



AIIMS team conducts second autopsy on accused in Disha case

page 8



Mental disorders more common in southern States, says study

page 9



Saudi court sentences five to death for Khashoggi murder

page 14

Bumrah back in Indian squad for Sri Lanka, Australia series

page 18



PRINTED AT · CHENNAI · COIMBATORE · BENGALURU · HYDERABAD · MADURAI · NOIDA · VISAKHAPATNAM · THIRUVANANTHAPURAM · KOCHI · VIJAYAWADA · MANGALURU · TIRUCHIRAPPALLI · KOLKATA · HUBBALLI · MOHALI · MALAPPURAM · MUMBAI · TIRUPATI · LUCKNOW · CUTTACK · PATNA

NEARBY



Envoy to U.S. Shringla is next Foreign Secretary

NEW DELHI
The government has appointed India's Ambassador to the United States Harsh Vardhan Shringla, an expert in India's neighbourhood, as the next Foreign Secretary. Mr. Shringla will take over from Vijay Gokhale on January 29 for a two-year tenure.

NEWS | PAGE 12

Delhi Cabinet passes electric vehicle policy

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Cabinet on Monday gave approval to an electric vehicle policy with the aim to reduce air pollution. Through subsidies, the policy aims to raise the number of e-vehicles to 25% of the total registered vehicles in the city by 2024.

CITY | PAGE 4

JMM coalition wrests Jharkhand

Hemant Soren to become Chief Minister again as his party wins 30 seats

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
RANCHI

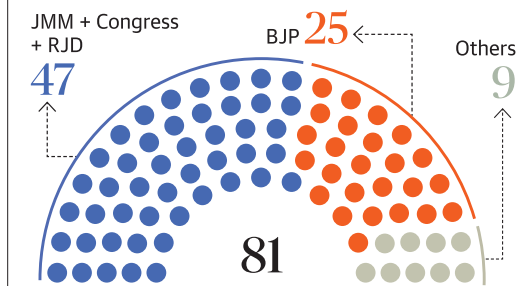
The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led alliance on Monday is on course to post a convincing victory in the Assembly election, handing a crushing defeat to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has lost another State after the recent setback in Maharashtra.

The JMM, the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal crossed the halfway mark in the 81-seat Assembly by a comfortable margin. The JMM and the Congress also emerged victorious in 47 seats – their highest ever tally since the formation of Jharkhand in 2000.

In this process, the JMM also became the single largest party with 30 seats, pushing the BJP to second position with 25 seats compared to 37 in 2014. The Congress increased its tally to 16 compared to six in 2014.

Decisive victory

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress-RJD coalition won/led in 47 seats as the JMM emerged as the single largest party in the State. While the BJP had the highest vote share, it won/led in 25 seats only



Change of guard: JMM working president Hemant Soren seeking the blessings of his father and party chief Shibhu Soren on Monday. • PTI

Interestingly, over 33.4% of the votes went in favour of the BJP while the JMM and the Congress polled 18.7% and 13.9% votes respectively.

CM routed

JMM executive president Hemant Soren won from both the seats he contested –

Dumka and Barhait – while outgoing Chief Minister Raghuraj Das could not retain his Jamshedpur East seat. "I express my gratitude to the people of Jharkhand for giving a clear mandate, which is a result of the hard work and sacrifice of Shibhu Soren [his father] over the

years. The time has come to achieve the goal for which Jharkhand as a separate State was created. This is a new chapter in the history of the State," Mr. Soren said.

CONTINUED ON | PAGE 12

JHARKHAND SIGNALS | EDITORIAL

MORE REPORTS | PAGE 13

Uddhav, Jagan rule out NRC exercise in their States

Expressing dissent

Chief Ministers of 11 States have expressed opposition to the National Register of Citizens

■ States whose Chief Ministers have expressed opposition to the NRC and have said they will not implement it - Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra & Jharkhand (CM-elect)

■ States whose Chief Ministers have expressed opposition to the NRC - Odisha & Punjab

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI/VIJAYAWADA

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday assured delegations from the Muslim community that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens will not be implemented in the State.

Addressing a public

meeting at Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy also categorically stated that the State government would not support the proposed implementation of the National Register of Citizens. With this, Andhra Pradesh joins 10 other States in opposing or refusing to implement the National Register of Citizens.

ter of Citizens.

The Maharashtra government would not construct any detention centre and Muslims should not fear being thrown out of the State, Mr. Thackeray told two separate delegations of leading Muslim leaders, ulemas and maulanans.

CONTINUED ON | PAGE 12

Gutted by fire



Tragic end: Nine persons, including a two-month-old girl, were killed when a major fire broke out at a three-storey building in north-west Delhi's Kirari in the early hours of Monday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR (REPORT ON PAGE 3)

Jharkhand results a verdict against Act, NRC: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Monday that the people of Jharkhand have conclusively given their verdict that they do not want the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens.

Congratulating Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's executive president Hemant Soren on the party-led alliance winning the Assembly elections, Mr. Kejriwal ascribed the ruling BJP's defeat in the State to "non-performance" and "arrogance". "People want to vote on the basis of work and they (BJP) didn't work. Second, BJP's arrogance is visible throughout the country," he said.

A 'sad' reality that has long been in existence in Assam

Persons released from detention centres recount 'horror'

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Guwahati-based retired Army officer Mohammed Sanaullah smiled wryly as he watched Prime Minister Narendra Modi's televised speech at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on Sunday.

His "ears laughed" when Mr. Modi said: "No Indian Muslims are being sent to detention centres and neither are there any detention centres in this country."

On June 8, the Gauhati High Court released Sanaullah on bail from the Goalpara central jail, one of six in Assam that also serve as detention centres for people declared non-citizens by 100 functional Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs). He was lodged in the Goalpara centre on May 28. "So what is that place where I spent 11 horrific days called? If I had not been sent to a detention centre by the State machinery, maybe I am not a Muslim too," he told *The Hindu*.

'It is actually hell'

About 40 km west in Khopanikuchi, sexagenarian Rehat Ali was equally amused.

"The PM is right. It is actually hell, not a detention centre," he said.

Ali was released on May 13 after the High Court declared him an Indian.

The family of Dulal Paul, who died of health complications on October 13 after spending two years at the

A bone of contention

Assam has six detention centres at Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Jorhat, Kokrajhar, Silchar and Tezpur

■ They are run by Assam's Home Department with approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs

■ On November 30, Assam's Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said these centres had 988 declared foreigners till November 20, while 935

others had been released after court orders, 28 people died since 2016

■ A sum of ₹4.74 crore was spent at the detention centres since 2010

■ An exclusive detention centre at Matia in Goalpara district will hold some 3,000 inmates and it would cost ₹46.51 crore.



Tezpur detention centre, said the denial of such centres ridiculed his death. "If there are no detention centres, my father was not sent to one after being declared a foreigner. In that case, the government should bring him back to life," one of his three sons said.

The family had refused to accept Paul's body for a week, putting the Sarbananda Sonowal government in a spot. Their contention was that since he was marked a foreigner, the government should send his body to whichever country it thought he had come from.

On November 30, Assam's Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary

provided data on the number of detention centres and how many declared foreigners they housed. This was two days after Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said in Parliament that there were 1,043 foreigners – 1,025 Bangladeshis and 18 Myanmarese – across Assam's six detention centres.

The detention centres are run by Assam's Home Department with approval from the Home Ministry. Released declared foreigners said four-five rooms within the central jails serve as detention centres.

"Each room is crammed with 50-60 people. Even the worst of enemies should not be sent there," Ali said.

Gold medallist kept out at convocation event

Pondy University student later accepts M.A. degree but rejects medal in solidarity with CAA protesters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PONDICHERY

A student who completed her masters in Mass Communication with a gold medal from Pondicherry University, Rabeeha Abdurehim, has alleged that she was prevented from attending the convocation ceremony attended by President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday.

Rabeeha Abdurehim, who hails from Kozhikode in Kerala, told reporters after the ceremony that she was asked to leave the hall before the President arrived.

"As I was on the radar of authorities (for participation in anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests), I was asked to leave the hall and was allowed only after the President left. Later, I received my degree and refused to accept the gold medal," she told reporters.

Ms. Rabeeha said her decision to reject the gold medal was also to express solidarity with students who faced police brutality while staging protests against the CAA.

'Take a strong stand'

"Educated youth should take a strong stand against the legislation and fascist regime," she said.

Ms. Rabeeha did her masters in the School of Media and Communication of Pondicherry University. Another gold medallist from the same school, Karthika B. Kurup had announced her decision to boycott the convocation in support of the protest against the CAA.

S.I. Humayun, officer-in-charge, Pondicherry University, said the student's decision to not receive the medal from the President was her "personal decision" and the



Rabeeha Abdurehim later accepted her certificate but turned down the medal.

University had nothing to comment on it.

The official also denied knowledge of what actually led her to getting ousted as she had been duly registered and had taken a seat.

"All we know is that there was commotion in the hall

and she was asked to leave. She was allowed back after departure of the President."

The official also denied the charge that she was asked to leave for wearing a hijab as was being claimed on social media.

"This is borne out by the student's Facebook post where she herself has denied it," said the official.

'Peaceful message'

In her Facebook post, Ms. Rabeeha said that while she dreamt often about the moment she would receive a gold medal and master's certificate, "never did I imagine it would end up being in a way in which I could send a strong peaceful message across India."

"As a woman, as a student, as an Indian, today in my graduation I reject the gold medal awarded to me in

solidarity with all the students and public who are fighting against CAA and NRC. This is my way of showing the world what education means to us youth, not medals and certificates but... standing up against injustice, fascism and bigotry," she said.

"And even though (for 'unknown' reasons) I was sent (sic) out of the auditorium where 100s of students sat awaiting their medals when the president came and was only allowed inside when he left, I feel at peace for the fact that I was able to take a stand as an educated youth."

A post script to this added: "I have been seeing news which says I was asked to remove my scarf. That is false. No one asked me to remove anything. No one told me why I was kept outside."

'Modi, Shah's statements contradict each other'

PM praised police, did not talk about injured students: protesters

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

In south-east Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, where protesters opposing the amended Citizenship Act have blocked the Noida-Kalindi Kunj Highway for over a week now, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comments that no discussion about the NRC had taken place on Sunday, found no takers.

"Amit Shah has stated in both Houses of Parliament that NRC will come... that's what all this started with," the Prime Minister had said. "It's all nonsense," said Shaheen Kausar, commenting on the Prime Minister's remark. Several others echoed her view highlighting the "contradiction". "The Prime Minister was trying to pacify the protests but his statements on the NRC were contradicting those of Amit Shah. He also claimed there were no detention centres but that is also not true," said Faisal Khan, a resident of the area.

"Who should we believe? The Prime Minister or the



Protesters gathering at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Home Minister?" asked Abdul Qauam, a social activist, underlining "a lack of trust". "They said they would send ₹15 lakh to each person's bank account... Amit Shah later said that it was a *jumla*. They said demonetisation would cut off funding to terrorists, but then Pulwama happened. There's no talk on the economy, education or unemployment. They must look the educated youth in the country in the eye and answer their questions," he argued.

Protesters here were also disappointed after the Prime

Minister hailed the police, but made no mention of the students who sustained injuries in the police crackdown. "Who will take responsibility for that?" said Ms. Kausar. The injustice being meted out had brought housewives into the street, she said, pointing at scores of women who had been sitting on the highway under a makeshift tent, braving the cold for the last several days. "Every little child here knows what the CAA and NRC are," said Mehreza Kahtoum (42), a housewife, adding: "We are doing this for our children. If we are pushed out what will happen to them?"

Large banners denouncing the CAA and explaining the issue with the NRC have been hung from a foot overbridge which remains unused. "No CAA" and "No NRC" have also been spray-painted at various points.

The police have erected barricades on both ends of the roads but locals have set up their own checkpoints to ensure no face-off takes place with the police.

139 detained during peaceful protest

'They were taken to Mandir Marg police station, released at 5 p.m.'

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police detained 139 people from outside Uttar Pradesh Bhawan and Assam Bhawan here on Monday when they were about to begin a protest against the action taken by the U.P. police during demonstrations against the amended Citizenship Act in the State.

Eish Singh, DCP (New Delhi), said that 46 people, including 27 women were detained from outside U.P. Bhawan and 93 people, including 52 women were detained from outside Assam Bhawan. They were taken to Mandir Marg police station and all of them were released at 5 p.m. "It was a peaceful protest. Most of the protesters were students," he added.

At U.P. Bhawan, the protesters were demanding the resignation of U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the

killings of an eight-year-old boy who died during a crack down on protesters in Varanasi. Former JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) president N. Sai Balaji and All India Students' Association's Delhi unit president Kawalpreet Kaur were detained the moment they reached.

At Assam Bhawan, the JNUSU called for a protest against the arrest of RTI Activist Akhil Gogoi in Assam under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Amid heavy police presence and a water cannon on stand by, students were detained as soon as they reached the site of protest. However, a group of 15-20 students marched in with placards from a bylane and raised slogans like "Free Akhil Gogoi" and "Delhi police *sharam karo*", before being forcefully shoved into police vehicles.

A police officer on duty outside the U.P. Bhawan said that Section 144 of CrPC was imposed outside U.P. Bhawan and Assam Bhawan. All preventive measures were taken to avoid gathering of protesters. The people who arrived to protest were taken to Mandir Marg police station and women protesters were taken to the police station in police vehicles by women constables, he said.

