such as Sri Lankan refugees, the legal bar on their applying for citizenship stands out. A 2004 amendment to the citizenship law introduced a clause that 'illegal migrants' will not be eligible to apply for citizenship. The definition of 'illegal migrants' as those who arrived without valid travel documents includes refugees. A provision of the present CAA is to remove this 'illegal' tag from non-Muslim minorities from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Dropping the reference to 'illegal migrants' will automatically enable any refugee to apply for citizenship, subject to the residential requirement. Therefore, a general enabling provision to allow a relaxation of the minimum residency requirement will serve the purpose of considering citizenship to any persecuted people. This would be nondiscriminatory, without obligation to grant citizenship. Finally, India should enact a refugee law wherein the right to live a life without fear or confinement can be protected. If the fear is that people may seek permanent asylum, the UNHCR can work with them officially for their voluntary repatriation, and without rendering long-term refugees ineligible for applying for citizenship. Finally, the government must end the process once the National Population Register is updated. It must give up the notion of a citizenship register. No good will come out of setting off a clamour for inclusion and panic over possible exclusion. That is a pain Indians of all persuasions can do without.

Significant reversal

NCLAT decision to reverse the removal of Mr. Mistry is a setback to Tata Sons

Three years after Tata Sons Limited voted to remove Cyrus P. Mistry from his post as the Executive Chairman of the Tata Group's main holding company, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) last week declared his removal "illegal" and ordered his reinstatement. The appellate body's decision to reverse the National Company Law Tribunal's ruling dismissing Mr. Mistry's challenge to his ouster, in October 2016, has far-reaching implications. For a start, the NCLAT has in no uncertain terms held that Tata Sons' "affairs have been or are being conducted in a manner 'prejudicial' and 'oppressive' to members" including Mr. Mistry as also 'prejudicial' to the interests of the company and its group companies. By upholding the appellants' contention that the minority group of shareholders – the 'Shapoorji Pallonji (SP) Group' – had been a victim of 'prejudicial' and 'oppressive' actions undertaken by the majority shareholders of Tata Sons, the NCLAT has struck a blow on behalf of the rights of all minority shareholders. Terming the company effectively a "quasi-partnership-company" – the Tata Group through the Tata Trusts and other Tata entities and family members holds 81% of Tata Sons' effective shareholding while the SP Group owns 18% – the appellate body stressed the need for the Tata holding firm to operate as a "two-group company" that could provide checks and balances in the running of the businesses.

The NCLAT's findings lay emphasis on greater transparency and adherence to governance norms especially in the conduct of affairs at the controlling company of a large diversified conglomerate. Throughout its 172page ruling, the appellate body has relied extensively on the correspondence between Mr. Mistry and the respondents including his predecessor and interim replacement Ratan Tata, and its findings are hard to fault on facts. That the NCLT had in its ruling dismissing Mr. Mistry's plea made several "disparaging" and "wholly unsubstantiated" remarks against him also attracted censure from the appellate body, which expunged them entirely. The tribunal's language reflecting a predisposition to view the Tata Group in a favourable light points to the pressing need for a more dispassionate judiciary while dealing with corporate misdemeanours. With the Tata Group clear that it plans to challenge the NCLAT verdict, it will be left to the Supreme Court to have the final say on the conclusions of the NCLAT, particularly on the question of whether Tata Sons is in effect a "quasi-partnership". This construct was, after all, the basis for the NCLAT's reasoning that the company had always been run on mutual trust and understanding between the Tata and SP groups – a trust that the appellate body would like to see restored post its ruling.

The three-step communal game plan

Through the NRC-NPR process, the Modi government aims to create a category of second-class citizens



PRAKASH KARAT

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) are interconnected and twin measures. The Home Minister, Amit Shah, had repeatedly made this clear both in Parliament and outside. First, the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill would be adopted by Parliament following which the NRC would be taken up.

In the wake of widespread protests against the CAA, the Central Government is trying to obfuscate the issue of implementing the NRC. It is taking advantage of the lack of clarity and the inadequate information available on how the NRC is going to be implemented in the whole country. The Minister of State for Home Affairs, G. Kishan Reddy, has said: "A countrywide NRC had not been notified so far and no one should fear." The Government has put out advertisements in Hindi and Urdu newspapers stating that "The NRC has not been announced yet and if it is done so in future, then rules and regulations should be such that no Indian citizen is troubled."

The NRC-NPR link

These and other such pronouncements are an exercise in disinformation. A crucial fact is that the NRC process begins with the compilation of the National Population Register (NPR). This is the first stage of the NRC. The notification for preparing and updating the (https://goaprinting-

press.gov.in/downloads/1920/ 1920-19-SI-EOG-1.pdf) was issued by the Registrar General of Citizen Registration, on July 31, 2019. For this, house to house enumeration will be conducted throughout the country (except in Assam) for "collection of information relating to all persons who are usually residing within the jurisdiction of the Local Registrar". This enumeration will be undertaken between the first day of April 2020 and September 30, 2020.

The compilation of the NPR is a preliminary step towards preparing the NRC. On the basis of the NPR, the local register of Indian citizens will be finalised after due verification. This is the procedure set out under the "Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules

So, from April 1, 2020 onwards, the National Register of Citizens process will begin with house to house enumeration for the National Population Register.

It is important to note that, as per these Rules (http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-Act&Rules/notifi-

cations/citizenship_rules2003.pdf), during the verification process, particulars of such individuals whose citizenship is deemed to be "doubtful" shall be entered by the local Registrar with appropriate remarks in the Population Register for further enquiry; and in case of "doubtful" citizenship, the individual or the family shall be informed in a specified proforma immediately after the verification process is ov-

Another clause of these Rules, 4(5)(a) states that: "Every person or family specified in sub-rule (4), shall be given an opportunity of being heard by the Sub-district or



Taluk Registrar of Citizen Registration, before a final decision is taken to include or to exclude their particulars in the National Register of Indian Citizens" [emphasis added].

