PRINTED AT . CHENNAL . COIMBATORE . BENGALURU . HYDERABAD . MADURAL . NOIDA . VISAKHAPATNAM . THIRUVANANTHAPURAM . KOCHI . VIJAYAWADA . MANGALURU . TRUCHIRAPALLI . KOLKATA . HUBBALLI . MOHALI . MALAPPURAM . MUMBAL . TIRUPATI . LUCKNOW . CUTTACK . PATNA

Brutally thrashed, says actor Deepak Kabir

Theatre actor and cultural activist Deepak Kabir on Thursday alleged that the police not only brutally thrashed and abused him in custody but also labelled him an "urban Naxal". Mr. Kabir, 44, was released from jail after a court granted him bail in a case of violence during a protest against Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Lucknow on December 19.

Teenager in hit-and-run to be tried as 'child': SC

A loophole in juvenile law will see a teenager who allegedly drove his father's luxury car over a 32-year-old man in Delhi being tried as a child rather than an adult who committed a heinous crime. A Supreme Court Bench observed that an offence which does not provide a minimum sentence of seven years cannot be treated as a heinous offence

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 4 PAGES

Foreign envoys in J&K on a fact-finding visit

They met politicians, editors and elected grassroots leaders

PEERZADA ASHIQ

A 15-member foreign envoys' delegation arrived in Srinagar on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir and met over 100 people, including senior Valley-based politicians, top newspaper editors and grassroots representatives.

They were seeking feedback on the ground situation post the revocation of the State's special status, Pakistan's attempts at interference and the immediate demands of the people.

Unlike the controversial tour of the European Union (EU) parliamentarians in October last year, these envoys, including U.S. Ambassador to India Kenneth I. Juster and the Norwegian Ambassador, drove past busy streets from the airport to reach Lalit Grand Palace Hotel. The venue is close to the sub-jail where National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah has been detained since August 5. The envoys did not meet him.

No shutdown was observed nor was any violence reported, unlike during the EU parliamentarians' visit.

During their interactions with politicians, local editors and elected grassroots leaders, the envoys posed pointed questions on the re-



Ground study: Foreign envoys arriving at the Srinagar airport on Thursday on a two-day visit. • ANI

SC verdict on curbs today

The Supreme Court will on Friday pronounce its verdict on the legality of the restrictions on the fundamental freedom of movement and the shutdown of communications in Jammu and Kashmir since August 5, following the withdrawal

vocation of Article 370 and wanted to know if Pakistan was making attempts to interfere, delegates at the meetings told The Hindu.

There was a common demand for restoration of Internet services, they added.

The foreign envoys, mainly from South American,

Why ban us, asks Congress

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the Centre of adopting double standards by taking Ambassadors on a "guided political tour" of Jammu and Kashmir, while barring Indian politicians from the Union Territory. He sought "unfettered access" for all politicians. ▶ PAGE 12

African and Asian nations, held a closed-door interaction with a group of prominent politicians led by Altaf Bukhari, fast emerging as the face of a non-NC, non-Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) third front.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

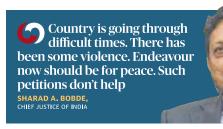
SC rebuffs plea to implement CAA

Court must independently review the law for elements of unconstitutionality: CJI

Chief Iustice of India (CII) Sharad A. Bobde said the country was already going through difficult times and an endeavour should be made to maintain peace.

The CJI made the oral comments while hearing a petition seeking an "aggressive" implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), which fast-tracks benefits of citizenship to illegal immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan belonging to six minority religions but denies the same treatment to Mus-

"Country is going through difficult times. There has been some violence. Endeavour now should be for



peace. Such petitions don't help," Chief Justice Bobde told the lawyer for Mumbaibased Puneet Kaur Dhanda.

Ms. Dhanda's petition wanted the court to declare the Act "constitutional".

The CJI scoffed at the prayer, explaining to the lawyer that any law passed by the legislature was anyway attached with "a presumption of constitutionality". It was now for the Supreme Court to independently review the law for elements of unconstitutionality in it.