"Many of the women protesters were also dropped off at their respective institutions by women constables," the officer added. Rushnae Kabir (22), a JNU student, condemned the "systematic police crackdown" on students and on minority communities.

Pritish Menon (25), a student, called the UAPA "draconian".

With inputs from Elisha Virmani

Standing united and how!



(Clockwise from top left) A protester being detained by the police outside Uttar Pradesh Bhawan; Jamia Millia Islamia Teachers' Association members during a candlelight march against the amended Citizenship Act at India Gate; students seen holding placards during a demonstration; doctors during a protest in the city on Monday. *R.V. MOORTHY

No bail to Daryaganj violence accused

Delhi court extends their judicial custody by two weeks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A city court on Monday rejected the bail applications of 15 persons arrested in Daryaganj last Friday on charges of indulging in violence during a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. Their judicial custody has been extended by two weeks.

Metropolitan Magistrate Kapil Kumar dismissed the bail applications as he did not find sufficient grounds to grant them relief.

Lawyer Rebecca John, who represented the bail applicants, earlier read out the FIR registered on a complaint from the area Station House Officer to point out that a vehicle set ablaze during the protest was private property, and questioned how the police invoked the

Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

The police submitted that the protesters damaged barricades and pelted stones at the police station, which is adjacent to the area Deputy Commissioner of Police's office. They said that 17 policemen were injured.

Ms. John said the 15 persons, who were from a poor background, were randomly picked up by the police. She asked if the police had identified them through CCTV footage or any witness. One of them, a 61-year-old, was a welding worker, she said.

The accused's lawyer contested the charge of criminal conspiracy and common intent, stating that they did not know each other. She also cited High Court guidelines to argue that rioting cases needed to be assessed

carefully. She said the police could have sent them notices as part of the probe instead of arresting them. The police submitted that the 15 persons were arrested as they were pelting stones during the protest.

Ms. John urged the court to direct the police to produce the arrest memos, which said that the arrests were made around 6 a.m. the next morning. It meant that the arrests were not spontaneous, she said. She also questioned the police for invoking provisions related to fire and explosives.

The arrested persons were from low-income group and were not capable of influencing any witness or tamper with evidence, and sureties, as directed by the court, would be furnished for their bail, she said.

Anti-CAA protest in Jamia enters eighth day

School students attend on Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The protests against the amended Citizenship Act at Jamia Millia Islamia entered its eighth day on Monday, with hundreds continuing to throng the streets outside the university.

Students from several schools in Noornagar, Batla House and Okhla also attended the protests on Monday.

The Jamia students, demanding withdrawal of the amendments in the law, questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remark that his government has never discussed the National Register of Citizens (NRC) after coming to power for the first time in 2014.

The students wanted to

know as to how many detention centres the government would build if all Muslims, Christians and other minorities are "outsiders" and "illegal migrants".

The students alleged that Mr. Modi had developed "sudden love" for the police forces.

Ashish Jha, a Jamia student, while addressing the protesters, said: "This government did not lodge a single case when policemen were beaten up in courts a month back.

"They had no love for the policemen then. Now, when the police have thrashed students at Jamia, AMU and other universities, they are terming officers as martyrs. What about the students and others who died in U.P.?"

DUTA rallies in support of ad hoc teachers

Hundreds join march on North Campus

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of teachers of Delhi University marched on North Campus on Monday to press for their demand for absorption of ad hoc and temporary teachers.

The teachers of the university have been on an indefinite strike, boycotting evaluation of the ongoing semester examinations since nearly two weeks now. "The discontentment of the teachers is palpable as more than 4,000 teachers have been denied permanent jobs and a similar number denied career progression for more than a decade in many cases," the Delhi University Teachers' Association said in a statement.

The teachers demanded that the Vice-Chancellor must speedily implement various concessions agreed upon by the Ministry of Hu-

The discontentment of the teachers is palpable as more than 4,000 teachers have been denied permanent jobs and a similar number denied career progression for more than a decade...

DELHI UNIVERSITY
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

man Resource and meet their representatives to find solutions to their concerns. Apart from absorption, the union also drew attention to alleged harassment of physical education teachers, delay in restoration of increments for M.Phil and Ph.D students, alleged unjust recoveries from salaries on "specious grounds", and the denial of pension to retired teachers.

₹1 crore compensation: NGT refuses relief to U.P.

Review plea by U.P. govt. dismissed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has disposed of a review plea filed by the Uttar Pradesh government seeking relief from an earlier order in which the State government was directed to deposit an environmental compensation of ₹1 crore for failing to curb pollution in the Ganga.

Dismissing the review plea, a Bench headed by NGT chief Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "In support of this application, it is stated that certain facts could not be placed before the Tribunal at the time when the order was passed. It is contended that the action was permissible in view of the prevailing circumstances [under relevant sections]."

view that there is no merit in this application in as much as the factual position set out by the applicant with regard to the unlawful action of the Jal Nigam," the Bench observed.

Earlier, the green panel had imposed the environmental compensation after it held that a permission granted by the Principal Secretary, Urban Development, for the release "of large quantity of untreated sludge and effluents" into river Ganga was illegal.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	327	Gurugram	162
Ghaziabad	344	Faridabad	324
Noida	351	Greater Noida	354

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Lecture on "The Making of Indian Civilization - Some Underlying Features" by Dr. Meenakshi Jain, Affiliate Fellow, NMML at Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML), Teen Murti House, Teen Murti Marg, 3 p.m.

Exhibition: "India: A Mapful Story", an exhibition of unseen historical maps and other important engravings (circa 18th Century to 1946) by Anubhav Nath, Curatorial Director of Ojas Art Gallery at 1AQ, Qutab Minar Roundabout, Mehrauli Road, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "A Dialogue with Soil", a solo glass sculpture show by Sisir Sahana at Gallerie Ganesh, E-557, Greater Kailash-II, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

Screening: Mandi, a Hindi film directed by Shyam Benegal will be screened at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

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



IN BRIEF



'No religion-linked party name allowed since '05'

NEW DELHI
The Election Commission on Monday told the Delhi High Court that in 2005 it took a policy decision not to register any political party having a name with religious connotations and thereafter, no such party has been registered. However, any such party registered before 2005 will not lose its registration for having a name with a religious connotation, the poll panel told a Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar.

Mandoli jail warden held for smuggling drugs

NEW DELHI
A 30-year-old warden from Mandoli Jail was arrested for allegedly smuggling drugs inside the prison, police said on Monday. The accused, Jitender, was working at the prison since October last year and he was arrested on Saturday, they said. He was carrying contraband weighing 25 grams inside his car while entering the jail on Friday night, they added.

Winter Carnival at Dilli Haats, Garden of 5 Senses

NEW DELHI
On cue with the holiday season, Delhi Tourism is organising Winter Carnival at various Dilli Haats across the city as well as the Garden of Five Senses. The timings of the carnival at all three Dilli Haats and Garden of Five Senses are from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The festival will be held at Dilli Haat, Pitampura, till December 25, Dilli Haat, INA, till December 31, Dilli Haat, Janakpuri, till December 24 and Garden of Five Senses till January 1.

File affidavit on encroached forest areas: HC

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Monday told the Capital's Chief Forest Conservator to clarify whether encroached forest areas have been included in the Centre's plan to regularise 1,731 unauthorised colonies in Delhi.

A Bench comprising Justice G.S. Sistani and Justice Anup J. Bhambhani, while hearing a public interest petition seeking to curb air pollution, asked the forest department to file an affidavit on the issue by January 23, next date of hearing.

The High Court's query came after senior advocate Kaillash Vasudev, who was appointed as amicus curiae to assist the court in the case, raised apprehension that encroached forest area could get included under the unauthorised colonies regularisation policy.

Ishwar Singh, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, who was present in the court, said the encroached forest area will not be included in the regularisation policy.

The case has been pending before the High Court since February 2015 and during the period detailed orders have been passed from time-to-time for taking steps to curb air pollution in Delhi.

"We are of the view that in case the measures suggested from time-to-time had been seriously implemented, pollution levels in Delhi would not have been as alarming as they are today," the High Court had said in November.

"There cannot be two views that with the present state of affairs in Delhi, existence of a robust tree cover must certainly be a priority," the court had said.

Mr. Singh had also submitted that the authorities was in the process of removal of encroachments on the Southern Ridge, where some 370 hectares of land is under heavy encroachment.

Nine, including 2-month-old, killed as fire engulfs building

Second major fire in city in less than a month; 3 occupants rescued by neighbours

HEMANI BHANDARI NEW DELHI

Nine persons, including a two-month-old girl, were killed when a major fire broke out at a three-storey building in Rohini's Kirari in the early hours of Monday. This is the second such incident in the Capital in less than a month after the Anaj Mandi fire in which over 40 people died.

The deceased were identified as owner of the residential building Ram Chander Jha (65), his wife Sudariya Devi (58), their daughter-in-law Sanju (28), Sanju's mother Guddan, Uday Kant Chaudhary, his wife Muskan and their three children Anjali (9), Adarsh (7) and two-month-old Tulsii. While Jha along with his family members were residing on the first floor of the building, Chaudhary's family was staying on rent on the first floor. However, Pooja (24), her daughter Aradhya (3) and Sanju's daughter Somya (10), who were also at the building at the time of incident, escaped with minor injuries.

Cylinder blast

The ground floor from where the fire is suspected to have started was being used as a godown for clothes. The fire had triggered a cylinder blast on the second floor. The impact of the blast was such that a part of the adjoining wall collapsed and fell on to the barren plot right next to the building.

Neighbours Avdhesh Pathak, who along with his brother Devesh Pathak and Rajesh Kumar, were among



The building where a fire broke out early on Monday morning in Kirari. The ground floor of the building was used to store clothes. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

the first responders and they saved the lives of three.

Recalling the incident, Avdesh, who is a street vendor, said that around noon, he and his brother were having dinner when he heard Pooja shouting for help. They went outside and saw her on the rooftop with two minor girls.

"I called my brother and other neighbours and we climbed up using a wooden staircase and brought them down. The doors of the first floor were however shut. The three who escaped the fire had managed to reach the terrace through the staircase," he said.

Though Pooja had told them about others being trapped inside the house, they couldn't help as the door was jammed due to the heat.

At the time of the incident, Pooja's husband Amanath alias Tinku had gone to Haridwar for performing the rituals of his deceased brother,

who is Sanju's husband.

The deceased Ram Chander Jha and his wife used to shuttle between Delhi and their home town in Bihar's Madhubani. The family said that they had come to Delhi only about 10 days ago. Sanju's mother Guddan had come to help her daughter about two months ago.

Uday Kant Chaudhary's family said that he worked with the Customs Department. He had been staying on the first floor for over two years. They wanted to leave the house and were planning to move out on January 1.

Distress call

Delhi Fire Service Director Atul Garg said that they received a distress call at 12.25 a.m. after which nine fire tenders were pressed into service. "Three persons on the second floor were charred to death and the rest died of asphyxiation. The fire is suspected to have

started from the ground floor and spread to the upper floors," Mr. Garg said.

Mr. Garg also said that there was only one exit in the building, which was locked from inside, and there was no fire safety equipment.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) S.D. Mishra said that no commercial activity was going on in the building and the ground floor was being used to store cloth material.

"The ground floor was given for rent to one Vijay Katara. The clothes had been stocked there a few days ago," he said.

He added that a case under Section 285 (negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter), 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered.

Incorrect information delayed operation: DFS

Caller didn't inform about cloth godown

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The distress call received by the Delhi Fire Service was about a fire in the house and the callers didn't inform about the cloth godown on the ground floor. The incorrect information had delayed the operation, said fire officials.

DFS Director Atul Garg said that as they received call regarding fire in the house, they had initially sent three fire tenders with a capacity of 3,000 and 5,000 litres. However, when the fire offi-

cials reached the spot, they found that a cloth godown existed on the ground floor from where the fire was suspected to have started.

It was then that water bowsters with a capacity of 20,000 litres were sent to the spot. "If we had known about the cloth godown, then we would have immediately sent water bowsters along with the fire tenders. Incorrect information delayed the operation," he said. A total of nine fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the fire.

₹10 lakh compensation to families of deceased

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Monday ordered a magisterial inquiry into the fire tragedy in Kirari in which nine people died and announced a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the families of deceased and ₹1 lakh for those injured in the incident.

"Inspected spot in Kirari and ordered magisterial inquiry to fix responsibility. Delhi government will provide ₹10 lakh as compensation for the families of deceased and ₹1 lakh for those injured," said Home Minister Satyendar Jain.

"Very sad news. The fire was controlled, but nine people could not be saved. May their soul rest in peace. There will not be anything lacking in the treatment of the injured," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said in a tweet.

Delhi BJP President Manoj Tiwari who visited the area said that people of Delhi have not recovered from the Anaj Mandi fire tragedy and the current incident has shaken them. "Such incidents are saddening and everyone should desist from accusing each other and politicising the tragedy," he added.

AQI likely to be 'severe' in parts of city, may improve by tomorrow

Dense fog expected over next 2 days: monitoring agency

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi continued to be in the 'very poor' category on Monday and is predicted to deteriorate to 'severe' in parts of Delhi on Tuesday, said government-run monitoring agency SAFAR.

"The decrease in surface wind speed, temperature, and increase in moisture have been forecast and these are likely to lead to very dense fog during the next two days. However, an increase in surface wind speed is forecast from December 25. It is likely to improve ventilation and AQI. Further improvement is expected by December 26," said SAFAR.



