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## Four accused in Disha’s murder killed

The entire area was cordoned off after locals gathered at the spot as the news spread. Sources in the Police Department said that after seeing the outrage and gathering of people, the top brass took a decision to perform post-mortem on the spot.

**Bodies shifted**  
However, they decided to shift the bodies to the Mahabubnagar government hospital later.

On November 27, the veterinarian, who was on her way home after a check-up at Gachibowli, was abducted,

ed, gang-raped and smothered to death in an open plot near the Tondupally tollgate on the Outer Ring Road, 12 km from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport.

The next morning, her charred body was found at the underpass near Chatanpalli by a villager.

The four accused arrested by the Cyberabad police on November 29 were sent to judicial remand at the Cherlapally central prison on November 30.

On Wednesday evening, they were taken into police custody for questioning.

## NHRC orders probe into Hyderabad incident

“The Commission is aware that growing incidents of sexual assault and violence against the women has created an atmosphere of fear and anger amongst the public at large but loss of human lives even of a person arrested by the police under law, in such circumstances, would definitely give a wrong message to the society,” the NHRC said.

Earlier, on December 2, the NHRC had taken cognisance of the increasing cases of sexual assault of women, including the

Hyderabad case, and had issued notices to the Centre and state governments.

“The Commission has already expressed its view that there is lack of Standard Operating Procedure to immediately respond to the panic situations by the police authorities. The Commission has been insisting upon all law enforcing agencies to keep human rights angle in their view while dealing with the persons arrested by them or being kept in their custody,” the NHRC said.

## MEA: Nithyananda’s passport was cancelled

It is also not clear how he managed to flee the country despite charges of abuse and harassment levelled against him by some of his followers.

In his online statements issued through his website <https://kailaasa.org>, the godman has claimed that he has set up a country for the followers of the Hindu faith on an island belonging to Ecuador.

avoid linking the Latin American country with him.

“Ecuador denied the request for international personal protection (refuge) made by Mr. Nithyananda before Ecuador and later on, Mr Nithyananda left Ecuador presumably on his way to Haiti,” the statement said.

### Travel document

The Ecuadorian statement has proved that Nithyananda has been travelling and has some kind of a travel document that is enabling him to move across international borders.

It is understood that the Indian authorities are trying to find out which country’s passport is Nithyananda using while travelling.

## Auto parts units shed 1 lakh temporary jobs

Going forward, Mr. Jain added, the transition to BS-VI compliant parts and the implementation of safety norms will progressively increase the value-addition from the component industry.

### Marginal growth

While the overall turnover of the sector declined, exports at ₹51,397 crore saw a marginal growth of 2.7% in the first half of 2019-20, compared with the same period of the previous year.

While exports to Europe witnessed a contraction, those to North America,

Asia, Africa, South America, and Australasia all saw growth.

### Aftermarket segment

The aftermarket segment grew 4% to ₹35,096 crore in the first half of 2019-20 compared with the first half of the previous year.

Mr Jain added that subdued vehicle demand, recent investments made on the transition from BS-IV to BS-VI, the liquidity crunch, a lack of a clarity on the electric vehicles policy, among others, have also had an adverse impact on the expansion plans of the component sector.

## ‘No Indian study links pollution to mortality’

These are studies commissioned by the Health Ministry, but the Environment Ministry wants more definitive numbers on how many exact years are lost due to pollution.

### 20-city study

By January, India is expected to report the results of a

20-city study, begun last year, on the extent to which exposure to air pollution correlated with respiratory diseases.

It will also examine whether pregnant women exposed to polluted air made their foetuses and babies more vulnerable to birth defects.

# House erupts over Unnao rape victim’s plight

Government demands apology from two Congress members for ‘threatening behaviour’ towards Minister Smriti Irani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha had to be adjourned for the day on Friday over the government’s insistence on an unqualified apology from two members of the Congress for their “threatening behaviour” towards Union Minister Smriti Irani when she was speaking on the burning of a rape victim in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh.

Later, the BJP moved a motion in Speaker Om Birla’s office to suspend Congress members T.N. Prathapan and D. Kuriakose, if they did not apologise for taking “a threatening demeanour” towards Ms. Irani. “This is the most condemnable behaviour. They came in threatening position...when she was speaking,” Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said when the House assembled after lunch.