"How can we just declare [CAA] constitutional? There is anyway a presumption of constitutionality. You have been a student of law. you would know..." Chief Jus-

tice Bobde said. The court, he said, had listed over 60 petitions challenging the legality of the Act for hearing on January 22. They argued that the Act shredded the nation's basic and fundamental value of secularism by discriminating in the grant of citizenship on the basis of religion.

The CJI remained noncommittal when the lawyer sought an urgent hearing of his petition favouring the CAA. Ms. Dhanda asked the court to direct the Election Commission to take "strict action" against political par-"spreading false rumours and violence in the country". The petition also sought legal action against those protesting against the CAA.

Protesters have said the Act is discriminatory in granting citizenship and had ripped apart the fabric of secularism.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

JNU students beaten up during march

Ministry rules out V-C's removal after talks with delegation of students, teachers

SHINJINI GHOSH

Several students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) were beaten up on Thursday by Delhi police personnel as they tried to march towards Rashtrapati Bhavan after "unsatisfactory" talks with officials of the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry. At least four students received injuries when police used "mild force" to disperse the march. Around 11 students were also detained but later released.

Scores of people, since late afternoon, had assembled outside the HRD Ministry as a protest march starting from Mandi House culminated there. HRD Secretary Amit Khare met a delegation of nine representatives from JNU Students' Union and JNU



Students being detained during a protest march towards Rashrapati Bhavan on Thursday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Teachers' Association demanding the removal of Vice Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar. The Ministry ruled out Mr. Kumar's removal. "Removing the VC is not the solution. The basic issue on which the whole problem has arisen needs to be addressed first. Changing X, Y or Z is not

as important as resolving the issues that have come up," said Mr. Khare.

Ministry officials, however, asserted that the "formula" decided during consultations with students and administration needs to be implemented. The university officials, including the Vice Chancellor, have been called at the Ministry on Friday over students' claims that the revised fees as decided during HRD intervention are not be-

ing implemented. Towards evening, JNU Students' Union president Aishe Ghosh addressed those gathered outside Shastri Bhawan and termed the MHRD meeting "unsatisfactory" and called for a march to Rashtrapati Bhavan. Students and protesters started moving but were stopped by the police. In the melee, several protesters were beaten up by the police and taken away in police vehicles. A male student suffered head injuries during baton charge.

(With inputs from Saurabh Trivedi and agencies)

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 2

T.N., Kerala hunt for suspected Islamic ultras

Duo killed an SSI in Kanniyakumari

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KANNIYAKUMARI

Preliminary investigations into the gunning down of special sub-inspector of police Wilson, 57, at Padanthaalumoodu checkpost in Kanniyakumari district on Wednesday night, point to the involvement of suspected Islamic extremists.

With the help of CCTV images, the police identified the assailants as A. Abdul Shameem of Thiruvithaancode and M. Thoufique of Malik Dinar Nagar in Kottar, Kanniyakumari.

Police sources said Shameem was involved in the murder of Hindu Munnani activist Suresh Kumar in Chennai in June 2014. He was arrested with some others but released on bail in



Abdul Shameem

December 2019. He went underground thereafter.

Tamil Nadu Director General of Police J.K. Tripathy and ADGP, Law and Order, K. Jayanth Murali, who arrived in Kerala on Thursday had an hour-long meeting with Kerala police chief Loknath Behera and ADGP, Law and Order, Sheikh Darvesh

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Centre withdraws CRPF cover for Stalin, OPS

'State govt. can provide them security'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has withdrawn the security cover of DMK president M.K Stalin and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, a senior government official said on Thursday

Mr. Stalin had Z-category security cover and Mr. Panneerselvam had Y-category proximate security cover, provided by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The official said that the CRPF was tasked with providing proximate and mobile security cover to both the leaders only in Tamil Nadu, which now stood withdrawn. While Z-category is the second highest form of security cover, with 20-22



personnel involved, Y-category protection entails deployment of 11-12 personnel.

The official said that the State government could provide protection to the two leaders. In July last year, around

1,300 security personnel were freed of VIP security duty after the MHA reviewed security cover of 350 indivi duals, including politicians.

Recently, the Centre withdrew the Special Protection Group cover of Congress leaders Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi and replaced it with Z-plus cover of CRPF.