On Monday, the average level of PM 2.5 – deadly respirable particles, which is a chief pollutant – was 149.2 ug/m3, more than twice the safe limit of 60ug/m3 as per Indian standards in Delhi and NCR at 9 p.m., according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

However, the level is al-

most six times the safe limit (25 ug/m3) set by the World Health Organization.

People are advised to avoid all kinds of outdoor activities, give morning walks a miss, and close windows of rooms. "Stop any activity if you experience any unusual coughing, chest discomfort, wheezing, breathing difficulty, or fatigue and consult a doctor," an advisory by SAFAR stated.

The city's air quality index on Monday was 327, up from 322 on Sunday, according to the CPCB. According to SAFAR, Tuesday's top three air pollution hotspots in Delhi are likely to be Jangirpuri, Vinobapuri and Adarsh Nagar.

'JNU suspended 6 students for protesting'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) on Monday alleged that six students have been academically suspended for their participation in the protest over hostel fee hike.

The JNU administration is formulating a strategy of mass intimidation by sending proctorial enquiries to students en masse and

even academically suspending them as well as evicting them from hostels and declaring them out of bounds, the JNUSU alleged.

However, no immediate reaction was available from the university.

Six students have been academically suspended and declared out of bounds for allegedly heckling the Vice-Chancellor, they said.

A lot of students have been randomly sent proc-

tural enquiries, they claimed.

"We warn the administration to not execute such stunts, and also appeal to the larger students community to stand against the hostel eviction order and deter the administration from targeting the students," they said.

The statement has also been endorsed by other student bodies like BAPSA, NSUI.

Minutes before fire swallowed her, Muskan called brother seeking help

'She said a fire had broken out and the door was locked'

HEMANI BHANDARI NEW DELHI

Around midnight, Rohan Kumar Jha, received the first call from his sister Muskan Chaudhary crying for help. She told him that a fire broke out in their building and the door was locked from outside.

Over the next few minutes, Mr. Rohan and his father received at least two more calls from Muskan. "Papa bachalo... Papa bachalo... aag lag gai hai... darwaza band hai bahar se [Save me father... fire broke out and the door is locked from outside]," she said.

Meanwhile, Vijay Chaudhary, brother of deceased Uday Chaudhary, also received a call from Muskan. The phone was picked up by their nephew Gopal. She asked for help from them too.

Muskan and her husband Uday made several calls for help before they along with their three children Anjali, Adarsh and two-month-old Tulsii perished in the fire.

Mr. Gopal and Mr. Rohan, both living nearby, reached the house within minutes but couldn't save their loved ones as the fire had spread massively.

Uday's family said that on Sunday, he had gone to Ramlila Maidan to see Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally and had sent a WhatsApp message to his cousin regarding the same on Sunday night. A neighbour, Ajay Kumar, said that Uday had come to his house on Sunday night to attend a function, which was organised by Ajay's family on the 10th day of his fath-



People gather outside the building in Kirari where a fire broke out in the early hours of Monday. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

er's death. Meanwhile, family of Chaudhary said that they suspect foul play and raised doubt that someone had deliberately locked the door from outside. Police, however, said that the matter is being investigated.

Mr. Rohan said that Chaudhary and his family had moved to the first floor of the building owned by Jha about two-three years ago "They wanted to vacate the building as there were internal issues between Jha and his family members. They had planned to move out on January 1," said Mr. Rohan.

Internal issues

Talking about the internal issues, Shikha Jha, sister of Sanju Jha, who died in the fire, said that her sister was tortured by the family after her husband Jitender's death

in January this year.

"They didn't want to take care of her and her daughter. She started working at a city hospital about six months ago because of this. They used to abuse and thrash her and wanted her to leave the house. Her sister-in-law Pooja, who had survived the fire, had hit her with a slipper a few days ago. She was living in a separate room on the first floor for the last four days. That is why our mother had gone there to help her," Ms. Shikha said, adding that she suspects foul play and demanded an investigation into it.

Ms. Shikha claimed that a major fight between her sister and other family members broke out on Sunday. "My sister called me in the afternoon and told me that they had threatened to kill her," she alleged.

Building not surveyed by civic body

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The building in north Delhi's Kirari, where a fire broke out in the early hours of Monday, had not been surveyed by the municipal corporation as it was a residential building with no instance of industrial work, chairperson of the North DMC Standing Committee, Jai Prakash said.

The three municipal corporations are engaged in an exercise to survey and seal

factories operating illegally in residential areas. "No commercial activity was being undertaken there. No small scale industry was running in the area either," Mayor Avtar Singh said.

"We were told that the cloth materials were shifted to the large hall, which was purely a residential building, only a few days ago," he added.

It is suspected that the fire was caused by a short cir-

cuit, Mr. Prakash said. We can't simply enter every ones house and see what is going on, Mr. Prakash argued. "We conducted a meeting of officials of various departments to figure out what steps can be taken to tackle such issues," he added.

With regard to the inquiry into the Anaj Mandi fire, the Mayor said that officials had asked for a few more days and the report would be ready by January 3.

IN BRIEF

Jammal-e-Siddiqui
head joins AAP

NEW DELHI
Mohammad Shahid Siddiqui, national president of Jamaat-e-Siddiqui of India, joined AAP on Monday along with its leaders, the party said.

Services
affected on
Blue LineSTAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Services on the Delhi Metro's Blue Line were affected on Monday following a technical snag. A weld fracture in a segment between Karol Bagh and Rajendra Place metro stations led to the delay, said the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

"These welds at times get fractured due to change in temperature or weather conditions and generally happen in the early morning hours. Monday's defect was also noticed in the morning and accordingly it was safely secured as per the established norms and procedures," the DMRC said. The trains were run at a restricted speed throughout the day between Rajiv Chowk and Rajendra Place metro stations, said officials.

Delhi Cabinet approves Electric Vehicle Policy, 250 charging stations expected

'This will help reduce pollution'; DTC employees to get ₹4K as monthly transport allowance

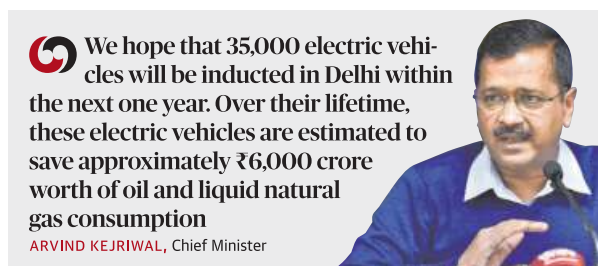
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Cabinet on Monday passed an Electric Vehicle Policy to help reduce air pollution, said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Under the policy, the government aims to make electric vehicles 25% of all new vehicles registered in the city by 2024. Also, the government will develop public charging infrastructure, install charging stations every three km and give subsidies to people buying electric vehicles, among others.

"To tackle the issue of air pollution, the Cabinet has decided to pass the Electric Vehicle Policy, which is an ambitious policy in its scope. Vehicles amount to 40% of PM2.5 air pollution levels and 80% of carbon monoxide in the air," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"Funding for the various incentives under Delhi EV Policy will be obtained from multiple sources such as pollution/diesel cess, road tax, Environment compensation charge (ECC), etc., which will be monitored under State EV Fund. A State EV Board shall be constituted as the apex body for the effective imple-



We hope that 35,000 electric vehicles will be inducted in Delhi within the next one year. Over their lifetime, these electric vehicles are estimated to save approximately ₹6,000 crore worth of oil and liquid natural gas consumption

ARVIND KEJRIWAL, Chief Minister

mentation and monitoring of the policy," he added.

The first draft of the policy came out in November 2018. It was put in public domain and discussions were held with experts and suggestions were also taken from public.

Last-mile deliveries

"All two-wheelers engaged in last-mile deliveries, such as food delivery vehicles, courier services, and e-commerce logistics, will be expected to transition 50% of their fleet to electric by March 2023, and 100% by March 2025. Likewise, the purchase subsidy on electric autos, e-rickshaws, and e-carriers is up to ₹30,000 and loans on a subsidy of 5% will be provided to them," the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Kejriwal said currently, the percentage strength of

electric two-wheelers is less than 0.2% and that of three-wheelers is almost zero.

"We hope that 35,000 electric vehicles will be inducted in Delhi within the next one year and 250 charging stations will be constructed across the city. We also hope that within the next five years, five lakh electric vehicles will be registered in Delhi. Over their lifetime, these electric vehicles are estimated to save approximately ₹6,000 crore worth of oil and liquid natural gas consumption. They will also avoid emissions of 4.8 million tonnes of CO2 [carbon dioxide] emissions, which is equivalent to avoiding CO2 emissions from nearly one lakh petrol cars over their lifetime. They will also help avoid about 159 tonnes of PM 2.5 emissions," he said.

Under the EV Policy, the government will provide a subsidy of ₹5,000 per kWh of battery capacity on the purchase of two-wheelers. Scrapping incentive up to ₹5000 will be offered for scrapping of a non-electric two-wheeler vehicle and switching to an electric vehicle.

"The government will provide a 100% subsidy for the purchase of charging equipment up to ₹6,000 per charging point for the first 30,000 charging points at homes/workplaces. The subsidy is to be routed through DISCOMS who will be in-charge of charger installations," the Chief Minister added.

Also, a special provision has been made for cab aggregators, under which they will be allowed to operate electric two-wheeler taxis. He said 20% of the parking areas of workplace and residential parking will have vehicle holding capacity as EV enabled with charging options.

Mr. Kejriwal said the Cabinet has approved that all Delhi Transport Corporation regular employees will get a transport allowance of around ₹4,000 a month.

Govt. school students take oath to respect women

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday administered an oath to students in all government schools to sensitise them on gender issues and crimes against women.

This move is a part of the government's campaign to change the "ideology" of society to create an environment where women are not afraid to step out at night. "We launched the women's safety campaign today [Monday] along with 22 lakh children from all schools in Delhi. The law and order have to be corrected. CCTV cameras and street lights are also being installed but the mindset of the society has to change," he said, adding that the boys took an oath to respect women and never abuse or misbehave with them.

He added that the girls have been told to make their brothers take the same oath and to warn them of disowning them if they ever commit such a heinous act. "We need to start a dialogue on this in both schools and homes," he added.

Court dismisses appeal by molestation convict

Man in custody to serve two-year jail term

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has rejected an appeal by a molestation convict, dismissing his arguments that the complainant had made improvements on her charges in the trial.

The man was immediately taken into custody to serve a two-year jail term on the direction of the court. The convict had tried to molest the complainant at her house where he had gone on the pretext of having a glass of drinking water.

No sooner the complainant went to fetch water than the accused entered into her and molested her, the complainant said.

Dismissing the appeal, Additional Sessions Judge Pooran Chand said: "As regards the argument of appellant that complainant made improvements in her statement recorded before the court, it is the settled principle of law that the complaint is not the encyclopedia and the complainant is free to depose in detail about the incident before the court and is not bound by her statement given to the police or to the Magistrate under Section 164 Cr.P.C." "Therefore, the

argument that since the complainant made improvements in her deposition before the court, creates doubt on her version is not an argument worth to be considered. Therefore, this argument is without any merit and is accordingly rejected," the Judge added.

The complaint is free to depose in detail about the incident before the court and is not bound by her statement given to the police or to the Magistrate

POORAN CHAND
Additional Sessions Judge

argument that since the complainant made improvements in her deposition before the court, creates doubt on her version is not an argument worth to be considered. Therefore, this argument is without any merit and is accordingly rejected," the Judge added.

'Natural to forget details'

"Another argument raised by the appellant that complainant failed to disclose the exact date, month and year of the alleged incident, which is also not fatal to the case as the same argument has been dealt by the trial court and the reason given is just in view of this court as complainant was examined in the court after a gap of two years so that forgetfulness of exact date is natural," the Judge said.

NGT forms panel to look into allegations of constructions on Yamuna riverbed

Committee comprising U.P. officials to submit report in a month

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following allegations of a road being constructed on the Yamuna riverbed near Mathura, the National Green Tribunal has directed a joint committee comprising Uttar Pradesh government officials to look into the matter.

A Bench headed by NGT

chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said: "Let the veracity of the allegations be verified by a joint committee of U.P. State Pollution Control Board, U.P. Irrigation Department and District Magistrate, Mathura. The committee will furnish a factual and action taken report within one month." The directions came

when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Akash Vashishtha.

"Illegal constructions, including multi-storied buildings have also come up on the active floodplains and riverbed of the Yamuna in Vrindavan. Irreparable damage is being done to the ancient ghats," the plea alleged.

DDA signs MoU with Railways for development of stations

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority on Monday said a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rail Land Development Authority along with the Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation was signed on December 19 pertaining to the development and redevelopment of the Anand Vihar and Bijwasan stations.

The urban body said: "The two stations are built over a part of land allotted by the DDA to the Railways. The DDA and the Railways have agreed for commercial development over this land on the basis of revenue sharing. This paves for infrastructure development of the city." The Railways can now utilise DDA's land for any commercial and residential development, the DDA added.

'Police told to keep vigil on massage parlours'

19 complaints of flesh trade received, govt. tells High Court

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The city government informed the Delhi High Court on Monday that the police have been instructed to keep a vigil on all the massage parlours operating in the city to take prompt legal action when any illegality is noticed.

The government said between July 1, 2017 and September 30, 2019, the police

have identified 526 massage parlours, of which 405 were functional and the remaining have either been closed by the owners or sealed by the municipal corporations.