Use of biometric data

Fifteen questions will be asked in the survey, including questions on the place of birth, the date of birth, and the name of the father and mother. The new addition will be eliciting the details of Aadhaar, which will then be crosschecked with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for verification of biometrics of the individual. So, the NPR compilation will also have the biometric data of those listed, which raises troubling questions.

It is at the verification stage that communal profiling will take place in line with what the Home Minister had declared – the purpose of the NRC is to eliminate "infiltrators" as against the Hindu refugees who will become eligible for citizenship under the CAA. Those summoned as "doubtful citizens" will have to go through the tortuous process of submitting proof of their citizenship.

The NRC does not require any new law or amendment. It is already part of the Citizenship Act of 1955 through an amendment made during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2003. For the first time, the concept of a National Register of Citizens was introduced by making it compulsory to register every citizen of India and to issue a national identity card. Based on this, the rules for registration for citizenship were issued subsequently in which provision was made for a National Population Register.

Further, there is confusion created by the fact that the updation of the NPR is being done along with the Census enumeration for 2021. It is the Census authorities who undertake both these processes, but they are two separate things. The NPR is directly linked

That the game plan of the BJP is to create a communal division in States such as West Bengal is absolutely clear. On the one hand, it claims that the NRC process will eliminate all those who are "Muslim infiltrators" from Bangladesh. On the other hand, by amending the Citizenship Act, Hindu migrants who have come from across the border over the decades will be given citizenship.

Superfluous and expensive

The NRC process is being undertaken at a time when the Aadhaar identity card has already covered most of the population. There is also the Electors Photo Identity Card issued by the Election Commission of India. The necessity for another citizenship register and identity card is superfluous. Moreover, it will entail a huge amount of expenditure. The NRC process is weighted against the poorest sections of the population – migrant labour, Adivasis living in remote

communities.

The movement against the CAA has correctly linked it to the NRC. The CAA and the NRC must be seen in tandem. While the former would legitimise non-Muslim migrants as citizens, the NRC would target the so-called "Muslim infiltrators". What the Narendra Modi government is aiming to do is to create a category of second-class citizens whose rights would be severely circumscribed.

Prerogative of States

It is imperative that the communal agenda of the BJP and the Central Government is foiled. This requires stoppage of the NRC. An important step in this direction will be to halt the NPR process in the States. Several Chief Ministers have gone on record that they are opposed to the NRC. Even Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar, and Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, whose parties supported the CAA in Parliament, have said that they do not want the

Already Pinarayi Vijayan, Chief Minister of Kerala, and Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, have announced that they are suspending the NPR process in their States. The work in the NPR gets halted since it is the State government which provides personnel for the enumeration and verifiprocess. Other State cation Governments should also do so. If the Central Government stands by the announcement that the NRC process has not begun, then it should withdraw the July 31, 2019 notification for the updation of the

Prakash Karat is a Politburo member of

Ironing out the wrinkles in trade disputes adjudication

The fall of the World Trade Organization Appellate Body is an opportunity to rectify issues with the present system



JAY MANOJ SANKLECHA

Twain famously quipped that "the reports of my death are greatly exaggerated". With the retirement of two of the remaining three members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Appellate Body on De-United States on fresh appointments, the "crown jewel" of the WTO been rendered dysfunctional. Although the demise of the Appellate Body has struck a blow to the rule of law, those drawing up the obituary of the WTO in the aftermath of its demise may have greatly exaggerated its conse-

The consequences of the Appellate Body's fall are overstated for a number of reasons. First, because this effectively marks a return to the dispute settlement system under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which, on the whole, proved surprisingly successful in resolving disputes. Second, most of the disputes at the WTO concern rules that are actually "self-enforcing", with the Appellate Body only policing its

enforcement by domestic authorities. Finally, many States have conceived "alternative" strategies to overcome difficulties arising out of the absence of a functioning Appellate Body.

The Appellate Body was set up in 1995 as a "safety valve" against erroneous panel reports in return for the membership agreeing to adopt reports using the "reverse consensus" rule in lieu of the "positive consensus" rule. Under the erstwhile positive consensus rule, reports issued by panels composed to hear disputes under each of the contracting states favoured its adoption. This effectively handed a veto to the losing

However under the reverse consensus rule, the report would be automatically adopted, unless each member objected to the adoption of a report. To eliminate the likelihood of erroneous panel reports, the membership proposed the establishment of an Appellate Body, and the adoption of the report was postponed till after such appeal was adjudicated by the Appellate Body.

Return to GATT

The fall of the Appellate Body effectively marks a return to the previous system as it hands states an opportunity to appeal an adverse panel ruling and effectively indefi-



that states under the GATT regime would almost always veto unfavourable reports, a remarkable 71% of panel reports were adopted using the positive consensus rule. not adopted by states they served as a basis for the parties to "bilaterally" resolve their disputes in a mutually satisfactory manner. In a vastly changed global economic landscape, the re-emphasis on diplomatic solutions in lieu of judicialised solutions to resolve interstate trade disputes may not be an entirely bad outcome.

Trade remedy matters

The majority of the disputes at the WTO concern trade remedy matters. In such matters, if a state violates the rules, for example those concerning dumping of goods or grant of subsidies, affected states can without recourse to the WTO. adopt countermeasures such as imposition of anti-dumping and countervailing duties. The dispute resolution mechanism primarily

aims to police the adoption of such countermeasures, namely whether they were warranted and otherwise imposed consistently with the rules. As trade scholar Pauwelyn notes, the mechanism is geared to address "over-enforcement" rather than "under-enforcement" of WTO rules. While the fall of the Appellate Body may see the adoption of more unilateral sanctions by states, possibly leading to increased trade wars, it will not render the WTO rules unenforceable. The threat of reciprocal sanctions may in fact serve to enpliant with the rules even in the absence of a functional Appellate Body at the helm of the dispute

Alternative pathways

Finally, although the membership could not prevent the fall of the Appellate Body as we know it; several states have adopted ad hoc solutions. States such as Indonesia and Vietnam have, through a no appeal pact, agreed in advance not to appeal the ruling of the panel in the dispute between them, effectively waiving their right of appeal. The European Union (EU), Norway and Canada have agreed on an interim appeal system for resolving any disputes through arbitration using Article 25 of the dispute settlement understanding in a process mirroring that of the Ap-

pellate Body with former Appellate Body members appointed as arbitrators. The EU has even threatened to launch countermeasures under general international law for countries that lose at the panel stage but refuse recourse to the interim appeal system under Article 25 of the dispute settlement understanding and instead appeal the report "in limbo" with a view to avoid the adoption of the report altogether. Although the overall effectiveness of such alternative strategies to overcome the demise of the WTO Appellate Body is uncerefforts by some members at resolving future trade disputes.