Nirbhaya case: two convicts file curative pleas

Vinay, Mukesh in their pleas claimed 'sea change in death penalty jurisprudence'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

Curative petitions were filed in the Supreme Court by two convicts in the Nirbhaya case on Thursday. The petitions come just days after a Delhi sessions court scheduled the execution of the four convicts at Tihar Jail on January 22.

Vinay Sharma and Mukesh, in separate curative

U.P. govt. suspends Noida SSP over objectionable video

Vaibhav Krishna had alleged corruption in the State police force in a 'secret' report to CMO, DGP

petitions, said there had been a sea change in the death penalty jurisprudence. They argued that ignoring the subsequent changes in the law against the death penalty would be "gross miscarriage of

Rare remedy

A curative petition is a rare remedy devised by a Consti-

tution Bench of the Supreme Court in its judgment in the Rupa Ashok Hurra case in 2002. A party can take only two limited grounds in a curative petition – one, that he was not heard by the court

before the adverse judgment was passed, and two, the iudge was biased. A curative petition, which follows the dismissal of a review peti-

tion, is the last legal avenue

open for convicts in the Supreme Court. Sharma was the first of

the four convicts to file a curative petition, arguing that there had been "a change in the law on death sentence in India" since the death penalty was first confirmed for the Nirbhaya convicts in

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Maharashtra may reopen Loya case, says Minister

Foul play was alleged in judge's death

STAFF REPORTER

Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday said the State government is open to reinvestigating the death of special CBI judge B.H. Loya if fresh evidence warrants it.

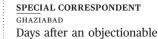
"Our government is open to reinvestigating the Loya death case. Some people are meeting me today to demand that the case be reopened. I will hear them out and if necessary, the case will be reinvestigated," said Mr. Deshmukh. Asked whom he was meeting, the Minister said he could not divulge the names.

Loya, who was hearing

din Sheikh fake encounter case of Gujarat involving current Union Home Minister Amit Shah, died of cardiac arrest in Nagpur on December 1, 2014, when he had gone to attend the weddingof a colleague's daughter. His death turned controversial after news reports suggested foul play. BJP MLA Ashish Shelar

the high-profile Sohrabud-

criticised Mr. Deshmukh for his statement. "If the Supreme Court has closed the case, then what is the reason for the Home Minister to make such statements? Is he acting as per law or are political intentions behind this?" he said.



video of Gautambuddha Nagar Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) Vaibhav Krishna came to light, the IPS officer has been suspended by the Uttar Pradesh government.

Mr. Krishna had described the video "morphed" and a move to "malign" his image. He filed an FIR and called it a move by his rivals to deflect attention from a "secret" report on rampant corruption in postings that he had submitted to the Chief Minister's Office and the Director General of Police.

In a simultaneous action, five IPS officers named in the



described the video as 'morphed'. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT report have been removed minary report found it to be

from field postings and an SIT probe has been ordered. Official sources said the video was sent to the forensic lab in Gujarat and a preli-

authentic. The inquiry report also found him guilty of violating the service rules as he leaked the secret report to the media. Mr. Krishna al-

Meerut to detain a senior journalist to know the source of the video. A departmental inquiry has been ordered against him.

so made news when he alleg-

edly sent police officers to

'Police-scribe nexus'

The leaked report detailed an alleged nexus between police officers and journalists to influence transfer postings and cases. The report was published after four journalists were arrested by the Gautambuddha Nagar police for alleged publication of fake news about police officers.

Among the 14 IPS officers transferred by the Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday are Himanshu Kumar,

Ajaypal Sharma, Rajiv Narayan Mishra, Sudhir Kumar Singh and Ganesh Saha, whose names were mentioned in the report submitted by Mr. Krishna.

Fighting corruption

An official release said there was zero tolerance against corruption and a threemember Special Investigation Team has been constituted to investigate the matter and submit the report within 15 days.

The allegations of exchange of money for plum postings sullied the "clean" image projected by the Yogi Adityanath government and gave an opportunity to the Opposition to take on the government.