The government additional standing counsel Sanjoy Ghose told an HC Bench that the police had received 19 complaints of flesh trade in relation to the massage parlours and of them, 11 were found to be unsubstantial

and in the remaining, FIRs have been registered under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act. The court listed the matter for hearing on March 30 as no one was present on behalf of the petitioner, Ateet Bansal, who has alleged that sex rackets are rampant in the garb of massage parlours.

Mr. Bansal said the police, even after receiving several tips, were unable to take action.

Timings DELHI

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

THURSDAY, DEC. 26
RISE 07:12 SET 17:32
RISE 07:07 SET 17:43

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	14	08
Safdarjang	14	08
Palam	13	07

Delhi Palam Today
14°C Dense fog during chilly morning. A cold day with partly cloudy sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
14°C Moderate fog with dense in pockets. A mainly sunny sky and cool afternoon.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

3 dead, 13 injured as van turns turtle in M.P.

KHARGONE
Three persons were killed and 13 were injured in the early hours of Monday when their van overturned between Piprad and Temla village in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district, police said. PTI

'BJP's divisive agenda rejected by the people'

Punjab Chief Minister welcomes Jharkhand poll results

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday hailed the Congress-JMM-RJD victory in the Jharkhand Assembly polls as rejection of the divisive politics of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The Chief Minister said the reversal of the ruling BJP's fortunes, which had begun earlier this year, has taken another leap forward with these polls. The results had resoundingly crushed BJP's ambitions of spreading its tentacles across the length and breadth of the country, and paved the way for the creation of a BJP-Mukta Bharat, he added.

"With these results, BJP's divisive agenda had not only been exposed but had also been rejected outright by the people," said Capt. Amarinder, adding that the mandate marked the defeat of the ruling party's communal politics.



Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh

ing party's communal politics.

"People want development and progress, in the backdrop of the Constitutional ethos of unity in diversity; they do not want to be divided by vested interests in the name of religion," Capt. Amarinder said, adding that the BJP had failed to read the people's mood and pulse.

The Punjab Chief Minister further said that the Jharkhand results validate the Congress party's secular agenda.

hand results validate the Congress party's secular agenda.

"Coming at a time when a strong anti-BJP wave was sweeping the nation, as manifested in the widespread public protests against the unconstitutional CAA [Citizenship Amendment Act] and NRC [National Register of Citizens] of the central government, the Jharkhand results validate the Congress party's secular agenda," he said.

'False promises'
"It is only a matter of time now for the saffron hue to be lifted from the nation's face, and give way to a bright future for its people... false promises and fake claims cannot take any political party far which the BJP has dogmatically failed to appreciate or accept," Capt. Amarinder added.

(With PTI inputs)

AAP hits out at Akalis on citizenship law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party has hit out at the BJP's ally in Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal, accusing it of having shown its "double face" on the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act, after the latter demanded the inclusion of Muslims in the controversial Act.

The Akali Dal had voted in favour of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Parliament.

Attacking Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal and his wife, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, who is a Union Minister, AAP's Punjab unit president Bhagwant Mann on Monday said: "Both of them supported and voted in favour of the CAB on the floor of the House, while their eyes were riveted on ministerial berth instead of the Muslim community."

He said that the real strength was their vote in the House which they exercised against the Muslims.

Srinagar Deputy Mayor removed

Mayor survives BJP bid to topple him

PEERZADA ASHIQ SRINAGAR

In the Valley's first major "political activity" post abrogation of J&K's special status, jailed Deputy Mayor of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) was toppled and Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu, from Sajad Lone's Peoples Conference (PC), retained his position despite the BJP move to remove him.

In a first signal that the regional parties - Lone's Peoples Conference, the National Conference - and the Congress were closing ranks and putting a joint front, SMC Mayor survived the apparent move by the BJP councillors to topple him.

The BJP, which won four councillor seats out of 74 in the urban local bodies election held in October 2018, of late worked hard to increase its numbers in the SMC to dominate the crucial municipality in the capital.

Sources said BJP's Dr. Ashok Koul, a councillor from Kara Nagar, had managed to "gather signatures" of around 30 councillors to dethrone Mr. Mattu, who remained absent for over four months since August 5.

Mr. Mattu was off the scene after he was arrested on August 5. He was able to resume office of the Mayor in the second week of December to "safeguard the post of Mayor" after a hectic lobbying by the BJP.

No-confidence motion
However, jailed Deputy Mayor Sheikh Imran, who also belonged to the PC, was toppled on Monday when around 44 councillors moved a no confidence motion against him, an official said.

Mr. Imran was also arrested during clampdown against regional parties on August 5 and continues to remain detained at the MLA Hostel.

PDP demands release of party leaders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA JAMMU/SRINAGAR

The Peoples Democratic Party on Monday held a meeting in Srinagar, the first after the Centre abrogated Article 370, to take stock of the the situation in the Valley and arrangements being made to observe the fourth death anniversary of party's founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on January 7.

'Release prisoners'

In another meeting held in Jammu, the party sought immediate release of all detained political leaders, including its president and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti.

In Jammu, the meeting was presided over by PDP general secretary and former MLC Surinder Chowdhary who termed the prolonged incarceration of politicians in Jammu and Kashmir as "unjustified and uncalled for", a party spokesperson said.

AMUSU seeks resignation of VC and Registrar

Students' union releases 32-page report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GHAZIABAD

The Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union has demanded the resignation of Vice Chancellor Tariq Mansoor and Registrar Abdul Hamid for their "mishandling" of affairs of the university.

In a 32-page report released by AMUSU detailing "the circumstances under which the AMU was attacked by the BJP government on December 15" on Monday, it has also demanded a "high-profile inquiry" by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court into the December 15 "State-sponsored violence" at AMU. It has also asked for government jobs for students who were seriously injured in the "brutal police action."

Alleging that the Vice Chancellor and Registrar were in sync with the BJP government, Salman Intiaz,

the outgoing president of AMUSU, said, "The AMU administration wanted to choke the peaceful dissenting voices of students in the campus that had unnerved the Union government. In line with the wishes of the State, the AMU administration wanted to curb students from raising their voice against the unconstitutional Citizenship (Amendment) Act."

Injured gets job

Meanwhile, using his special powers, Prof. Mansoor has appointed Mohd. Tariq, who received severe hand injury on the night of December 15, as an assistant professor on ad hoc basis in the Department of Chemistry.

Mr. Tariq, a JRF- and NET-qualified PhD scholar, suffered serious hand injury during violent incidents on December 15.

Martial moves



Sikhs at a procession to mark the martyrdom of four sons of Guru Govind Singh, in Amritsar on Monday. PTI

Gehlot assures protesters on examination date extension

6 women had climbed a water tank to press for their demand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

Candidates appearing in the Rajasthan Public Service Commission's examination for recruitment of government school teachers received an assurance from Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot here on Monday for "sympathetic consideration" of their demand for extension of the exam dates. The exam is scheduled to begin on January 3.

Half-a-dozen women protesters raising the demand had climbed down from an overhead water tank at Jagatpura locality here late on Sunday night after Mr. Gehlot's appeal. The aspirants have launched an agitation with the demand that new

dates in July-August 2020 be fixed in view of the upcoming panchayat elections.

While several of them are yet to obtain the qualifying degree, a large number of aspirants serving the government were unable to prepare due to time constraint. The protesting women, who spent more than 32 hours on the water tank, were sent food, blankets and water through ropes by the crowd present below.

Meena extends support

As the women continued their protest and issued a video message addressed to the Chief Minister, other candidates waited on the ground to support them. Rajya Sabha member Kirori Lal

Meena extended his support to the agitation and also spoke up in favour of the candidates' additional demand for increasing the number of vacancies from 5,000 to 10,000.

Mr. Gehlot told a delegation of the candidates led by Mr. Meena that he would take a decision "in the best interest" of the youth appearing in the exam. He had tweeted on Sunday that he was concerned for the protesting women and pointed out that the government had extended the exam dates twice in the past.

"If the date is not extended this time, about 2.50 lakh candidates may become ineligible for various reasons," Mr. Meena said.

Punjab govt. changes timings of schools

State reeling under cold wave

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

As Punjab continues to reel under cold wave conditions, the State government has decided to change the timings for all schools from December 24.

The Punjab Education Department has issued direction changing timings of government, aided as well as private schools in the State.

"The changed timings would take effect from December 24, 2019, and would be in force till January 15, 2020," an official statement said.

"The timings of the primary schools would be from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m., while those of the middle, high and senior secondary schools would be from 10



Changed timings will be implemented from today.

a.m. till 4 p.m. The timings of the schools having double shifts would remain the same," it added.

Met forecast

The Chandigarh-based India Meteorological Department has forecast that during the next 4-5 days the weather conditions are likely to be remain mostly dry in Punjab and Haryana.

'Woman from Bihar' lands in Pakistan jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DEHRI ON SONE

A 51-year-old woman, claiming to be from this Bihar town, has landed in a Pakistan jail, police said on Monday.

Superintendent of Police, Rohtas district, Satya-veer Singh said a communication was received from the State headquarters seeking verification of details of the woman, who claims to hail from "Koni Bigha, Dehri on Sone".

"According to the details made available, the woman was granted consular access at Lahore Central Jail on October 28. She has stated her father's name as Dharam. The address given appears sketchy. Dehri on Sone has been called the district from which she hails," the SP said.

Jammu-Srinagar highway cleared after remaining closed for 42 hours

A massive landslide in Ramban district had left thousands of vehicles stranded on the crucial road since Saturday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BANIHAL/JAMMU

The 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway was cleared on Monday after remaining closed for over 42 hours following a massive landslide in Ramban district which had left thousands of vehicles stranded, traffic department officials said.

However, no fresh vehicular traffic was allowed from either Jammu or Srinagar for the third consecutive day to

facilitate smooth movement of thousands of stranded commuters, they said.

A massive landslide struck the highway at Digdole on Saturday evening, blocking the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with rest of the country and leaving thousands of vehicles, mostly trucks, stranded.

After hectic efforts by the road clearance agencies spanning over 42 hours, the road was cleared of the land-

slide debris and made traffic worthy this morning to allow the movement of stranded vehicles, officials said.

They said a decision to allow fresh traffic from either Srinagar or Jammu will be decided later in the day.

One-way traffic

The traffic on the highway is restricted to one-way during the winter months and plies alternatively from Srinagar

and Jammu to avoid traffic jam due to ongoing four-laning work.

Fresh snowfall in Jawahar Tunnel - the gateway to Kashmir - and multiple landslides between Ramsoo and Panthiyal in Ramban district forced closure of the highway on Friday evening.

The highway was cleared on Saturday but a fresh landslide at Digdole again disrupted the traffic. Meanwhile, severe cold

conditions returned to Jammu region on Monday after the night temperature plummeted again.

Severe cold

The residents of Jammu city woke up to a chilly morning with minimum temperature settling two degrees below the season's average at 6.2 degrees Celsius, down by 2.5 notches against the previous night's 8.7 degrees Celsius, an official of the mete-

orological department said.

Katra, which serves as the base camp for the pilgrims visiting Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in Reasi district, recorded a minimum of 5.7 degrees Celsius against the previous night's 6.2 degrees Celsius, the official said.

He said the snow-bound Baderwah town in Doda district was the coldest recorded place in Jammu region with a low of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius.

Man lynched on suspicion of cattle theft

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AGARTALA

A 29-year-old man was lynched by a mob in Tripura's Sipahijala district on suspicion of cattle theft, the police said on Monday.

Matin Miah was caught by a few locals in the early hours of Sunday from Gorurband area of Sonamura near the India-Bangladesh border with two cows, said Souvik Dey, Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Sonamura. He was beaten up severely and died at Melaghar Hospital, the officer said.

Matin's father Shafique Miah, 60, has filed a complaint against two persons accusing them of murdering his son. Another complaint has been filed by one Tapan Bhowmik alleging cattle theft.

W.B. Governor shown black flags at Jadavpur University

Students blocked Dhankhar's car, demanded answers on CAA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was shown black flags and greeted with "go back" slogans at Jadavpur University on Monday when he arrived on the campus to attend a meeting.

The protest was held a day after the Governor, who is the Chancellor of State universities, declared as "illegal and invalid" the varsity's decision to defer the December 24 special convocation because of possible trouble. A large number of students blocked his car and the Governor had a difficult time stepping out of his vehicle.

When he was leaving the campus, Mr. Dhankhar was asked certain questions by the agitating students. They wanted to know his opinion on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act which the students said "violated the Constitution". The students also claimed that 25 people had died during anti-



Students raise slogans during a rally against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Kolkata. ■ FILE PHOTO

CAA protests across the country and asked why the Governor has not said anything on the vandalising of JU campus allegedly by supporters of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad earlier this year.

All for autonomy'

Mr. Dhankhar encouraged the students to send a memorandum to him and said that he was willing to interact with them. "I am not a representative of any government but of

the Constitution," he said.

The Governor said he is concerned about the well-being of the students and "all for autonomy of universities".

The university Vice-Chancellor, Suranjan Das, said the convocation will be held as scheduled on Tuesday morning. To a question, he said, "If the Chancellor comes, he will preside over the convocation and if he presides, he will also speak."

(With inputs from PTI)

450 Maoist supporters part ways with organisation

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Around 450 Maoist sympathisers, including more than 100 former militia, snapped their ties with the organisation and surrendered before the police at Mathili in Odisha's Malkangiri district on Sunday.

They were from more than 10 villages of Mahupadar panchayat, a traditional stronghold of the Maoists. Many of them were engaged in providing logistics and other support to the rebels. Their parting ways with the organisation would be a setback for the Maoists, said the police.