In sum although the fall of the WTO Appellate Body represents a turbulent period in the history of trade disputes adjudication, it by no means spells the end of the WTO. On the contrary it presents an opportunity to the members to rethink and "iron out some of the creases" with the present system. The ongoing negotiations between the United States and India in relation to the Panel report in US-Carbon Steel, where the U.S. has appealled an adverse report to a dysfunctional body, may offer an insight into how the dispute settlement system evolves.

Jay Manoj Sanklecha is a lawyer specialising in international law. The views expressed are personal

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.

Exclusionary combo

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) are a single entity and not separate entities. The enactment of the CAA has become a necessity to give citizenship to non-Muslims excluded from the Assam NRC. Thanks to them, all except Muslims can acquire citizenship by virtue of their religious identity - 'except Muslims' being the operative words. As a mutually complementary mechanism, the CAA-NRC combo sifts out Muslims. It amounts to legalisation of religious discrimination and segregation, pure and simple. It is a betrayal of our common humanity that Muslims are being singled out for denial of citizenship because of their religious faith. It is wrong that masses of people should be pigeon-holed as 'us-andthem' on the basis of religion. The present

government's policy on citizenship hastens India's retreat from secularism. Hence it must be opposed with all the strength we can summon up. Secularism is the legacy of the freedom movement and the talisman that keeps our multireligious country united and its repudiation will be a recipe for balkanisation and disintegration. Making select religions the gateway to citizenship hammers the nail into the Constitution and India's pluralist democracy. As Yogendra Yadav has so admirably put it, what India now needs is not a National Register of Citizens, but a National Register of the Unemployed. G. DAVID MILTON, ruthancode, Tamil Nadu

Hitting the streets

The CAA has shocked the entire country. Consequently, students and educated people from different backgrounds and

platforms are coming to the streets staging protests and raising slogans against this discriminatory and unconstitutional law. On the other hand, the government seems too stubborn to accept the public demand to withdraw or amend the act. Further. steps like shutting down the Internet and using excessive force on protesters are adding fuel to the fire ("Toll touches 16 in U.P. as protests continue," Dec. 22). MUSHAHID RAZA,

Disruptive exercise The government's analysis

on illegal immigrants is not misplaced. People have indeed sneaked in through India's porous borders with countries like Bangladesh and Nepal. However, their numbers are not enormous enough to justify a nationwide NRC, which seems to have been designed with the same

logic as demonetisation to weed out a few corrupt elements, put to inconvenience the whole population. This can lead to unintended consequences, iust like in the case of demonetisation. Rather than spending huge amounts on such a disruptive exercise, the government should take measures to prevent illegal immigration in the future by investing on steps like better border protection, technological surveillance and agreements with neighbouring countries. BALAJEE SUMANT CHEMOTE,

Bad black money law Misinformation regarding

the quantum of black money in the economy, which is sometimes blown out of proportions by people with vested interests, has resulted in the legislature making bad laws on the same issue (Editorial page, "Inaccurate

diagnosis, draconian remedy," Dec. 20). The fact that there are a huge number of tax evaders in our country also shows the lack of faith people have in the government's service delivery apparatus. The government must wake up to the problem, and take a proactive approach to solve the issues faced by the citizens to regain their confidence, and also adopt a carrot-and-stick policy to solve the black money issue. It can draft realistic policies which provide incentives like less tax on undisclosed black money

assistance treaties, the government can expose the black money hoarders and confiscate their assets. It should be remembered that every law made must act as

an enabler for the lawabiding citizen and as a deterrent to the lawbreaking citizen. Bad laws help no one. SUPREETH K.,

and an assurance that there

will be no harassment by

the tax officials. Further,

through mutual legal

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: India's foreign reserves stood at \$454.49 billion as of December 13, and not \$554 billion as the Business page report titled "Import

cover rises to 10 months: RBI" (Dec. 21, 2019) said. A Sports page report titled "Taking it week by week" (Dec 21.

2019. some editions) erroneously said that Sumit Nagal took a set off Roger Federer at the Australian Open. It was at the U.S. Open that Nagal took a set off Federer in the first round. In the "Corrections and Clarifications" column (Dec. 21, 2019),

Ishan Porel's name was wrongly listed under additions to the Rajasthan Royals squad. Actually, he is under the Kings 11 Punjab

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300;

A Hindu critique of Hindutva

We need to rescue religion from zealots and rediscover the spirit of religiosity



AVIJIT PATHAK

The question I ask myself as we witness the assertion of the ideology of Hindutva and its resultant fear among minorities is this: Is it possible to have yet another reading of my religion or the experience of religiosity and take part in a collective movement for creating a society filled with love, empathy and pluralism? This is both a sociopolitical and an ethicoexistential question. At a time when the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 has caused fear and existential insecurity among the minorities, there is a danger of the movement against the discriminatory nature of the CAA degenerating into violent communal politics. Therefore, it is important to introspect and redefine one's politics, culture and religiosity for a collective struggle.