U.P. tops list in crimes against women VIJAITA SINGH

NEW DELHI

The National Crime Records Bureau published the annual Crime in India Report 2018 on Wednesday. It was published with provisional data, as five States – West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim did not send clarifications sought by the NCRB.

According to the report, 3,78,277 cases of crime against women were reported, up from 3,59,849 in 2017. Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 59,445 cases, followed by Maharashtra (35,497) and West Bengal (30,394).

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 9

AQI inches closer to 'satisfactory'

STAFF REPORTER

The overall air quality of the city was in the lower end of "poor" category on Thursday, only a few notches above "satisfactory" level, according to government-run monitoring agency System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR).

"The high surface winds and ventilation are likely to continue for the next two days. The AQI is forecast to be at the higher end of poor to lower end of very poor category on Friday," said SAFAR.

On Thursday, the average level of PM 2.5 - deadly respirable particles was (78.9 ug/m3) more than the safe limit (60ug/ m3) as per Indian standards, in Delhi and NCR at 9 p.m., according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). But the level is more than three times the safe limit (25 ug/m3) set by the WHO.

The city's AQI on Thursday was 203, down from Wednesday's 266, according to the 4 p.m. bulletin of the CPCB, which is the average of the last 24 hours.

"The SAFAR model suggests marginal deterioration in air quality and in the "very poor" category by January 11. Further deterioration towards the middle of the "very poor" category is expected by January 12," SAFAR said.

Friday's top three air pollution hotspots are likely to be Vinobapuri, Vasundhara and Sahibabad, according to SAFAR.



DELHI TODAY

Haridas Tansen Sangeet Nritya Ma-hotsav will feature vocal recitals by Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar and Pt. Ch-hannulal Mishra and flute recital by Pt Harinrasad Chaurasia at Shank Lal Hall, Modern S Barakhamba Road, 6.30 p.m.

Exhibition: "Light and Lines in the Middle Land", a solo exhibition of photographs by Amit Verma at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: A group art show by Kushala Vora, Sangita Maity and Shruti Mahajan at Shrine Empire Gal-lery, D 395, Defence Colony, 11 a.m.

Exhibition: "Sands of Time", a solo art show by Rashmi Khurana at Art Konsult, 3, Ground Floor, Hauz Khas Village, 10.30 a.m. - 6.30 p.m.

Exhibition: "Katha", a solo painting show by Chandar Panjre at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205,

Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. **Screening:** "Every Day a Good Day", a Japanese film with English sub-titles will be screened at The Japan Foundation, 5A Ring Road, Lajpat Nagar IV, 6.30 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column

'INU's character has changed since current V-C took charge'

Yechury, Kanhaiya address students as protesters demand V-C's resignation

SHINJINI GHOSH

Scores of students from JNU assembled outside the HRD Ministry since late afternoon on Thursday, demanding JNU Vice-Chancellor's resignation and safe university spaces. Thousands, including ordinary citizens, students and professors from various universities, participated in the march.

Stating that the "character of JNU has changed since the current V-C's joining, Sana Khan, a Ph.D scholar in the university said: "When I joined JNU 10 years ago for my M.A. course, JNU was a space where one could have debates and students from various classes mingled with each other. It was a place which helped us break stereotypes. Suddenly the entire character of the university has changed with the V-C bringing in all kinds of restrictions.

JNU student Sohini Dasgupta, who was seen carrying a blank poster, said: "We have so much to say that it cannot fit in one poster. While the fee hike should be revoked completely, the V-C should immediately step down. This is an issue which is affecting thousands of students. If students don't speak up, then who will?"

'Political agenda'

Former JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar said: "The Home Minister keeps referring to the "tukde tukde gang". I want to tell him that I own the term proudly. Desh ko todne ka jo sapna hain unka, uska tukde tukde kadenge hum desh ko bacha*kar*. Besides this, the V-C has to be removed. Despite being the head of the institu-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Policemen in plainclothes

were on the JNU campus

when students were assault-

ed by an armed gang, stu-

dent activists said. Eyewit-

nesses maintained that they

spotted a large number of

armed men with faces co-

vered in handkerchiefs sta-

tioned outside Periyar Hostel

and policemen in civil

clothes were standing near-

by when the mob began pelt-

run. But after a while we re-

turned to the Periyar main

gate, and there we saw a col-

lection of men who were not

masked and armed. So we

asked them who they were

and they responded that

they were from the Delhi

police," said Sucheta Taluk-

dar of the All India Students

Association.