"The police and the administration have promised to provide security to all of them [surrendered persons]. We will also facilitate them to benefit from pro-poor schemes. We want to raise their standard of living through various government schemes, for which the Maoists are a major obstacle," said Malkangiri SP Rishikesh Khilari.

He said the Maoist sympathisers have now understood the futility of violence as they realised it had not brought any development to their area. Extortion and torture of innocent tribals by the Maoists also prodded them to snap ties with them. It was alleged that the Maoists were using threat and force to collect money and food from poor tribals, the SP said. There had been several instances when poor tribal families had faced torture at the hands of the Maoists, who for no reason accused them of being police informers. Several families had to leave their homes to take shelter elsewhere because of it.

Man mauled to death by lion in Gir forest area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AMRELI

A 55-year-old man was mauled to death by a lion at a forest in Gujarat's Amreli district on Monday morning, an official said.

The feline, in the age group of three to five years, attacked Kadubhai Bilhad when he went to attend nature's call near his house in Jira village under Dalkhaniya range of Gir forest division, he said.

"The man died after he was attacked by a male lion around 6 a.m.," Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Junagadh, Dushyant Vasavada said.

The body was sent to Dhari civil hospital for postmortem, he said.

The Dalkhaniya range of Gir forest in October last year witnessed a massive outbreak of canine distemper virus that killed several lions in the region.

Gir forest is the only abode of Asiatic lions. As per the last census in 2015, there were around 523 lions in the State, mainly in the forest areas of Junagadh, Gir-Somnath, Amreli and Bhavnagar districts.

CAA, NRC to divert people's attention from economy: Sharad

The Central government has failed on every front, says NCP chief

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Issues such as the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens are being brought forward by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to divert people's attention from the government's failures on various fronts, especially its economic policies, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar said here on Monday.

Mr. Pawar said he was surprised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comment at Delhi's Ramila ground on Sunday that his government had never discussed a countrywide NRC. President Ram Nath Kovind had talked about the government's plan to implement NRC across the country in his joint address to Parliament.

Home Minister Amit Shah had also spoken on this in Rajya Sabha, Mr. Pawar said.

"When a major policy is brought, a discussion takes place at the government level. Such a policy will not come before the country without that. Secondly, the



NCP chief Sharad Pawar at a press conference in Mumbai on Monday. • VIVEK BENDRE

country's Home Minister had said in Parliament that they will bring NRC across the country," said Mr. Pawar. He added that the President's speech reflects the government's policy and now to say there was no discussion on this (NRC in the Cabinet) is not right.

"I think the government has failed on every front. To divert attention of the public at large from such a situation, they are raising these issues and giving such speeches," he added.

"It is a defeat for the BJP and those leading the party will have to take responsibility for it, be it the PM or the party president," he said.

'Am I also a Naxalite?'

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Asked about the ongoing trial in the Koregaon-Bhima riot case, NCP chief Mr. Pawar said that he had held talks with several people regarding the same.

"It is really unfortunate that people have been behind bars for more than a year only because of naxalism-related literature found with them. Even I read many books and someone may find books on naxalism at my house as well. Does that mean I am a naxalite too?" asked the NCP chief.

Commenting of the defeat of the BJP in Jharkhand, Mr. Pawar said, "The weakening condition of the economy is one of the major reasons behind the party's loss. The situation in Jharkhand is different from other States. It is an Adivasi-dominated State where there is more poverty. In such a situation, the BJP tried to use financial strength to retain power. But I am happy the people have not accepted the BJP. I want to thank the people of Jharkhand," Mr. Pawar said.

Why did BJP not grant full farm loan waiver when in power: Sena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Hailing the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra government for declaring loan waiver of up to ₹ 2 lakh for farmers, the Shiv Sena on Monday hit out at the BJP for seeking to write off debts fully and asked why it did not address the issue when it was in power.

In a veiled attack on the BJP-led Central government, the Shiv Sena, in its party mouthpiece *Saamana*, noted that the Thackeray government took the decision of farm loan waiver at a time when the country is "burning" over the issue of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Without naming the BJP, it said one can provoke people by playing politics of sentiments, but he/she needs courage to take a de-

cision in the interest of farmers.

When Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced the loan waiver in Assembly on the last day of the winter session in Nagpur, the BJP staged a walkout seeking full loan waiver.

This is the first step of the new government towards writing off farmers' debts completely, the Marathi daily said.

The Fadnavis government could have also given full loan waiver, but it did not do so then.

"You were in power in Maharashtra for five years. Why did not you give it then? You should tell this first," it said.

"The BJP doesn't have to sulka if farmers feel joyous. Be a part of farmers' joy," it said.

Death on a highway



Eight people lost their lives when a speeding truck rammed an autorickshaw on Dhule-Jalgaon road at Erandol on the Mumbai-Nagpur highway on Monday. Eight people were injured in the accident. • VIKAY KUMBHAR

No clarity yet on expansion of Maharashtra Cabinet

'There are no orders to prepare for a swearing-in ceremony'

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The new Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government is yet to finalise the date for Cabinet expansion even 25 days after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was sworn in along with six ministers.

Several leaders from the Shiv Sena, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress had hinted during the just-concluded winter session of the legislature in Nagpur that the expansion would take place a day or two after the session ended. However, a Raj Bhavan official said, "We are yet to receive orders for the preparations of the swearing-in ceremony."

A senior Congress leader said, on condition of anonymity, that the final date of the expansion will be decided after the meeting between party president Sonia Gandhi and State unit president Balasaheb Thorat. "Once she clears the names of Congress ministers, and we receive the message, the preparations will start," he said, hinting that the expansion could take place on



Uddhav Thackeray took oath as Chief Minister with six others on November 28. • THE HINDU

Tuesday or on December 26. Two other dates being discussed were December 27 and 30. The opposition has already targeted the MVA government for the delay in Cabinet expansion.

NCP chief Sharad Pawar, when asked about the expansion, said it is the prerogative of the Chief Minister. "We are local parties where the names are fixed by us and we need not go to someone else to fix the names," said Mr. Pawar, again hinting that the Congress is yet to finalise the names.

Asked whether he would be meeting Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday night, Mr. Pawar replied

it was likely. Several hopefuls from all three parties confirmed to *The Hindu* till the time of writing this report that no call had been made to them inviting them for the swearing-in ceremony.

The formula for portfolio distribution has already been announced as per which no party will get the post of Minister of State in the same department as Cabinet minister from that party. Around 30 ministers, including those of Cabinet and MoS rank, are likely to take oath in the expansion while some departments could be kept vacant for future expansion.

Ensure benefits reach all farmers, Uddhav tells party workers

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Addressing Shiv Sena district chiefs for the first time after becoming Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray on Monday stressed upon strengthening the party in urban local bodies, civic councils, and zilla parishads. The party officials have also been tasked with ensuring that farm loan waiver reaches the last beneficiary.

Mr. Thackeray held a meeting of his party functionaries at Shiv Sena Bhavan on Monday. Though the Sena, Congress, and Nationalist Congress Party alliance is in power in the State, it has not been formally announced that they will contest local elections as an alliance.

Mr. Thackeray has in the past also told party functionaries to work towards

strengthening the organisation in rural areas. In Monday's meeting, he reiterated this point and told the district chiefs to improve performance in local elections. A few zilla parishads elections are due in January.

"Now that the CM has announced a farm loan waiver, he wants us to ensure it reaches the needy. We will be helping farmers complete the process of securing documents and ensure there is no red tape. We have been asked to play a supervisory role," said a party functionary present at the meeting. In the past, Sena had announced help cells in every district to help drought affected farmers.

"Even though he is CM, he is still the Sena chief. He came to give guidance to Shiv Sainiks," said Sena leader Sanjay Raut.

Deliberate attempt to spread rumours on CAA: Fadnavis

'In India, everybody is safe and secure, including minorities'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLHAPUR

Former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said a "deliberate" attempt was being made to spread rumours and divide society over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Without naming any party, he said some political outfits were trying to disrupt harmony in society, and asserted that minorities in the country were safe.

"Rumours are being spread about the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. There is a deliberate attempt to create a divide in society and it is condemnable. The Act is not against any religion, and there is no provision in it to take away the citizenship of any citizen of the country," Mr. Fadnavis told reporters here.

The Act deals with giving citizenship and not taking it away, he stressed.

"The Act deals with giving citizenship to the persecuted minorities from three countries - Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh," the BJP leader said.

He said there is a "deliberate attempt to spread rumours and misunderstandings" about the Act, and some political parties are at the forefront to create a di-



Former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis.

vide in society and break the harmony.

"In India, everybody is safe and secure, including minorities," he added.

There have been anti-CAA protests across the country with several of them turning violent, leading to arson and damage to property.

'Farmers betrayed'

Mr. Fadnavis also accused the Maharashtra government of "betraying" farmers with its farm loan waiver announcement, and demanded that the Uddhav Thackeray-led dispensation give ₹25,000 per hectare to cultivators for crop damage.

The Thackeray government on Saturday announced a loan waiver of up to ₹2 lakh for farmers, with a cut off date of September 30, 2019.

"The jugglery of the loan waiver scheme is that loans that have been declared outstanding till September 2019 will be waived, which means all these loans will be from previous years," Mr. Fadnavis said in the Assembly last week.

He said his government had already written off loans of upto ₹1.5 lakh, so the waiver announced by the Chief Minister did not add to much.

"The government which was formed by betrayal is now betraying farmers as well," he said.

He said farmers from Kolhapur, Sangli and Satara were severely affected by unseasonal rains in October, but left in the lurch by the new Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

"Crops on around 94 lakh hectares were damaged due to floods in the region and farmers faced 100% losses. The Chief Minister promised ₹25,000 per hectare to the affected farmers, but nothing was given to them in this (winter) session," Mr. Fadnavis said.

He said the BJP would hold protests on various issues concerning the people and the party's State unit chief Chandrakant Patil would soon announce the programme.

Raut quotes Martin Luther King to hit out at BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

In the backdrop of protests over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Monday launched a veiled attack on the BJP by quoting the late Martin Luther King.

If politics creates religious issues, then one should know the country is being run by wrong people, Mr. Raut said while attributing the comment to the legendary civil rights leader.

The 57-year-old firebrand Rajya Sabha member has of late been taking aim at the BJP, with whom the Sena recently severed ties, through his posts on the micro-blogging site.

"The country where religious issues are addressed politically becomes great. But one should know the country is being run by wrong people if its politics creates religious issues," Mr. Raut tweeted without specifying any issue.

Amid nationwide protests against the amended citizenship law, the Opposition parties, including the Congress, have been accusing the BJP-led central government of dividing the country in the name of religion.

The new law seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslim refugees who came to India before December 31, 2014, to escape religious persecution in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.



Thousands of people had gathered to protest over the Citizenship Amendment Act at a peaceful rally in Aurangabad last week. • YOGESH MHATRE

104 arrested, thousands booked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AURANGABAD

More than 100 people have been arrested and over 12,000 booked in three districts in connection with violence during protests over the amended Citizenship Act in central Maharashtra region last week, officials said on Monday.

The anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests on Friday were marred by stone pelting and damage to public and private property in Parbhani, Hingoli and Beed districts.

More than 12,200 cases have been registered in these three districts, where 104 people have been arrested till now, they said.

Most of the cases, nearly 12,000, have been registered in Parbhani district, the officials said.

"So far, 47 people have been arrested from areas under three police stations in Parbhani. The search is still on for more people who pelted stones," said Assistant Superintendent of Police (Parbhani city) Nitin Bagate.

The process to file cases

and arrest protesters was still on in Beed district.

"The police have filed cases against 80-100 people in Beed. So far, we have arrested 32 people and offences such as attempt to murder, damaging public property and rioting, among others, are being registered against protesters," said Harsh Poddar, Beed Superintendent of Police.

"We have registered offences against 100-120 people and arrested 25 people till Sunday evening," said Yogesh Kumar, Hingoli Superintendent of Police.

Thousands take to streets in Latur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LATUR

Social activists, political workers and people from different walks of life on Monday took out a peaceful march demanding scrapping of the amended citizenship law and boycott of the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) here in central Maharashtra.

The march, with the theme 'Sanvidhan Bachao, Desh Bachao' (Save the Constitution, Save the country), was organised under the banner *Amhi Laturkar* (we, residents of Latur) and comes amid nationwide protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the NRC.

The 'maha morcha' started from the Ganjoli area around 11 a.m. and passed through Hanuman Chowk, Gandhi Chowk, and Ashok Hotel before ending at local Tehsil office in the afternoon.

Thousands of local residents, including students, women, lawyers, along with members of several political parties and social groups participated in the morcha.

The marchers held placards with messages like 'Reject CAB! Boycott NRC! We want constitutional India, Not Nazihad' and 'We are for rights not riots.'

IN BRIEF


Writer Anand bags Ezhuthachan Award

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan presented the Ezhuthachan Award for the year 2019 to writer Anand (P. Sachidanandan) at Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. The award carries a purse of ₹5 lakh. The author has penned novels such as *Aalkootam*, *Maranacertificate* and *Marubhoomikal Undakunnathu*.

Thanka Anki procession sets off to Sabarimala

PATHANAMTHITTA The ceremonial procession carrying the sacred golden attire, Thanka Anki, for the 'madala puja' at Sabarimala set off from the Sree Parthasarathy temple at Aranmula on Monday. The Ayyappa idol will be adorned with the Anki prior to the 'mandala puja' to be performed between 10 a.m. and 10.40 a.m. on Friday.