Yes, there is a Left-Ambedkarite version of secularism, and many of us -

Transcending limiting identities

university-educated/metropolitan intellectuals and civil society activists – are reasonably free from the burden of the conditioned mind that religious orthodoxy causes. Yet, a careful look at India's culture and society would indicate that religion is all-pervasive: it can be seen in beliefs, rituals as well as in the dangerous stereotypes we nurture about others. Hence, the mere act of debunking religion will not help. We need to rescue religion from zealots and rediscover the spirit of religiosity as, to use Rabindranath Tagore's language, our 'surplus'. It is in this context that as someone born in a Hindu family, I would like to critique Hindutva or, for that matter, any deterministic/one dimensional doctrine of religion. This critique emanates not from scientism or soulless secularism, but from deep religiosity, the

The kind of Hindutva we see today is against some of the finest aspects of my religiosity that I learned as a Hindu. While the discourse of Hindutva with its hypermasculine nationalism is essentially monolithic

urge to transcend limiting identities.



"Even though it may appear impossible to imagine a world where Kabir and Rumi, Gandhi and Maulana Azad, and Tagore and Nizamuddin Auliya work with us, it is a task we ought to strive for." Gandhi and Azad in Bombay. • • GETTY IMAGES

spiritual pilgrimage to Noakhali in

1946, not in the calculative Machia-

vellian urge to build a temple at

Ayodhya at the demolished site of the

Babri Masjid. Moreover, there is a

culture of conversation and argu-

mentation in the broad tradition of

Hinduism. While Nachiketa dared to

converse with Yama, the proponents

of Lokayata did argue with the fol-

lowers of Vedanta. In a way, it is pos-

sible to be a Hindu with the spirit of

pluralism and dialogue in our con-

sciousness. Paradoxically, it is possi-

ble to be a Hindu, yet be a non-Hin-

du. This is why the ideology of

Hindutva is not in conformity with

religiosity as people's inner quest for

moving towards a world of love and

times. First, as the CAA and the Na-

tional Register of Citizens together

indicate, the minority community

has further been stigmatised. And in

a society with a long history of the

tension-ridden relationship between

the two communities, the ghettoisa-

tion of space and mind has further

erected a huge wall of separation.

Hence, the danger is that the anger

against the CAA might take a commu-

nal turn, and it is not impossible for

the 'nationalist' media to project it as

a conflict between 'patriotic' Hindus

and 'problematic' Muslims. From

Seelampur in Delhi to Aligarh Mus-

lim University in Uttar Pradesh,

these 'Muslim sites' might be imme-

diately projected as 'war zones'. And

in a vicious cycle of humiliation and

We are passing through difficult

togetherness.

and centralising, I have learned about the beauty of the elasticity of human consciousness and merger of multiple faiths and paths from the likes of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. While the doctrine of militant Hindutva is recklessly engaged in an act of 'othering' and stigmatising Musremarkably

lims, I have learned about love, empathy and listening from M.K. Gandnuanced engagement with Hinduism. Likewise, while Hindutva intensifies aggression, Mira's bhajans teach me that love and religiosity are not separate. The character of 'Anandamayee' that Tagore created in his classic novel Gora makes me see the enchanting power of maternity, the current that absorbs everything. And hence, I begin to see the hollowness in the assertion of brute masculinity seen in instances of mob lynching by zealots, which ruthlessly denies the possibility of an evolutionary journey towards what Sri Aurobindo regarded as the 'divine consciousness'.

Yajnavalkya's conversation with Maitreyi in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad helps me conceive the depths of spirituality, the quest for the Eternal, and also helps me see the ugliness in a doctrine that reduces religion into mere identity politics, or a weapon for intensifying the narcissistic ego of the 'Hindu nation'. Engagement with the Bhagavad Gita acquires a different meaning. I see the ethos of niskam karma (or the spirit of work as an offering without

selfish interests) in Gandhi's politico-

provocation, the minorities could feel more and more lonely.

A culture of communion

Majoritarian Hindutva is not merely against Muslims; it is no less hostile to those Hindus who think and live differently - while some would be castigated as 'leftists', 'pseudo secularists' and 'urban Naxals', the rest would be regarded as 'effeminate idealists' or 'Gandhian fools'. Therefore, in such a situation, it is important to try to evolve a culture of combetween the munion communities, and fight together for a better world. However, the discourse of communalism or a politics based on exclusivist religious identity (and even though majority communalism is immensely destructive, minority communalism is no answer to it) is essentially against this spirit of communion. Likewise, a soulless secularism which fails to deal with the religious/spiritual quest doesn't succeed much in touching people's hearts for inspiring them to create a new moral politics for collective redemption.

In troubled and directionless times, Gandhi could tap the therapeutic power of religiosity and move towards this communion. He could be a Hindu; yet, dialogic, experimental and elastic. In a way, as Nathuram Godse might have thought, he was also a non-Hindu. Likewise, I would imagine that a Muslim with true religiosity is equally eager to resist the attempt by the orthodox clergy or the fundamentalist elements to hijack the religious sphere. He/she ought to be inherently against the Talibanisation of consciousness. Because true religiosity is the art of using the 'form' in order to be formless. Imagine a world where Kabir and Rumi, Gandhi and Maulana Azad, and Tagore and Nizamuddin Auliya work with us, become our educators, and inspire us to heal the world through the power of love and understanding. Even though in the age of dystopia it may appear to be impossible, it is a challenging task we ought to strive for. This is precisely the most important sadhana, or the meaning of being a 'Hindu' - a seeker who seeks to break the iron cage of Hindutva or, for that matter, any other fundamentalist doctrine.

Avijit Pathak is Professor of Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Towards a non-toxic news environment

Readers are invited to give their views on the changes in the news industry over the last two decades



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

As a prelude to this column, I would like readers to read the lead article by Suhrith Parthasarathy, "The virtual effacement of civil liberty" (December 21), as well as the firstperson account in The Hindu's online edition by the paper's U.P. correspondent, Omar Rashid, of how he was picked up, threatened and released by the U.P. police. These articles reveal how the space for free expression, free dissemination of information and free thought in India has shrunk.

Most news organisations have moved to a mobile-first editorial policy to cater to readers who access news on hand-held devices. Hence, the disturbing data that 67% of the world's documented shutdowns took place in India last year amounts to a formal censorship, which is violative of Article 19 of the Constitution. And if journalists are going to be harassed and manhandled in the most populous State of the country because of their religious identity, then the situation we are living in now is certainly worse than what this country faced during the Emergency.