"Our first response was to

ing stones at students.



Defiant stand: Students marching to the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday. • sushil кимак verма

tion, he has not met any of the injured faculty members and students. It is clear that he has come here with a political agenda."

Saket Sonkar, another JNU student added, "The administration with the V-C being the head has completely failed the students. He has not done anything to restore normalcy. Until and unless they rollback this manual and pass a new resolution in a democratic manner we will continue protesting."

Leaders join students Several political leaders and activists also addressed the gathering.

CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury said, "No resignation, he (V-C) has to be removed. For three hours he allowed

'Police in plainclothes were on JNU campus'

Narrative goes counter to reported claim that officials were not in a position to stop goons

Delhi University students enact a play to protest against the

violence at JNU campus, at the Arts faculty on Thursday.

The narrative goes coun-

ter to the reported claim that

the police were asked to be

stationed at the entry gates

of the campus and therefore

were not in a position to stop

the violence by the armed

gang. The students indicate

that the police were present

on the campus to incite and

"We were agitated and

participate in violence.

rampage inside the campus despite the police being outside. They were only called when it was over. This can only mean that the V-C is also complicit in the incident."

Activist Anjali Bharadwaj said, "This government does not believe in any form of dialogue. People are fighting against CAA, NRC and V-C, opposing the violence across the campuses. But what we are seeing is a nonresponsive government unwilling to take on board opinion, which is critical in a democracy."

DCP's contention

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singhal said: "A gathering of JNU students and teachers marched from

Mandi House to MHRD, Shastri Bhawan via Rajendra Prasad Road. A delegation of nine persons, including teachers, went to meet JS, MHRD. The gathering remained peaceful till they were in the meeting."

"However, when the delegation came out after the meeting, one of the student leaders provoked the gathering to move towards Rashtrapati Bhavan. They stopped the normal traffic at Rajendra Prasad Road and some of them tried to march towards Rashtrapati Bhavan," he said.

"They were prevented from doing so. In the process, 11 people were detained and they were subsequently released," he added.

ice in civil dress were not on-

ly mute witness but in fact

assaulted students near the

"Students identified the

persons in plainclothes that

they were indeed from Delhi

Police and around 7 p.m. of

January 5, they assaulted stu-

dents," said a PhD student

who witnessed the violence

near the north gate, which is

the main entrance of the un-

iversity and near the Periyar

was because of the presence

of the plainclothes police-

men that the violence was in-

tense from the side of the

police during our anti-fee

hike agitation but the pre-

sence of policemen on the

campus was a form of incite-

ment for targeting students,"

said Ms. Talukdar.

"I was beaten up by the

Students maintain that it

and Ganga hostels.

north gate.

Students contest V-C's statement, call it a bid to put pressure on them

They say a few who are affiliated to ABVP had registered online

SIDHARTH RAVI NEW DELHI

Contesting the Vice-Chancellor's statement that 3,300 students had made payments for online registrations in the current semester, students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (INU), present on the campus on Thursday, argued that it was an attempt to put pressure

on the student community. All the students The Hindu met said that they were boycotting the registrations in support of the students' union which was holding demonstrations at the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

"Only a few students who are with the ABVP have registered themselves to get into the V-C's good books," alleged Durlabh Sahoo, a PhD student at the School of **International Studies**

"The V-C is inflating the numbers by adding those who have paid their hostel fees," he said. Others such as Mohamed Arif, an MPhil Urdu scholar, claimed that an internal student survey had shown that only about students registered.

Durlabh argued that the V-C was attempting to put pressure on the student The V-C is inflating the numbers by adding those who have paid their hostel fees

community through such statements so that those who were boycotting registrations stop doing so out of adverse fear consequences.

Confusion prevails 'We get calls from students,

who have gone back home, every day asking us whether registrations have started. There is so much confusion," said Sibtin Raza, an MA student, who said that he was still on the campus for the same reason.