Yediyurappa announces CID probe into Mangaluru violence

There will be a magisterial inquiry too, says Karnataka Chief Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU/SHIVAMOGGA

Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Monday announced a CID probe and also a magisterial inquiry into the violence in Mangaluru during the protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act that left two persons dead in police firing.

However, the Opposition demanded a judicial inquiry. The Chief Minister also rejected the Opposition demand for the resignation of Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai. While the Chief Minister announced the CID probe in Bengaluru, he later clarified in Shivamogga that there would be two inquiries. However, Congress leader Siddaramaiah, on a visit to Mangaluru, said there should be a judicial probe.

"I have directed that strict action be taken against those



Demonstrators throwing stones at the police during a protest against the CAA in Mangaluru on December 19. • REUTERS

who tried to enter a police station to loot arms. I hope peace prevails at least now," Mr. Yediyurappa told presspersons in Bengaluru. Continuing to accuse the Congress of inciting violence," he said those leading the protest or speaking against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act had not explained how the Act was going to affect Muslims.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also clearly said

that this Act will not affect Muslims. Even after Mr. Modi's clarification, the Congress is deliberately causing confusion," he said. Further, in Shivamogga, Mr. Yediyurappa said that there was information that a few youths from neighbouring Kerala were also involved in the violent incidents. He added that his government would not try to suppress peaceful agitations, but cautioned of

stern action against those who indulged in disturbing peace and harmony in the name of protest.

Meanwhile, Mangaluru police commissioner P.S. Harsha requested the public to share videos or photos of the violence on December 19 for further investigation. The police said the prohibitory orders would be in force in the city till Monday midnight.

Disha case: second autopsy on four accused performed

Bodies handed over to families; report to be given to HC

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

Eighteen days after they were killed in an alleged exchange of fire with the Cyberabad police at Chatanpalli near Shadnagar in Telangana, the bodies of the four persons accused of gangrape and murder of a woman veterinarian were handed over to their families on Monday.

The bodies were taken to their villages in Makthal mandal of Narayanpet district, after a team of forensic experts from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, conducted the second post-mortem on them at the State-run Gandhi Hospital here.

The three-member team, comprising Dr. Sudhir Gupta, head of forensics at the AIIMS, Dr. Abhishek Yadav and Dr. Adarsh Kumar, conducted the autopsy for more



A team of forensic experts from AIIMS at the Gandhi Hospital morgue in Secunderabad on Monday. • G. RAMAKRISHNA

than four hours, while Dr. Varun Chandra assisted them.

The entire procedure was video-recorded and the footage would be submitted to the Registrar-General of the Telangana High Court, as per its direction.

Doctors of the Gandhi Hospital, who had conducted the first post-mortem at

Mahabubnagar government hospital on December 6, had been asked not to be part of the procedure, as they might 'influence' the AIIMS team's investigation.

Sources in the Telangana police department said the medical board of the AIIMS was likely to submit its 'classified report' in a couple of days to the High Court.

German student who took part in anti-CAA protests deported

PON VASANTH B.A.
CHENNAI

Jakob Lindenthal, a German student on an exchange programme in IIT Madras, who took part in the protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) here, left India on Monday night after officials from the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) asked him to leave forthwith.

No written order

Sources close to the student confirmed that no written communication was given to him by BoI officials. He was orally informed that he had



Jakob Lindenthal at a protest rally in Chennai.

violated his visa regulations.

He was summoned to the BoI office here in the morning through the office of the Dean of International and

Alumni Relations (IAR) in the IIT. He was questioned till afternoon on a range of topics, including his views on Indian politics and what he thought of the anti-CAA protests, the sources confirmed.

After the enquiry, he was informed that he had to leave the country immediately and he will have to reapply if he wanted to visit again.

Though the German Consulate offered him contacts of lawyers whom he could reach for help, he felt unsafe and decided to leave, sources in the IIT said.

Migrant workers attacked for taking part in protest

Workers from West Bengal took part in CAA protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOZHIKODE

The Kozhikode rural police have launched an investigation into the attack on three migrant workers from West Bengal by an unidentified gang for taking part in the anti-CAA protests organised by the Indian Union Muslim League and the Congress at Nadapuram on Sunday night.

Shafiqullah Islam, Sasna Abdullah and Mulkram Khan, in their 30s and hailing from Murshidabad, were assaulted by a four-member gang with sticks in their rent-



Long march: Protesters attending a rally against CAA and NRC in Kochi on Monday. • THULASI KAKKAT

ed house at Nadapuram town around 9.30 p.m.

They had taken part in the protest at 6 p.m. They said that the attackers wore saf-

Sedition case against two SDPI leaders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MANGALURU

The police have booked cases of sedition (Section 124A) and promoting enmity between different groups on the basis of religion, place of birth etc., of the IPC against two leaders of Socialist Democratic Party of India (SDPI). Cases have been

booked against Riyaz Farangipete, general secretary of the State unit of SDPI, and Sahul S.H., district secretary of the party. The two have been accused of inciting people to protest against the CAA and the NRC through messages on WhatsApp on December 18 and 19.

be spared if they took part in protests again, they were told.

The police said a case had been registered based on a

complaint by Mr. Shafiqullah Islam. The migrant workers said they had no idea about the assailants but could identify them.

Kiss of Love activists booked under POCSO

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Crime Branch on Monday indicted anti-moral policing Kiss of Love activist Rahul Pashupalan and his partner and model, Reshmi Nair, for "pairing off" under-age girls with wealthy clients looking for paid sex. In a chargesheet filed in a court here, the agency has booked the duo for violating the provisions of the POCSO Act.

The agency had arrested them in 2015 after a month-long undercover operation, code-named 'Operation Big Daddy'. The sting led by IG S. Sreejith had exposed an interstate network that arranged sex online for clients. Rahul and his wife shot to fame in 2015 when they became the symbols of a vast movement of youngsters against perceived moral policing tendencies in Kerala.

Festive spirit



Bright and beautiful: With Christmas around the corner, people are busy buying items for decoration in Kochi, Kerala. • AP

Bar-headed goose spotted in Pandalam

Karingali Pancha in Pathanamthitta district is a major birding spot

RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR
PATHANAMTHITTA

A six-member team attached to Pathanamthitta Birders has spotted the Bar-headed goose (Anser indicus) in the wetlands of Karingali Pancha, near Pandalam, reportedly the first sighting in the district.

According to Hari Mavelikara, birdwatcher and district coordinator of the Bird Atlas Project, the team comprising Robin C. Koshy, Jiji Sam, Libin Abraham, Stebin, Aben and Sabu sighted this rare goose species in Karingali Pancha on December 21. The Pancha is a major birding spot in the district which reported the highest bird count in the Asian Waterfowl Census of 2015.

Mr. Hari said the bar-headed goose was the 336th



New abode: A bar-headed goose sighted in Karingali Pancha, near Pandalam, on Saturday.

bird species found in the district. Bar-headed geese are found in central China and Mongolia and they breed there. They start migration to the Indian sub-continent during the winter and stay here till the end of the season.

They are one of the birds

which can fly even at very high altitude. They come to India and return to their homes by crossing the Himalayan ranges.

Cross Himalayas

Their migration has been a fascination for birders as they cross the Himalayas on

one of the most high-altitude migrations in the world. Their ability to sustain the high oxygen demands of flight in air that is exceeding oxygen-thin is exceptional. The capacity of bar-headed geese to transport and consume oxygen at high rates in hypoxia distinguishes this species from similar lowland waterfowl.

Two years ago, a few birds were observed in the Periyar Lake at Thekkady. Before that some other observations were made in the Thrissur kole fields and in Kollam. Large flocks used to visit the Koonthakulam bird sanctuary at Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. However, it is rare that the bird is spotted in Kerala and the recent sighting at pancha is important, says Mr. Hari.

'Bamboo Chicken has lost authenticity'

A.P. tribal chef who commercialised the delicacy regrets the loss of its essence

T. APPALA NAIDU
MAREDUMILLI

Konda Reddi tribal chef K. Amarnath Reddi, who had commercialised the tribal delicacy of 'Bamboo Chicken' in the early 2000 at Maredumilli town in the Rampa Agency area, is sad today. Reason? The way the tribal delicacy has lost its identity and authenticity in Andhra Pradesh.

"Our tribal delicacy, Bamboo Chicken, has lost its authenticity in many ways. From the additional ingredients being added in preparing it by the non-tribals to the taste for which foodies fall in love," Mr. Reddi, 44, told *The Hindu*.

A tribal ambrosia

Living in a mud-walled hut, the lone crusader is now



Authentic taste: Konda Reddi tribal chef K. Amarnath Reddi at his mud-walled hut in East Godavari district. • T. APPALA NAIDU

striving to protect the authenticity of his tribe's delicacy by running a tiny unit making and selling Bamboo Chicken here. The tribal ambrosia originated in the Maredumilli forests in which the Konda Reddi tribe practices the traditional method of 'roasting chicken in a

bamboo pipe'. "Oil, spices, and salt should not be added to prepare the Bamboo Chicken. Unless the bamboo pipe is not fresh, salt should not be added. The chicken requires to be roasted in the bamboo pipe at least for one and a half hours to attain the actual taste only by adding

turmeric, red chilli powder, green chilli, ginger, and garlic. This typical process is hardly seen anywhere now in the State," said Mr. Reddi.

Ignorant eaters

A majority of the customers are unaware of the authentic method of preparing Bamboo Chicken, gobbled whatever is being sold in prominent tourist destinations - Maredumilli and Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh.

"Being a Konda Reddi tribal chef, I repent for introducing it for commercial purpose as the experiment has led to killing its uniqueness and prominence slowly," Mr. Reddi rued. He predicts that the trade of the delicacy thrives as long as the customer does not realise its original taste.

IN BRIEF



Maradu flats demolition to begin on January 11

KOCHI
H2O Holy Faith would be the first of the four Maradu apartments in Kerala that would be pulled down for violating the Coastal Regulation Zone norms. As per the revised plans, the apartment will be demolished using controlled implosion on January 11.

DRDO successfully tests quick reaction missile

NEW DELHI
The Defence Research and Development Organisation successfully conducted twin tests of the Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur off the Odisha coast on Monday morning.

South has higher prevalence of mental disorders: study

Report finds one in seven, or 197 million, Indians suffered from mental health issues in 2017

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh account for a higher prevalence of mental disorders that manifest primarily during adulthood in depression and anxiety, according to the first comprehensive estimates of disease burden attributable to mental health from 1990 prepared by the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative and published in the *Lancet Psychiatry*.

The study finds that roughly one in seven Indians, or 197 million persons, suffered from mental disorders of varying severity in 2017.

These include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, idiopathic developmental intellectual disability, conduct disorders, and autism. Importantly, the contribution of mental disorders to the disability adjusted life year

(DALY) – the sum of total years of life lost and years lived with disability – has doubled between 1990 and 2017 increasing from 2.5% to 4.7%. Mental disorders were the second leading cause of disease burden in terms of years lived with disability (YLDs) and the sixth leading cause of disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs) in the world in 2017.

In total, 45.7 million people had depressive disorders, as one in three years lost due to a mental disorder was due to depression. This was followed by anxiety – a total of 44.9 million people suffered from it and it accounted for the loss of 1 in 5 years.

Three categories

In its State-wise analysis, the study divides different States into three categories on the basis of their socio-demographic index (SDI), i.e low, medium and high SDI States. The SDI is a composite mea-

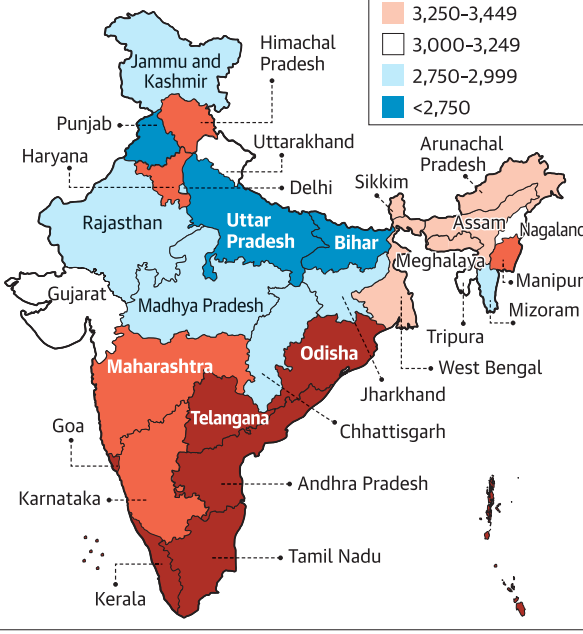
sure of per-capita income, mean education, and fertility rate in women younger than 25 years and is calculated on a scale of one.

Prevalence of depressive disorders was highest in Tamil Nadu (loss of 836 years per 1 lakh population), Kerala (loss of 641 years), Goa (loss of 626 years) and Telangana (loss of 756 years) in the high SDI State group and Andhra Pradesh (loss of 793 years) in the middle SDI State group.

Similarly, anxiety disorders were found to be more common in Kerala (loss of 383 years per 1 lakh population), Himachal Pradesh (loss of 329 years), Tamil Nadu (loss of 325 years), Karnataka (loss of 324 years), Telangana (loss of 324 years), and Maharashtra (loss of 324 years) in the high SDI State group and Andhra Pradesh (loss of 328 years), Manipur (loss of 360 years), and West Bengal (loss of 331 years) in the middle SDI State group.