Failure to ensure protection of rights

As a news ombudsman, my concerns are not only about accuracy and fairness in journalism but also the overall environment. It is only in an enabling environment that independent news media can work fearlessly to help citizens make informed choices. Internal lapses in a news organisation are relatively easy to address. A visible mending process within responsible organisations creates a sense of accountability to produce news and opinions in an ethical manner. Publishing corrections and clarifications are an effective way to rectify mistakes.

However, the failure of the executive and the judiciary to ensure constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and rights is sending shivers down the spine of every reporter. Journalists find this new normal difficult to handle because they pay a price for simply doing their duty. Since the days of the Watergate investigation, journalists have been saying that journalism is not a crime. There are numerous reports titled "Journalism is not a crime" published by different organisations such as UNESCO, Amnesty International, and Reporters without Borders. How I wish those in the executive, the judiciary and the legislature would read these reports!

Changes in a digital world

Readers are an integral part of the news media's struggle for its independence, autonomy and sustainability. Credible information remains not only the bedrock of a vibrant democracy but also helps it differentiate itself from a mobocracy that is fed by shrill rhetoric. News organisations need to come up with viable strategies to deal with the digital environment. One of the finest news design experts in the world, Mario Garcia, has spelt out what 2020 holds for the news industry. The crucial four points of his reading are: "It's a mobile-first world for the audience. It's an opportune time to become more aggressive about monetizing content. It's time to stop romanticizing the print product give it its place, but not at the head of the table. It's not too late to become serious about the impact of audio. Start that podcast now!"

It is evident that journalistic values, principles and best practices should guide the information landscape. We cannot permit trend-driven algorithms to shape the generation and the dissemination of information. Former publisher of The Wall Street Journal, L. Gordon Crovitz, rightly says that even to fight disinformation and misinformation we need journalism, not secret algorithms. "Watching Silicon Valley exercise news judgment has been like watching Walter Cronkite try to write code in Python," he writes.

I would like to know what readers think about the changes in the news industry over the first two decades of this century. What are the changes you like? What are the changes you want this newspaper to discard? Craig Newmark, whose charities fund trustworthy journalism and the information ecosystem, drew our attention to the spread of the 'truth sandwich' in American journalism. This means that a lie is sandwiched between the truth and a fact-check, as a means to confront disinformation. Do we need such a system in India? Over the next two weeks, I will collate readers' reflections in order to devise a method to keep our news environment free from toxicity.

readers editor @thehindu.co. in

The Man Prindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Condemnation of Stalin

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 23, 1969

The Soviet Communist Party to-day [Decem-

ber 27, Moscowl marked the 90th birth anni-

versary of Stalin by formally reiterating condemnation of him originally made under the

leadership of ousted party chief Nikita

Khrushchev. It was the first time the late dic-

tator's birthday had been marked since the

80th anniversary in 1959, when Mr. Khrush-

chev was in power. A 750-word unsigned ed-

itorial today in the main party newspaper

Pravda bearing all the stamps of an official

party statement, was virtually identical in its

assessment of Stalin to a similar editorial in

1959, which was twice the length. Though

Stalin had made a great contribution in the

ideological-political battle with the enemies

of Leninism he had made "theoretical and

political mistakes which took on a serious

character in the last period of his life", the

It is not without reason that the London

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DEC. 23, 1919.

Ireland and Home Rule.

editorial said.

(From an Editorial)

FACTWISE

Mixed signals on NRC

PM Modi's remarks on the National Register of Citizens contradict the Home Minister's claims

SUMANT SEN & HARI NARAYAN

Addressing a rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that there have been no discussions on an all-India National Register of Citizens (NRC) since the BJP-led government assumed power in 2014. He said that the NRC was implemented in Assam alone following the Supreme Court's orders. Is this statement accurate?

Claims and counterclaims

On November 20, 2019, in a reply to a question by Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta, Home Minister Amit Shah said that the NRC exercise would be carried out across India. He said that the gazette notification of September 7, 2015, which was made in the case of Assam, would be applicable to the rest of India as well. The Prime Minister's remarks on the "nationwide NRC" therefore contradict what the Home Minister has been saying on

"Nationwide NRC" also finds a mention in the BJP's 2019 election manifesto. Under the section 'Combating Infiltration', the manifesto clearly mentions that NRC will be implemented across the country. The manifesto says, "There has been a huge change in the cultural and linguistic identity of some areas due to illegal immigration, resulting in an adverse impact on local people's livelihood and employment. We will expeditiously complete the National Register of Citizens process in these areas on priority. In future we will implement the NRC in a phased man-

ner in other parts of the country". The Prime Minister also denied the existence of detention centres in India. In response to a question by Md. Nadimul Haque in the Rajya Sabha on December 11, 2019, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, said that the Central government had circulated a document titled Model Detention/Holding Centre Manual to all State and Union Territories on January 9, 2019. He also revealed in another answer in the House that, as on November 22, 2019, Assam already had six functioning detention centres with 988 foreigners lodged in them.

In response to Mr. Haque, Mr. Rai also said that "detention centres are set up by State Governments/ Union Territory Administration (UTs) as per requirement to detain illegal migrants or convicted foreigners pending deportation to their native country. Instructions have been issued to all State Governments/UTs from time to time for setting up the detention centres... and [States/UTs] will not require any specific approval from the [MHA] for setting up of such detention centres". He also said that the government has approved a detention centre at Goalpara in Assam at a budget of ₹46.5 crore.

While referring to opposition among a section of the political class to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, Mr. Modi said, "The very people opposing citizenship rights to refugees had supported in 2004 a move to deprive Jammu and Kashmir's women of rights if they married someone outside the State." His reference was perhaps to the Jammu and Kashmir Permanent Residents (Disqualification) Bill, 2004. This contentious issue was adjudicated upon by the J&K High Court in 2002 in State and others v. Dr Susheela Sawhney. In that judgment the court said that "a daughter of a permanent resident marrying a non permanent resident will not lose the status of permanent resident of the state of Jammu and Kashmir".