Though Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury got up to reply, Mr. Joshi insisted on the presence of the two MPs from Kerala. Finally, BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, who was in the chair, adjourned the House for the day.

It all started during the Zero Hour, when Mr. Chowdhury referred to the incident of a rape victim having been burnt in Unnao and said there “are plans to build a grand Ram temple while Sita is being burnt”. He said Uttar Pradesh had become ‘ad-



**Leading the charge:** Woman and Child Welfare Minister Smriti Irani speaking in the Lok Sabha on Friday. •PTI

harm pradesh’ (lawless State).

“The Hyderabad police shot the rapists when they tried to flee, whereas in Uttar

Pradesh, the police allowed them to be free on bail. That is why they got a chance to burn the victim,” he said.

Things turned volatile when Ms. Irani, the MP from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh, accused the Opposition of “communalising and politicising” the incident. She questioned Saugata Roy of the Trinamool Congress for not referring to a similar case in Malda in West Bengal. During the West Bengal panchayat election, “rape was used as a political weapon”, she said.

As she continued, the two Congress MPs entered the

aisle and charged towards the treasury benches.

In the Rajya Sabha, the Congress questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “silence” on the Unnao incident. Amee Yajnik said women were in panic as the data from the National Crime Records Bureau showed that crimes against women had increased. “The Prime Minister tweets on different topics. But he did not give any statement on Unnao. The Women and Child Development Minister did not make a statement. The Home Minister did not ask for any report. Why is it so,” she asked.

## Congress MP stages protest against Citizenship Bill

It will endanger Assam’s indigenous identity: PCC chief Bora

SOBHANA K NAIR  
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha member and Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Ripun Bora staged a solo protest at the Gandhi statue in Parliament against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill on Friday.

He sat holding a poster that read “Protest against murder of Assam accord ‘the soul of Assam’.” Under the accord, foreigners who have come to Assam “on or after March 25, 1971, shall continue to be detected, deleted and practical steps shall be taken to expel them”.

In the Bill, the cut-off date is 2014, and it will grant citizenship to all non-Muslim refugees who came to Assam after 1971, too.

Congress workers across Assam are on a hunger strike against the legislation. Mr. Bora said the Bill is not only unconstitutional since it uses religion as a criterion to grant citizenship but also against the interest of the people of Assam.

The new version of the



**Going Solo:** Ripun Bora staging a protest against the Citizenship Bill in New Delhi on Friday. •SANDEEP SAXENA

Bill shields tribal areas under Schedule 6 of the Constitution and the States with inner line permit.

“The Bill is misleading. What protection are they talking about? The protection already exists for areas under the ambit of Article 371 of the Constitution,” Mr. Bora said.

He said the legislation would endanger Assam’s in-

digenous identity.

“In Assam, we have taken the burden of huge migration of people during the British regime, partition of India in 1947 and after the 1971 Bangladesh war. The Bill will only add to the burden. The demographic picture of Assam has already changed, and with this legislation, our identity will be in danger,” he told *The Hindu*.

## Now, Venkaiah pulls up Ministers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

After members, it was the turn of Ministers to get a rap from Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu for absenteeism. On Friday, he said no Minister should skip the House without prior information.

When the House convened in the morning, he called out Rajkumar Singh, who was to lay papers for the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Mr. Singh’s absence was pointed out by Jairam Ramesh of the Congress.

Mr. Naidu said many members and Ministers were skipping the proceedings without informing him. “Ministers are duty-bound to come. If they take my permission, I will allow other Ministers to lay [papers] on their behalf,” he added.

Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur was also not present, and his colleague Som Parkash wanted to lay the papers on his behalf. But Mr. Naidu objected to it.

## Rajya Sabha discusses Bill to scrap poll spend limit

Several members raise concerns

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Friday discussed two private members’ Bills to do away with the cap on election spending by candidates and to establish a committee on foreign investment to prevent threats to national security.

Continuing the discussion on the amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, introduced by M.V. Rajeev Gowda of the Congress in the last session, several MPs raised concerns about doing away with the spending limit of ₹70 lakh per candidate.