A heavy burden

Prevalence of depressive disorders was highest in Tamil Nadu (loss of 836 years per 1 lakh population), Kerala (loss of 641 years), Goa (loss of 626 years) and Telangana (loss of 756 years) in the high SDI group and Andhra Pradesh (loss of 793 years) in the middle SDI group



'Road fatalities high among young men'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Road injury was the leading cause of death in India among 15 to 39-year-old men in 2017 and was the second leading cause for both sexes combined, according to the findings of the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative published in the *Lancet Public Health*.

The study gives the first comprehensive population-level estimates of road injury deaths by type of road users in each State.

Of the 2,19,000 road injury deaths in India in 2017, 77% were of men, with the death rate three times higher as compared to women. The death rate standardised for age was 17.2 deaths per 1 lakh population, but it was 25.7 deaths per 1 lakh male population and 8.5 deaths

per 1 lakh women.

In 2017, pedestrians in India accounted for 35.1% (76,729) of all deaths due to road injuries and older adults were the largest casualties. Motorcyclists accounted for 30.9% (67,524) of all road fatalities, motor vehicle occupants accounted for 26.4% (57,802) and cyclists 7% (15,324) of road fatalities.

Motorcyclist and cyclist road injury death rates were 69% and 33% higher in India as compared to the global average.

The study noted that if the estimated trends of road injury deaths up to 2017 were to continue, none of the States are likely to meet the SDG 2020 target of reducing such deaths by half from 2015 to 2020 or even by 2030.

Army officer awarded for developing bulletproof jacket

Suit, which is named Sarvatra Kavach, provides protection from neck to ankle and upper arms: official

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

In 2014, Maj. Anoop Mishra was hit by a bullet while serving in Kashmir valley. Luckily, the bullet hit his armour plate but he went through deep trauma following which he decided to work on developing an armour that can withstand hits from all kinds of ammunition.

On Monday, he was felicitated by Army chief Gen. Bipin Rawat with the Army Design Bureau (ADB) excellence award for indigenously developing *Sarvatra* bulletproof jacket that can provide protection against various ammunition including that of sniper rifles.

Maj. Mishra is presently posted as Instructor at the College of Military Engineer-



Army chief General Bipin Rawat and his deputy General M.M. Naravane in New Delhi on Monday. ■ ANI

ing, Pune. He was among the four awardees felicitated by Gen. Rawat.

Sanctioned in 2017

The project was sanctioned in June 2017 and initially the design and development of a Level IIIA soft body armour suit was sanctioned and was subsequently revised to in-

clude a Level IV hard armour panel inserts, an officer explained. "The suit was named Sarvatra Kawach, it provides protection from neck to ankle and upper arms," he said.

Addressing the seminar held by the ADB on "Technologies for Non Contact Warfare", Gen. Rawat called

on the industry to develop dual-use technologies. "A large number of equipment has now been changed to commercial specifications so that what is built by the industry if it is not ordered by the military and the orders are sinking they can go for civil use."

Military specifications

Giving examples, he said tyres used in the Army vehicles are of military specifications and different from those used by civil vehicles. And so is the case with batteries and generators.

The ADB was set up to liaise with the industry and the academia and develop indigenous solutions for the Army which saw some progress in the last couple of

years. Gen. Rawat stressed on the growing importance of non-contact in future wars and flagged cyber, space and Artificial Intelligence (AI) as the focus areas.

In line with this was technology on display by a team from the Military College Of Electronics and Mechanical Engineering (MCE), Secunderabad on the use of AI for carrying out predictive maintenance of helicopter engines, which is under development.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation also put up a few technologies under development one of which was a Laser Ordnance Disposal System (LORDS) which uses high-energy laser beams to destroy far away ordnance.

Weather, stir hit domestic GoAir flights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

GoAir on Monday cancelled several domestic flights on its network. While the airline declined to cite an exact number, officials said there were about 18 cancellations.

"A combination of factors such as inclement weather, low visibility and anti-CAA protests in certain parts of the country have disrupted multiple flights across GoAir's network. This was further aggravated with flight duty time limitations for the crew," a GoAir spokesperson said in a statement. Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Patna airports were affected.

Judge conduct of judicial officers strictly'

Must keep litigant's faith intact, says SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A judicial officer in the subordinate courts performs a "pious duty" in the service of justice. The standards of probity, conduct and integrity of a judicial officer in discharge of his duties are not the same of a careerist, who is only bothered about advancement in his profession, the Supreme Court said in a recent judgment.

A Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and Navin Sinha pronounced the judgment in an appeal filed by Ram Murti Yadav, who was an additional district and sessions judge in Uttar Pradesh. In 2007, Justice Yadav acquitted the accused in a criminal

case. A vigilance inquiry into his conduct gave an unfavourable report in 2012. A judicial committee ordered his compulsory retirement in 2016. The State High Court dismissed his appeal.

The SC said it was necessary that the ordinary litigant's faith in the judiciary is kept intact. Even creating a perception to the contrary may have damaging consequences.

"The yardstick for judging the conduct of the judicial officer, therefore, has necessarily to be strict. Having said so, we must also observe that it is not every inadvertent flaw or error that will make a judicial officer culpable," the SC observed.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17:00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Cold day to severe cold day conditions very likely in many pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh & Delhi and cold day in isolated pockets over Uttar Pradesh. Cold wave condition very likely in North Rajasthan.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...	22.5	12.4	Kozhikode	...	33.6	25.0
Ahmedabad	...	28.0	17.8	Kurnool	...	30.2	19.2
Aizawl	...	18.2	-	Lucknow	...	17.3	7.2
Allahabad	...	24.2	9.0	Madurai	...	31.1	23.3
Bengaluru	...	27.6	18.1	Mangaluru	...	35.8	23.0
Bhopal	...	24.3	11.8	Mumbai	...	34.6	22.2
Bhubaneswar	...	27.6	17.1	Mysuru	...	28.0	17.2
Chandigarh	...	12.0	9.1	New Delhi	...	14.3	8.3
Chennai	...	30.1	21.2	Patna	...	20.4	10.4
Coimbatore	...	28.9	21.0	Port Blair	...	30.9	25.4
Dehradun	...	22.2	6.8	Puducherry	...	29.5	20.1
Gangtok	...	6.4	-	Pune	...	29.2	17.3
Goa	...	34.2	24.4	Raipur	...	28.3	18.8
Guwahati	...	20.7	12.9	Ranchi	...	22.6	12.8
Hubballi	...	29.0	19.0	Shillong	...	14.4	-
Hyderabad	...	27.3	17.4	Shimla	...	14.1	3.6
Imphal	...	22.2	5.8	Srinagar	...	8.7	0.8
Jaipur	...	24.0	7.0	Thiruvananthapuram	...	32.8	24.4
Kochi	...	32.0	25.6	Tiruchi	...	30.6	22.4
Kohima	...	15.8	5.6	Vijayawada	...	29.7	20.2
Kolkata	...	23.5	14.4	Visakhapatnam	...	29.2	22.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	51	21	21	103	95	■
Bengaluru	10	58	36	...	82	■
Chennai	16	48	64	162	...	■
Delhi	7	171	94	388	268	■
Hyderabad	17	56	38	221	...	■
Kolkata	10	74	51	329	220	■
Lucknow	4	76	313	■
Mumbai	16	37	58	259	178	■
Pune	69	20	98	208	137	■
Visakhapatnam	8	37	49	161	...	■

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
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 premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

NIA searches NSCN(IM) member's residences

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted searches in Delhi and Nagaland at the residence of Alemla Jamir, a member of the steering committee of the NSCN(IM) that is involved in peace talks with the Centre.

The NIA has accused Ms. Alemla Jamir of transporting terror funds from Delhi to Nagaland on the instructions of Icrak Muivah, wife of T. Muivah of the Isak-Muivah faction of the NSCN(IM).

Nagaland Governor R.N Ravi is engaged in final round of negotiations with Mr. Muivah and other Naga groups for the Naga peace deal.

The NIA re-registered a case on December 20, initially being probed by the Special Cell of the Delhi police. The NIA said Ms. Jamir was detained at the Delhi airport on December 17 with ₹72 lakh by the Income Tax authorities. She was later arrested by the Special Cell.

"The case relates to terror funding of NSCN(IM), wherein funds were being taken by the cash courier Alemla Jamir from Delhi to Nagaland on the instructions of Icrak Muivah, wife of Muivah, general secretary of the NSCN (IM)," the NIA said in a release.

It said searches conducted at the house of Ms. Jamir had led to the recovery of four bulletproof jackets, 28 rounds of prohibited ammunition, one drone, Naga Army uniforms, prohibited wildlife articles, incriminating diaries, photographs, and digital devices including Chinese smart phones, video recorders, spy cams and hard disks.



Jharkhand signals

BJP lost because of its inability to recognise livelihood issues and regional aspirations

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s defeat in Jharkhand at the hands of the Congress-Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Rashtriya Janata Dal alliance, seven months after it won 51.6% votes in the Lok Sabha election, follows a now-familiar pattern. The BJP does much better in Lok Sabha elections than in Assembly elections if one goes by the outcomes in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Haryana over the last year. Jharkhand, like Maharashtra, is also an example of the increasing distrust between the BJP and allies. The BJP's ally, All Jharkhand Students Union, parted ways with it following the Lok Sabha election, contributing to its defeat. Its unyielding approach towards allies has a certain appeal, but many communities and interest groups find it as hubris, for good reasons. Conflicting demands of social groups are easier to overcome for the BJP when it manages to place itself as the sole torch-bearer of national interest and pride in Parliament elections. Nationalist bluster has limited appeal in State elections, and questions of livelihood and ethnic autonomy significantly influence voter choices, it appears. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity and rhetorical flourish may still win elections for himself, but State elections have different dynamics. In Jharkhand, outgoing Chief Minister Raghuvar Das's unpopularity made the BJP's downfall quite predictable. Mr. Modi tried to make up for the governance deficiency by making communal appeals during the campaign. He insinuated that only Muslims were behind the violence in protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The BJP bit the dust nevertheless.

Mr. Das, the first non-tribal CM of the State that was formed with the objective of accelerating welfare for indigenous communities, ran a government that only strengthened the perception that the BJP had little sympathy for them. Simultaneously, the BJP and the Sangh Parivar also sought to deepen religious fault lines in the State, between Christian and non-Christian tribals on the one hand, and against Muslims in the name of cow protection on the other. The State witnessed some abhorrent incidents of mob lynching under the BJP. To top it all, the BJP failed to keep its own house in order. Long-time party loyalist Saryu Rai resigned from the party and defeated Mr. Das. The win is a breather for the Opposition, which is struggling to formulate a nationwide and coherent strategy against the BJP on the CAA and the proposed National Register of Citizens. But it may not be accurate to interpret the outcome as the sign of any countrywide mood against the BJP. There is no proof yet that the Opposition has gained enough momentum to challenge the BJP's defining ability to build up mega campaigns on sentimental issues and eclipse material questions and diversity in aspirations.

Brexit on fast-track

With Parliament approving the Brexit deal, U.K. is set to exit the EU on or before Jan. 31

With the passage of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Brexit deal in British Parliament, it is now almost certain that the country would exit the European Union (EU) on or before the current deadline – January 31. Mr. Johnson became Prime Minister after his predecessor Theresa May's repeated attempts to get lawmakers' support for her Brexit deal failed. Mr. Johnson first reached a new agreement with the EU and then called fresh elections. With his party's resounding win in the parliamentary election and a surge in the number of Brexiteers among Conservative lawmakers, the passage of the Bill in the House of Commons was a mere formality. The deal got the support of 358 lawmakers against 234. The agreement deals with issues such as citizens' rights, the settlement amount the U.K. has agreed to pay the EU and an arrangement to avoid physical barriers between the Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., and the Republic of Ireland, an EU member. The accord will be put on vote in the House of Commons once more, and then the upper chamber, the House of Lords, will vote on it. The formalities in the U.K. are expected to be over by early January and the deal will then go to the EU Parliament. Once the EU lawmakers ratify it (which is expected on January 29), the U.K. will formally exit the union.

A formal exit, however, doesn't mean that the tedious Brexit process is over. Even after January 31, the U.K. will continue to remain in the EU single market and customs union, at least for 11 months – this means trade will continue as usual. Mr. Johnson's biggest challenge is to reach another agreement with the EU on the country's future relationship with the bloc. He has ruled out extending talks beyond the December 31, 2020 deadline, which means a no-deal exit can still not be ruled out. Furthermore, Mr. Johnson faces legislative and political challenges ahead even if the current deal goes through the EU hurdle. His government has to pass a series of new legislation replacing the existing EU laws. He should also be mindful of the impact his deal may have on the delicate peace in Northern Ireland. Desperate to secure a complete break with the EU customs union while at the same avoiding a physical barrier between the two Irelands, Mr. Johnson's deal seeks to erect a customs border between Great Britain and the island of Ireland. This has already irked the unionists and strengthened the nationalists in Northern Ireland. The uncertainty over Brexit is now over. But the uncertainty on how Brexit will happen still remains. Mr. Johnson may like to wrap up Brexit at a breakneck speed, but he should be mindful of these speed-breakers. If not, the economic and political costs of Brexit could be huge.

Safeguarding constitutional morality

The post-poll developments in Maharashtra and the hastily passed CAA have been in conflict with constitutional values



M.K. NARAYANAN

On the occasion of Constitution Day, at a joint sitting of Parliament to mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, President Ram Nath Kovind, (quoting B.R. Ambedkar) made a significant observation that all three organs of the state, persons occupying constitutional posts, civil society members, and citizens should abide by 'constitutional morality'.