The Peoples Democratic Party, which was in a coalition government with the Congress in 2004, brought the said Bill to overturn the decision. The Bill passed 47-34 in the Lower House in the then State of J&K. However, partly due to opposition by the Congress, it lapsed in the Upper House. Peerzada Muhammad Sayeed, the Congress chief for J&K, was reported to have said: "There are thousands of students studying in various States and some have married there. If we enact this law it would create problems for them. Legally and morally, the Congress will not be part of any Bill which is anti-women".

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DATA POINT

Burden of proof

According to an official Q and A*, "citizenship can be proved by any documents related to date & place of birth." Documents are "likely to include voter cards, passports, Aadhaar, birth certificates, school leaving certificates, etc." An analysis of the coverage levels of these documents shows that not everyone who is eligible for a particular document possesses it. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Birth certificate | In 2000, only 56% of newborns were registered. In the years prior to that, the share of registered births was much lower. While it has gone up since, even as of 2017 at least 15% births were unregistered



Aadhaar card | As of December 2019, 89.6% of the population have Aadhaar cards. The coverage was particularly low in Assam (17.6%), Meghalaya (29.3%), Nagaland (57.0%). The Aadhaar Act says the card cannot be a proof of citizenship 89.6%

Passport | As on December 2018, only 7.96 crore citizens held valid passports (only 5.8% of the population at that time). Aadhaar is accepted as proof of address and photo identity for passport applications

Bank account | As of 2017, 80% of the adult population had access to bank accounts. Aadhaar can be used to open a bank account * Q & A ON NRC (NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS) RELEASED BY PIB. SOURCE: CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, UIDAI, RESERVE BANK OF INDIA, ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Voter ID | As of 2017, 92% of the eligible population had voter ID cards. Also, in some age cohorts the coverage was much lower. Aadhaar can be used as proof to obtain a voter ID card

Age group	% gap in registration
18-19	40.26
20-24	75.12
60-64	81.94
65-69	85.37
70-74	81.24
85+	81.04

Education certificate | Less than 80% of the population eligible to go to secondary school were enrolled as of 2016-17. In 2004-05, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) was even lower (51.7%). Table shows GER in secondary level

Year	GER
2004-05	51.7
2005-06	52.2
2006-07	53.5
2014-15	76.91
2015-16	79.3
2016-17	79.35

Times has achieved an unrivalled position in the newspaper press of England. The Times never fails to speak out boldly and convincingly on the abuses and blunders of the Government when dealing with great questions of policy or procedure. It is no respector of persons or powers when unjustice, evasion, force or partiality characterize the powers that-be in their action towards public matters, and domestic or foreign relations; and this policy of fearless and just criticism has never been more evident than in regard to the English Government actions in Ireland, India, and Egypt - the three countries that are making a gallant, if so far ineffectual,

struggle for political emancipation. Only the other day we cited the opinion of the Times on the Dyer atrocities in the Punjab, and Egypt and its concerns have been generously, treated; but with regard to Ireland the "Thunderer" has recently condemned in most emphatic language, the shilly-shallying, the delay, the evasions the general policy with regard to the treatment of Irish claims and aspirations. Lord French, however capable as a military officer, is certainly no statesman, and his drastic action in trying to suppress and eradicate Sinn Fein on the eve of an announcement granting a sub-

stantial measure of home rule to Ireland, the

Times declares to be not only futile but irreconcilable.

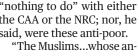
FROM PAGE ONE

Pan-India NRC was never on the table: PM

"...lies are being peddled...if not anything else, at least value the education you've received. At least read what this CAA and NRC are once. You are educated people. I appeal to the youth of the country: please read these. And I want to tell those who still have any doubts that these rumours of detention centres being spread by the Congress and Urban Naxals are completely false, malicious and full of unholy intentions to destroy this country. Yeh jhooth hai, jhooth hai, jhooth hai (This a lie, a lie, a lie)," he said.

The Muslims who belong to the soil of India, the Prime Minister added, had "nothing to do" with either the CAA or the NRC; nor, he said, were these anti-poor.

"The Muslims...whose an-





Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi

cestors are the children of Maa Bharti (Mother India) have nothing to do with both the CAA and the NRC. The Muslims of the country are neither being sent to detention centres nor is there a detention centre in India...this is a white lie. This is a bad-intentioned game. This is an unholy game," he

Tense wait for Jharkhand result

BJP set 65-seat target, but exit polls give marginal edge to JMM-Congress alliance

SATYASUNDAR BARIK RANCHI

Results of the Jharkhand Assembly election, held in five phases, will be declared on Monday with the ruling BJP finding itself in a spot of bother to retain power in the mineral-rich State.

Against the backdrop of the exit polls giving a marginal advantage to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led Opposition alliance in a close contest, counting will take place across 24 districts. The postal ballots will be counted first and then the EVMs will be brought in. Paper slips generated by the VVPATs will also be counted.

The overall voter turnout in this Assembly election was estimated at 65.23% as against 66.53% in 2014. The counting will decide victors among 1,216 candidates including 127 women for the



Long process: The Jharkhand Assembly election was held in five phases. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

81-member House.

The stakes are high for the BJP in Jharkhand, especially after the Maharashtra setback, where the saffron party could not form the government. The party had launched the campaign with the tag line Abki bar, 65 par, aspiring to win 65 seats. But going by the exit poll results, the target looks improbable.

The BJP had won 37 seats in the outgoing Assembly.

The India Today-Axis My India survey, which has been close to the final figures in the last few exit polls, has even predicted the return of the JMM-Congress alliance to power whereas others have forecast a close finish.

Chief Minister Raghubar Das, who is the first to complete the five-year term in the State, is keeping his fingers crossed for his own win from Jamshedpur (East) and the party's victory in the State. It is believed that his former Cabinet colleague, Saryu Rai, and Congress candidate Gourav Vallabh have given a tough fight.