"We don't know about our exams either. If registrations take place, then exams will be called at any time. So we are constantly preparing for exams," he added.

Commenting on the effect of the entire imbroglio on studies, students such as Vinod Kumar, a PhD scholar at the School of International Studies (SIS), said that students were studying them-

However, concerns over the increased fees remain among students. Sachidananda Naiq, a PhD Sanskrit scholar who said that he is politically "leaned towards" the ABVP, lamented that if various utility charges were imposed, then the programme would be unaffordable for him.

"I am considering to take up a part time job to supplement my income. But to do a job and to carry on my research would be very hard," he said.

Students here said that there was no clarity on what kind of increase would take place. "They had only removed the medical charge, but we are worried whether they will add other utility charges later on. There are rumours that the fees will be hiked by 10% every semes-

ter after that," said Durlabh. Students said that while the campus was calm now there was an apprehension that it had become unsafe for students with some taking safety precautions.

Arif, a resident of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh said: "One of the reasons why I haven't gone home is because there is a fear that someone might attack me there.. but my family says I am not safe here either." He now sleeps with the lights on at night.

Police got order from 'above' to let violence happen: CM

'Whatever is happening now not their fault'

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

AAP national convener and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday, in an allusion to JNU without naming the university, alleged that the Delhi Police got "orders from above" to let violence happen and let the attackers escape and then only enter the campus.

"Whatever cycle of events happening now is not the Delhi Police's fault... If constables are told 'let violence happen, do not enter inside, stay outside'. How can they go inside? They will be suspended," Mr. Kejriwal said at a press conference.

"They [police] get order from above, 'let violence happen and after that let them escape and then only enter inside'. So they do that," he said.

There have been allegations that the police waited outside the gates of JNU, while a masked mob attacked students and teachers on Sunday night.

Delhi Police is under the ambit of the Lt. Governor, who is appointed by the Central government, and is not under the Delhi government.

The Chief Minister said that the Delhi Police is functioning along the same lines of the BJP-run municipal cor-



Arvind Kejriwal

porations. "There are 90% chances that the complaint will not be filed by the police in case of an emergency. You all have witnessed the attitude of Delhi Police in the last few days when the law and order situation in the State was grave," he added.

Delhi Police's reaction When asked for a comment.

additional PRO of Delhi Police, Anil Mittal said: "Delhi Police has all along been a professional force and handles situations professionally as per its legal mandate. It is absolutely incorrect to say that it acts under any pressure and also to suggest that complaints are not registered at police stations. There is a well established mechanism to address complaints, including women help desks and public facilitation officers.

JNU forms panel to look into violence

STAFF REPORTER

The Jawaharlal Nehru University administration on Thursday said that a fivemember committee was constituted to look into the violence which took place on the campus on Sunday.

The V-C has set up a committee "to inquire into the whole incident of violence which took place on the campus on January 5," read a statement issued by the administration.

The five-member panel will be assisted by Chief Security Officer and the committee "shall submit its report at the earliest statement said.

A masked mob armed with sticks and rods had on Sunday attacked several faculty members and students, including JNUSU pre-

sident Aishe Ghosh. On being questioned about the violence which took place and how the masked mob managed to enter the campus, Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar had on Tuesday said: "Let the police investigate into it, let the facts come to the front and then we will know what exactly happened. We must not add additional versions of what is going around and cause further confusion."

Lakshmi's mahout fails to get custody as apex court refuses to entertain plea

Bench wondered how habeas corpus plea can be heard for a jumbo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A 26-year-old mahout failed to get the custody of elephant Lakshmi as the Supreme Court on Thursday refused to entertain his habeas corpus plea seeking its release from alleged illegal detention.

Lakshmi was in news a few months ago when she was allegedly taken away by the mahout before Delhi police rescued her and took to a forest shelter.

Saddam, the mahout of the 47-year-old pachyderm, had moved the apex court seeking its directions to release Lakshmi from "illegal detention" at Elephant Rehabilitation Centre and bring her back to Delhi.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde wondered how a habeas corpus plea can be heard for an elephant



and asked the lawyer appearing for the mahout whether he had document to show legal right of possession.