The reiteration by the President of an essential truth came not a moment too soon. Concerns are increasingly being voiced by different segments of people regarding violations of the Constitution by those in authority.

Concerns about the future of democracy and democratic traditions are, no doubt, growing across the world. In quite a few democracies, moreover, one can also perceive a decrease in democratic freedoms and a trend in favour of illiberal populism. India was hitherto perceived to be an exception to this, being protected by safeguards found in its Constitution – the product of a Constituent Assembly that consisted of not only the best legal minds, but also of compassionate individuals who espoused the finest human values.

Article 370, and after

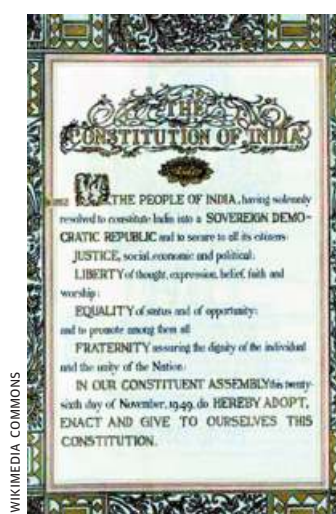
Recent developments in India, however, seem to 'sing', without as yet undermining, the basic structure and principles of the Constitution. Steps need to be taken expeditiously to prevent any further slide. For instance, much has been

made of the fact of diluting Article 370, that it was a temporary provision. The reality is that it was, nevertheless, a provision made in the Constitution for a specific purpose, which clearly required more detailed and careful treatment before being peremptorily invalidated. Even if the end justified the means, the haste was unwarranted.

Again, while the Indian Constitution provides for a federal system with a unitary bias, the Central and State Governments both derive their authority from the Constitution. This implies that States are not exactly subordinate to the Centre. Splitting Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into two Union Territories, without due consultation with different segments and shades of opinion there, including its political leadership, ran contrary to this essential principle. It violated the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution.

Furthermore, while secularism is becoming an ugly word today in many parts of the globe, we in India were free of any such bias. Lately, it would seem, that some of these biases are beginning to emerge in many circles in India as well, undermining our long held secular precepts. In its seminal judgment in the *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* case (1973), the Supreme Court held that secularism is part of the basic structure of the Constitution and cannot be trifled with in the name of security or other considerations.

These are all portents of danger, and call for a great deal of introspection. They merit a calibrated response. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be happening. Those in authority would do well to heed the warning given by former President Pranab Mukherjee while delivering the second Atal Bihari Vaj-



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

payee Memorial Lecture that "A numerical majority in elections gives you the right to make a stable government. The lack of popular majority forbids you from a majoritarian government. That is the message and essence of our parliamentary democracy".

Drama in Maharashtra

Constitutional capers are aggravating this situation. The unfortunate drama enacted after the Maharashtra State Assembly results were announced could have been avoided if constitutional proprieties were adhered to. A pre-election alliance of the BJP-Shiv Sena had secured a majority, but the inability of the two allies to resolve issues relating to sharing of power led to a breakdown. President's rule had to be invoked. Later, after a compromise was reached between the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress to form a government, the President's rule was revoked in a midnight charade using the Prime Minister's 'special powers', and a BJP-led government was sworn in. The State also witnessed

unseemly incidents such as sequestering of MLAs who were taken to safe havens to avoid poaching in the event of a trial of strength in the Assembly. That the attempt to impose a BJP-led government did not succeed is less important than the fact that provisions of the Constitution and the position of constitutional functionaries had been compromised.

A still more expedient experiment, which conflicts with some of the basic precepts contained in the Constitution, has been the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). On the face of it, the CAA only makes it easier for refugees from countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to gain Indian citizenship. The fine point, however, is that it excludes certain categories, such as Muslims. This denies people belonging to one particular religion recourse to the new law.

While the CAA implicitly violates India's liberal traditions, when combined with the move to compile a National Register of Citizens, it carries an ominous ring. Many experts had apparently warned that the proposals were in violation of the Constitution, but these warnings were not heeded. That the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill passed through both the Houses without any detailed debate or discussion thereafter is, hence, unfortunate, giving an impression that a majority in Parliament is adequate to push through Acts which may or may not be in tune with the Constitution.

A study was needed

Whatever be the merits or demerits of the CAA, given India's many-layered democracy and the existence of different religious communities spread across different regions of the country, a more de-

tailed and in-depth study was called for before pushing through such a key measure. Granting citizenship may be the sole discretion of the Centre, with the States having no role. Yet, this could still be unconstitutional if it violates Articles 8 and 14 of the Constitution.

The violence in varying degrees of intensity that has erupted across the nation is a testimony to the divisive nature of this latest piece of legislation. The issue of refugees from neighbouring countries has been pending for long. No satisfactory outcomes were readily forthcoming. Given that the Constitution has been the guarantor of equal treatment to people of all religions and regions, and irrespective of geography and history, the issue of refugees called for not only greater understanding, but also more time, so that the fundamental principles of the Constitution were not violated. While piloting the Bill, the Home Minister had mentioned that "if the Congress had not divided this country on the basis of religion, there would have been no need to bring in this Bill". This is hardly a valid argument. On the other hand, it raises more questions as to what were the real reasons behind the enactment of the Act.

What is also not understood is the haste with which the Bill was pushed through Parliament. India has been grappling with several more critical issues in recent months, including the state of its economy. To raise this matter at this time seemed uncalled for. At this juncture, it may be worthwhile to quote Winston Churchill 'the price of greatness is responsibility'. Is India acting responsibly?

M.K. Narayanan is a former National Security Adviser and former Governor of West Bengal

Making capital out of political rivalry

Coming five-and-a-half years after the bifurcation, Reddy's three-capital proposal for Andhra Pradesh is a belated idea



K. VENKATESHWARLU

After maintaining secrecy over the future of Amaravati for months and allowing confusion to prevail, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has finally revealed what is in his mind. By hinting at the establishment of three capitals, citing the South Africa example, Mr. Reddy has made it clear that he is not in favour of grandiose plans lined up for Amaravati by his predecessor, N. Chandrababu Naidu.

If Mr. Reddy means what he has announced in Andhra Pradesh Assembly about having Amaravati, Visakhapatnam and Kurnool as the legislative, executive and judicial capitals respectively, it is going to be a rather radical move that raises many questions. Can a capital city be divided into three or more pieces and spread across the State based on regional and other considerations?

Can the ruling party of the day play with the idea of a State capital, an enduring symbol of identity for people, and keep shuffling it on political grounds? Should a huge mandate mean a licence to tinker with anything, with scant regard

to continuity in governance? And what if a rival political party comes to power later and reverses the three capitals proposal midway?

Wait for a capital

Such a move by Mr. Reddy would mean that people of Andhra Pradesh have to wait for more time to realise their dream of having a place that could be called a capital. When the Telugu-speaking Andhra State was carved out of the composite Madras State in 1953, Kurnool was made the capital and many people had to move out of the then-Madras city. Three years later, in 1956, the erstwhile Hyderabad State was merged with the Andhra State, including Rayalaseema, to form Andhra Pradesh with Hyderabad as capital.

And, just when people began settling down in Hyderabad, investing their time and resources, showing their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills, the agitation for separate Telangana State began, triggering a wave of insecurity. Following the creation of Telangana in 2014, just when people in Andhra Pradesh thought their search for a capital was over with Amaravati, Mr. Reddy tossed up the three-capital idea.

No one opposes decentralisation of administration and development. But in gravitating towards a three-capital idea, Mr. Reddy appears to be using it to set-



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

tle political scores with his predecessor.

There could be no other reason as Mr. Reddy has floated his idea a full five-and-half years after the tumultuous bifurcation left a truncated Andhra Pradesh without a capital. As Leader of the Opposition in the previous State Assembly, Mr. Reddy did not oppose the location or structure of the capital, leave alone demanding three capitals. He avoided visiting Amaravati even when a section of farmers in the region protested. There was no mention of the three-capital idea in YSR Congress Party (YSRCP)'s manifesto either. So, to find fault with the choice and contours of the capital now looks belated and motivated. Further, thousands of farmers who gave away their land are now in a fix.

Yes, it is true that the Sivaramakrishnan Committee, constituted by the Central government to suggest choices for the capital, did not favour one 'super-capital' and pitched for decentralised development. But, the panel also never

said that there should be a string of capitals across the State as is being interpreted now. Perhaps, it was for this reason that the government went in for a fresh committee headed by former IAS officer G.N. Rao to get a report in sync with its thinking. It came as no surprise that the committee's report had all the points made by Mr. Reddy in the Assembly, two days earlier! This committee suggested that Andhra Pradesh should have a High Court in Kurnool, with a bench each in Visakhapatnam and Amaravati; and an Assembly in Amaravati, which also conducts a few sessions in Visakhapatnam. The proposal promises to be a logistical nightmare with officials frequently having to hop from one city to another.

Naidu's vision and fallacies

At the same time, no one disputes the fact that Mr. Naidu had dumped the Sivaramakrishnan Committee report and its objections to locating the capital in the Vijayawada-Guntur-Tenali-Mangalagiri stretch of land – a fertile stretch. He bulldozed the panel's warnings and went ahead to build a 'dream capital' at the very place. Mr. Naidu's vision was that of a capital as grand as Singapore or any other contemporary capital city with characteristics like iconic public buildings and multiple cities within a city.

Mr. Naidu wanted the capital to

be a robust growth engine that would attract investments, promote tourism and create innumerable jobs, like Hyderabad closer home, Bengaluru and Mumbai. Through Amaravati, Mr. Naidu thought his name would remain etched in public memory forever. In hindsight, Mr. Naidu seems to have gone for an overkill, pooling in a whopping 33,000 acres for the capital and taking his own sweet time to draw a master plan, for which he paid a heavy price and lost badly in the election. There is also a charge made by YSRCP leaders that lot of 'insider trading' happened and Mr. Naidu's supporters benefited.

The point here is, leaving aside Amaravati's scale and size, a centrally located capital has already come into existence with the completion of Secretariat, Assembly and High Court buildings. Should not a government that appears to be sensitive to extravagant public expenditure capitalise on this infrastructure, instead of creating something new in various cities at an enormous cost? At a time when political rivals of conflicting ideologies have come together to form a government in a neighbouring State based on a Common Minimum Programme, is it too much to expect something like CMP on a capital city?

K. Venkateshwarlu is a senior journalist based in Hyderabad

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.

Modi's speech

The Prime Minister, through his customary rhetoric and grandstanding, has tried to pin the blame for the wave of unrest sweeping the country on the Opposition parties and the so-called 'urban Naxals' (Front page, "Pan-India NRC never on the table: PM," Dec. 23). But, the truth is that no one other than his own Home Minister, Amit Shah, was responsible for the unrest. It was the overaggressive and unduly dramatic statements made by Mr. Shah in the Lok Sabha asking the people to be prepared for a nationwide NRC that led to all the trouble. Now that Mr. Modi has clarified that a pan-India NRC is not on the table, what is one to make

of all that happened? Was the Home Minister just shooting off his mouth or was he testing the waters for an NRC with the full knowledge and backing of the Prime Minister and the rest of the Cabinet? Or is it that the Home Minister has become a power unto himself? At this juncture, when the NRC restricted to Assam has itself thrown up a situation where the future of lakhs of people still remains uncertain, the priority of the government should be to find a humane solution to the problems of the people figuring in the list of 'illegal immigrants'. While the Citizenship (Amendment) Act can potentially take care of the Hindus among them, the government of a civilised country like ours should

not close its eyes to the plight of those belonging to other communities.

G.G. MENON,
Tripunithura, Ernakulam, Kerala

Public volte-face

Is the Modi government so rattled by the countryside protests that cost more than 20 lives that the Prime Minister was forced to make a public volte-face by asserting that a pan-India NRC has never been even discussed since his government came to power in 2014? This not only contradicts the repeated categorical assertions by his Home Minister Amit Shah, it is also in direct conflict with President Ram Nath Kovind's address to the MPs after the 17th Lok Sabha was constituted. Such customary address by the

President is a policy declaration of the government of the day. How does the Prime Minister reconcile this contradiction on such a sensitive issue? Similarly, Mr. Modi's denial about the existence of detention camps anywhere in the country is factually incorrect. His own junior Minister's reply in the Rajya Sabha had admitted that instructions had been issued to all States for setting up detention camps. Was it then fair on the part of the Prime Minister to blame the Opposition?

S.K. CHOUDHURY,
Bengaluru

The Kerala model

Minority communalism is certainly not the answer to majoritarian communalism

and Hindutva in India today (Op-Ed page, "A Hindu Critique of Hindutva," Dec. 23). Since CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) may likely to be misused by the latter, the best way to oppose them is through political mobilisation. Kerala's response in this case is a sterling example. The two main coalitions have buried their ideological differences and political enmity at least temporarily for this great democratic cause,

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: A clarification in regard to the FAQ page article "What connects the NPR, NRC and Census" (Dec. 22): A reader had raised a question as to how persons living abroad would be affected as the National Population Register (NPR) will not include the NRIs. However, since they continue to be citizens, the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) will naturally have to include them. This is something that should be addressed when the NRIC is generated. There is no clear answer as of now.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in



To read more letters online, scan the QR code

preventing the fringe minority communal elements from unifying and communalising the people's resistance. It gives a great model to all the Opposition parties at the regional and national levels. Hopefully, this will usher in a new democratically sustainable political culture.

P.J. THOMAS,
Changanassery, Kerala