All eyes will be on the poll outcome in two constituencies, Dumka and Barhait, from where Hemant Soren, the alliance's chief ministerial candidate, has fought. The JMM-Congress alliance has pinned hopes in 18 seats in Santhal Pargana, a traditional stronghold of the regional party.

In the event of a hung Assembly, smaller regional parties like the All Jharkhand Students Union and Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik) are likely to play cru-

Shah announced NRC in Parliament: Congress

PM contradicting HM, says Surjewala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Congress on Sunday rejected Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charge that the party was 'misleading' citizens over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC).

"The Opposition has not brought up this issue out of a vacuum. There is a context to that; [it] is the Home Minister's statement in both the Houses in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, it is in the public domain...That has created an environment of fear, insecurity and uncertainty in the country and it is primarily government, which is responsible for that," said Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Rajya

Sabha Anand Sharma. Senior Congress leader

A.K. Antony accused the government of coming up with the CAA and the NRC to divert attention from his government's abject failure, unprecedented unemployment and collapse of economy.

"It's Modi who is telling lies," he said.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala too targeted the government on Twitter by asking: "Two things need to be answered: Is the Prime Minister and Home Minister not on same page? Is there a rift between the party and the government? Or is that both together are making a fool of people?"

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee too said the Prime Minister was contradicting his Home Minister.

Cong. hopes to ride the youth wave

Priyanka, Rahul try to connect with protesters; party CMs show no such intent

SANDEEP PHUKAN

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi took to Twitter on Sunday to reach out to the youth and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "destroying their future".

"Dear Youth of India, Modi and Shah have destroyed your future. They can't face your anger over the lack of jobs and damage they've done to the economy. That's why they are dividing our beloved India and hiding behind hate. We can only defeat them by responding with love towards every Indian," Mr. Gandhi tweeted.

The spontaneous protests by students against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) across the country has offered an opportunity for the Opposition to reach out to the youth who have decisively voted in favour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party in the past two Lok Sabha elections.

Youth voter base

In the 2014 Lok Sabha election, Election Commission data showed that of 81.5 crore voters, 2.3 crore were in the 18-19 age group. And



Catch 'em young: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi joined a group of student protesters at India Gate last Friday. • PTI

this constituency of firsttime voters is believed to have played a crucial role in powering the BJP to the Centre.

Congress leaders seem to have started a calibrated campaign to reclaim this segment. Last Friday, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, along with her teenage daughter, joined a group of student protesters at Delhi's India Gate.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, too, has taken up the issue of action against students of Jamia Millia Islamia by the Delhi Police and petitioned President Ram Nath Kovind on December 17 to intervene. "We are anguished at the manner in which the police have dealt

A demonstration against the

Citizenship Act in Assam on

law. He added that the prot-

ests would continue despite

the BJP, which brought CAA

with West Bengal in mind

and apparently to help the

Bengalis left out of Assam's

National Register of Citi-

zens. But like CAA, the steps

taken to please communi-

ties feeling threatened be-

cause of the Act, would

prove to be a bane for Ben-

galis," Congress spokesper-

son Abhijjit Majumdar said.

dents' Union leader Rezaul

Karim Sarkar agreed that

the Bengal-origin Muslims

could be targeted with the

land policy as well as crea-

tion of new councils for indi-

genous groups covering

areas where migrant Mus-

lims live. "We will be dis-

cussing the issues for neces-

sary action," he told The

Hindu.

All Assam Minority Stu-

"The mask has come off

the sops.

with peaceful demonstrations across India. We have the example in Delhi where the police entered the Jamia Hostel Women's dragged women students out," Ms. Gandhi had said after meeting the President.

But many have questioned if the Congress's response has been somewhat muted and why Chief Ministers of the party-ruled States such Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan or Punjab have not taken to the streets to mobilise people as done by Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayı Vıjayan.

Former party chief Rahul Gandhi too was missing from the action as he was away in

CAA, NRC are

India's internal

South Korea for a programme of the Overseas Congress.

Veterans said the student and youth wing of the Congress failed to give leadership to the current protests as they did during the Mandal Commission agitation against the V.P. Singh government in 1990-91.

"It is the Congress that was at the forefront against the CAA in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Congress is also part of the people's protests but we don't want to hijack them. It's not about politics but about saving the Constitution," former Union Minister Manish Tewari told The Hindu.

Mr. Tewari said the current protests were a manifestation of the latent anger against the Modi government for not fulfilling election promises such as creating 10 crore jobs in five years and economic progress. And that is a development his party is mindful of as it prepares to take on the Union government.

"The CAA protests have provided the students a platform to articulate this large anger under the banner of Save the Constitution campaign," he said.

India, Iran agree to accelerate Chabahar port development

Indians in Tehran raise concerns over Citizenship Act

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Days after his visit to Washington, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif for a meeting of the 19th India-Iran joint commission, including talks on the Chabahar port, during a visit that could see him dealing with concerns of Indian expatriates over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as

In a tweet after the meeting on Sunday, Mr. Zarif said they had "excellent discussions on closer bilateral relations and regional and global issues affecting our respective countries," adding that India-Iran ties are "ancient, historic and unbreakable".

Productive meeting Mr. Jaishankar said the meet-

ing with Mr. Zarif and the Iranian delegation had been "very productive". " [We] reviewed the entire gamut of cooperation [and] agreed on accelerating our Chabahar project," he said in a tweet.



Iran Foreign Minister Javad Zarif welcoming his Indian counterpart S. Jaishankar in Tehran on Sunday.

The meeting of the two ministers was the first since last month, when Mr. Zarif had told a group of visiting Indian journalists that he was "disappointed" that India had allowed itself to be "bullied" by the United States and stopped all oil imports from Iran. Speaking in Delhi, Iran's Ambassador Ali Chegeni had earlier suggested that India's adherence to U.S. sanctions was also affecting Chabahar port development plans.