"Is elephant a citizen of India?" the Bench, also comprising Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice Surya Kant, said.

The Supreme Court said that if the animal was with the Elephant Rehabilitation Centre, the petitioner would have to produce some documents to get back the custody of Lakshmi.

At this, advocate Wills Mathews, appearing for the petitioner, withdrew the petition with liberty to approach the High Court.

The top court in its order said, "Counsel for the petitioner seeks permission to withdraw this petition with liberty to approach the High Court for appropriate relief. Permission sought for is granted. The writ petition is dismissed as withdrawn with liberty to approach the High Court for appropriate relief in accordance with law."

phant had gone missing and a countrywide alert was isdepartment two months la-

In July last year, the elesued to trace it. The animal was found by the Delhi forest

Court asks bank to recover car loan from defaulter

Man took a loan of ₹6 lakh to buy car

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

asked why were they just

standing and not stopping

the gang that still could be

heard hollering nearby. But

they kept standing there,"

Closer scrutiny needed

The role of the police during

the night of assault deserves

closer scrutiny as some oth-

er students said that the pol-

said Ms. Talukdar.

In an ex-parte judgment, a Delhi court has allowed a public sector bank to recover a car loan of ₹5.65 lakh from a borrower.

The borrower had taken a loan of ₹6 lakh from the bank to buy a car by hypothecating the vehicle to it. However, after paying a few EMIs, he repayment. The bank filed a recover

suit after the borrower took no note of the legal notice served on him. The court issued a notice to the borrower on taking cognisance of the case. However, the borrower

chose not to defend himself. Hence, the court decided the matter ex-parte on the basis of evidence by an officer of the bank.

"In view of unrebutted

testimony of the witness and the documents proved on record, it is established that defendant failed to make the payment of the outstanding amount and a total sum of ₹5,65,938 was outstanding as per the statement of accounts dated 29.06.2012.," Additional Sessions Judge Murari Prasad Singh said.

6% interest

"Therefore, I find that plaintiff bank has been able to establish its case on preponderance of probabilities. Plaintiff bank, is therefore, entitled for a sum of ₹5,65,938 against the defendant. On this amount of ₹5,65,938, plaintiff bank is awarded pendente lite [during the pendency of the case] and future interest at 6% per annum," the judge said in his decision.

'Find out whether automated plants can address pollution'

Green panel directed CPCB to carry out study within 4 months

STAFF REPORTER

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to carry out a study within four months to ascertain whether advance batch automated plants can address pollution caused due to burning of waste tyres in pyrolysis industries.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the CPCB to carry out the study with the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)

Pyrolysis is a method of recycling old tyres through a thermochemical treatment CPCB informed. under high temperature to produce industrial oil and



The directions came after the apex pollution control body informed the tribunal that according to an action taken report from respective State pollution control boards, currently there are 678 tyre pyrolysis units in 19 States. Out of the 678 units, 270 were compliant with environmental norms, the

"The increase in number of compliance units is mainly due to monitoring by CPCB and State pollution control boards [SPCBs]. SPCBs based on direction of CPCB has started process of closing the non-compliance units," the CPCB said. The tribunal was hearing a plea moved by NGO Social Action for Forest and Envi-

ronment (SAFE) which sought a ban on end-of-life tyres in pyrolysis industries citing non-implementation of environmental laws. "Direct the Ministry of En-

vironment, Forests and Climate Change, the CPCB and the State pollution control boards in consultation with other scientific agencies to develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure that waste tyres imported are verified through scientific means," the plea had said.

IN BRIEF

Woman tries to kill self at food outlet washroom

A woman in her 20s tried to end her life at a food outlet at Bahadurshah Zafar Marq here on Thursday, the police said. She had slit her wrist and was found bleeding in the washroom. She had come alone, ordered food and gone to the washroom. She was rushed to a hospital in a PCR van and is said to be out of

1-yr-old undergoes rare liver transplant surgery

A 14-hour rare liver graft transplant surgery was performed on a one-year-old girl from Saudi Arabia at Artemis Hospital in Sector 51 here. Baby Fatima (name changed) underwent the living donor liver transplant, where only 1 out of 8 portions of the liver was used to provide a new liver to her. The surgery called Monoseament (Seament 3) living donor liver transplant is the first such case reported in

Delhi-NCR, the hospital said.