For a part of the discussion, Prof. Gowda presided over the House in the absence of Chairperson M. Venkaiah Naidu and Deputy Chairperson Harivansh.

### Black money

Opposing the Bill, Rakesh Sinha of the BJP said increasing the limit would not strengthen democracy.

Congress member P.L. Punia said the real expenditure on elections was higher than the limits and black



M.V. Rajeev Gowda

money was still prevalent. However, removing the limit would not be right, he said.

Vishambhar Prasad Nishad of the Samajwadi Party raised concerns over “paid news,” saying a media company had approached him to pay ₹20 lakh in exchange for coverage. G.V.L. Narasimha Rao of the BJP said there was money being spent on “illegitimate purposes”, including “paid news”. He said the current limits could be reviewed, with a separate provision to allow media publicity.

The Bill to set up a committee on foreign investment was introduced by Narendra Jadhav. Both Bills would be taken up again, likely in the next session.

## ‘Police must be proactive on women’s safety’

Home Ministry for better forensic skills

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla wrote to all States and Union Territories on Friday that it is “imperative that the police be easily accessible” and “able to deal with any complaint of crime against women in a timely and pro-active manner”.

Mr. Bhalla also asked the States to set up autonomous forensic units, adding that “forensic evidence is critical to the delivery of justice”.

In the letter, Mr. Bhalla reiterated the Ministry’s earlier directive to ensure “strict compliance” with the provision of “zero FIR” in the event of a cognizable offence like sexual assault. A zero FIR can be filed at any police station, irrespective of the jurisdiction where the

crime occurred, and later transferred to the police station concerned.

States were also asked to “monitor the completion of investigation in serious sexual offences cases in the prescribed two-month period”.

The States were asked to regularly use the national database on sexual offenders (NDSO) to facilitate better investigation. The database has details of over 7 lakh sex offenders. The first-of-its-kind registry, launched in September 2018, is a database of all those convicted for sexual offences from 2005. It includes the names, addresses, photographs and fingerprints of the convicts and can be accessed by police stations through a common software.

## Vijay Kumar appointed Senior Security Adviser

He will hold the post for a year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Retired IPS officer K. Vijay Kumar has been appointed Senior Security Adviser to the Union Home Ministry, an official order said.

The 1975 batch officer will “advise the Ministry on security related matters of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected States,” it said.

The December 3 order by the Ministry stated that Mr. Kumar will be in the position for a period of one year from the date of his taking charge.

Mr. Kumar was serving as



K. Vijay Kumar

an Adviser to Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satyapal Malik till October 31, when the erstwhile State was bifurcated into two Union territories – J&K and Ladakh.

He had earlier also served in the Home Ministry as Senior Security Adviser (LWE).

## Power point



**Remembering Babasaheb:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Manmohan Singh at an event to mark Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar’s death anniversary in Parliament on Friday. •SANDEEP SAXENA

## ACB exonerates Ajit Pawar in Vidarbha irrigation scam case

In affidavit in Bombay HC, it ruled out his involvement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NAGPUR

Maharashtra’s Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has given a clean chit to NCP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in the multi-crore Vidarbha irrigation scam case. The ACB, in its affidavit submitted in the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court, has ruled out Mr. Pawar’s involvement in the cases of alleged irregularities in approval and commissioning of irrigation projects.

The affidavit was submitted on November 27, a day before the government of



Ajit Pawar

the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress was sworn in on November 28.

The court had asked the ACB to clarify its stand on the role of Mr. Pawar, a former Water Resources Development Minister, in these cas-

es. Mr. Pawar, the NCP MLA from Baramati in Pune district, was Water Resources Development Minister during 1999-2009 when the Congress-NCP combine was in power.

Mr. Pawar had also served as chairman of the Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation (VIDC), which had cleared irrigation projects in which irregularities were alleged.

The affidavit said there were lapses on the part of executing agencies of the tender work – that is engineers, divisional accountants and contractors.

## Naxalism will be finished soon: Shah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah told top police officers on Friday that Naxalism would be finished soon and all issues in the northeastern region would be resolved in the next four years, a senior official said.

Mr. Shah was addressing the annual all-India conference of Directors-General and Inspectors-General of Police in Pune.

The conference is organised by the Intelligence Bureau. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to address the police officers on Saturday.