In Washington last week. however, a senior U.S. official made it clear that it would continue its "narrow exemption" to India to develop the Chabahar port, re-

cognising its role as "as a lifeline to Afghanistan in terms for India to be able to export humanitarian supplies and potentially helping Afghanistan diversify its export opportunities.

Subsequently, diplomats from India, Iran and Afghanistan met in Delhi on Friday and discussed several new initiatives for the trilateral project at Chabahar.

Citizenship Act flagged

Meanwhile, the *Mehr* news agency reported that a "number of Indian businesspersons, professionals, university and seminary students and scholars living in Iran" sought a meeting with Mr. Iaishankar to discuss protests in India.

MEA officials did not respond to a query about whether the groups had been granted a meeting with Mr. Jaishankar, or if the CAA had come up during his talks with the Iranian leadership. Mr. Jaishankar is expected to meet with Iranian President Hassan Kouhani before he leaves Tehran on Monday and travel next to Oman for bilateral talks.

OIC voices concern, flags impact of CAA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The 57-member Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) issued a statement of "concern" on Sunday, criticising the government over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the Babri Masjid verdict of the Supreme Court. In a statement, the general secretariat of the Jeddah-based OIC, which is led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, said it was closely following "recent developments affecting [the] Muslim minority in India."

"[The OIC] reiterates its

call to ensure the safety of the Muslim minority and the protection of Islamic holy places in India," the statement said, invoking the United Nations charter against discrimination. "In this regard, any action, contrary to these principles and obligations, may lead to further tensions and may have serious implications on peace and security across the region," it read. The statement comes close on the heels of criti cism from another grouping of Islamic nations at the "Kuala Lumpur summit".

Mixed response to Assam land plan

It is aimed at indigenous groups

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A bid by the Assam government to assuage tensions over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) with a proposed legislation to protect the land rights of indigenous communities, has been received with caution.

The move to "safeguard" Assamese culture and land rights is seen as a ploy to put an end to the anti-CAA protests.

Tribal and other indigenous groups perceived to benefit from the slew of sops, such as upgraded councils and financial packages, have welcomed the decisions but said the government needs to first clarify how it plans to implement the plan in view of demo-

graphic complications. "The plan for creating a council for us is appreciated. But we are unaware of the concept and the area to be covered," said Hitesh Barman, leader of the All Assam Koch-Rajbongshi Students' Union.

AASU response

"We would have been happier had the government decided to ask the Centre to repeal CAA and grant ST status to six communities," said Lurinjyoti Gogoi, general secretary of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) that has been spearheading the movement against the new



ment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) are India's internal issues, Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen has said. But he is worried that any "uncertainty" in India is likely to affect its neighbours.

As the protests continue nationwide against the CAA, Mr. Momen hopes the situation will "cool down". Citizenship "The

(Amendment) Bill [which has become an Act] and the NRC are India's internal issues. The Indian government has assured us again and again that these are the domestic issues. They are doing it because of legal and other reasons," he told PTI here. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had told his counterpart Sheikh Hasina that under no circumstances would it affect Bangladesh, he said.

Mr. Momen said his country trusted India. However, he said, "We are the no.1 friend of India. So, if there is uncertainty in India, it is likely to affect its neighbours. When there was an economic downturn in the U.S., it affected many countries... That is worrisome. We hope the situation will cool down and India can get out of it... It is their internal issue. They should deal with it."



A sea of protest: Thousands taking out a rally through Dharavi on Sunday. • AADESH CHOUDHARY

Huge turnout at anti-CAA protests across Mumbai

Rallies were taken out in various localities and Thane

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Several thousand people on Sunday marched through Dharavi in Mumbai in protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the December 15 police action against Jamia Millia Islamia students.

The protest was held on 90-foot road in Dharavi and saw participants holding placards against the CAA and the proposed National Register of Citizens exercise that some BJP leaders have been claiming would be held

nationwide. Similar protests were held at Malvani in the northern suburb of Malad where some protesters shouted slogans in favour of the Mumbai police whose efficiency ensured that a massive rally on Thursday at August Kranti Maidan went off without a hitch.

On the other hand, in Ghatkopar, a BJP stronghold, several people joined a pro-CAA rally, with participants hailing the Narendra Modi government for the

In the suburb of Thane, young and old alike from all communities came together against the CAA, the proposed NRC and police brutality against protesters.

As many as 250 people gathered at the Hazuri Dargah in Thane (West) to take part in the peaceful protest. College students, working professionals and residents, along with local leaders and and religious elders raised slogans and displayed placards. The Wagle Estate police had imposed strict restrictions as protesters thronged the narrow lanes outside the dargah.

"Those who had no part in building the country are now trying to divide it. But it is in the very character of this country to stand united. I must applaud all the students gathered here," Dalit leader and activist Sambhaji Bhagat said.

(With inputs from PTI)

Priyanka demands release of party leader

Sadaf Jafar was arrested by U.P. police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday demanded the immediate release of party spokesperson Sadaf Iafar. the only woman activist arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police following the Lucknow violence over the Citizenship Amendment Act.

"Our female activist Sadaf Zafar was asking the police to catch the miscreants. Instead, the U.P. police beat her up and arrested her. She is the mother of two young children. This is sheer excess. Such repression is unacceptable," tweeted Ms. Vadra in Hindi, and added, "Immediately release our woman party worker."

Ms. Jafar was arrested on December 19 along with 150 others when the protests against the CAA in Lucknow turned violent. At that moment, she was streaming a

live video on Facebook Live, and could be heard asking the police to act against stone pelters. The Uttar Pradesh police have charged her with serious offences under the Indian Penal Code, including inciting violence and damaging public

Ms. Jafar's arrest came to light after her sister Naheed Varma wrote a Facebook post. "My sister Sadaf has been arrested yesterday from Parivartan Chowk. Totally uncalled for and cowardly action of the police! They have slapped charges like sabotage and attempt to murder on her while she was reporting live on how police was complicit in sabotage at the dharna!" she wrote on Friday.

U.P. Congress leader Rajiv Tyagi told The Hindu that the party would offer all possible assistance to Ms. Jafar.



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