15 Daryaganj violence accused granted bail

Accused told to appear at police station till further orders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday granted bail to 15 people who were arrested by the State police for alleged violence during protests against the amended Citizenship Act in Daryaganj last month.

Additional Sessions Judge Kamini Lau allowed the bail applications on the condition of a bond of ₹25,000 per head and surety of the like amount.

The accused persons have been directed to appear in person before the Station House Officer of Daryaganj police station on the last Saturday of every month, till further orders.

They are also required to surrender their passports and not to make any attempt to influence the witnesses in



the case.

Lawyer Rebecca John, who represented the accused people, had submitted before the court that the police arrested them from different places; that they were not involved in any violence; and that they did not have any political affiliation.

Ms. John also said that the arrested people were from low-income groups and that

they were in no position to influence any witness or tamper with the evidence.

The court had earlier directed the police to submit medico-legal certificates and the CCTV footage, in support of their allegations, for perusal.

The judicial custody of the accused people was on Monday extended till January 18. Thereafter, the hearing on their bail applications was transferred to another Tis Hazari court as the case was taken over by the Crime Branch.

On December 23, a magisterial court had turned down the bail pleas of the accused.

The said incident took place on December 20, after which the accused were arrested for alleged violence.

Cognisable crime in 2018: Delhi with over 2 lakh cases leads 18 metro cities

National Crime Records Bureau releases report on Thursday

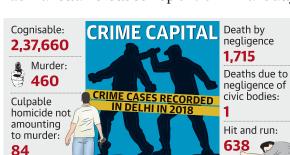
STAFF REPORTER

The national capital registered a total of 2,37,660 cognisable cases followed by Chennai (85,027) and Surat (60,384) among 18 metro cities in terms of crimes in 2018, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data released on Thursday

The NCRB released the 2018 edition of the report, 'Crime in India', which stated that Delhi has witnessed a marginal rise in crime cases as compared to 2017. In 2018, Delhi accounts for a 29.6% share of the overall Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL) among 19 metro cities.

The total number of IPC and SLL cases registered in 2017 was 2,24,346, according to data from the NCRB.

Chennai ranks second on the list of metro cities, with a share of 10.6%. In 2018, the total number of crime cases registered was 85,027, a



sharp rise from 41,573 cases registered in 2017.

Surat in Gujarat, and Mumbai in Maharashtra figure at third and fourth positions with shares of 7.5 and 7.1 % of the overall figure.

Together, India's 19 metro cities show a modest 10% increase in crime in 2018, according to the data from the latest edition of the 'Crime in India' report. In all, 8,02,267 cognisable crimes comprising 5,45,502 IPC crimes and 2,56,765 SLL crimes were registered in 19 metropolitan cities in 2018.

In 2018, the city topped with 460 murder cases fol-

lowed by Bengaluru (229) and Coimbatore (174), Under the head of death due to negligence, the Delhi records 1.715 deaths where as Chennai (4101) and Bengaluru

In cases of death due to negligence of civic agencies, the city recorded only one death and four deaths in Ghaziabad in 2018. Three deaths were reported in Bengaluru and no deaths in any of the metro cities.

The NCRB said that the city recorded no death due to medical negligence and deaths due to negligence relating to rail accidents.

City records

The national capital records the highest number of Crime Against Women (CAW) in 2018 among 19 other metropolitan cities, as per a report released by the

In 2018, a total of 11,724 cases of CAW registered in Delhi accounts for 27.8% of total CAW cases registered in other metros. In 2017, 11,542 cases were registered. Mumbai is ranked second with 6.058 cases in 2018.

"Delhi recorded 137 cases of dowry deaths, three cases of murder after rape and 35 cases of abetment to suicide of women while five cases of acid attack and nine cases of attempt to acid attack," the report reads. Out of the total crimes registered under the IPC against the women, the majority of the those (3131) involved "cruelty by husband or his relatives".

The city recorded highest number of cases (1,367) under the Protection of Children from Sexual Violence

High Court disposes of petition against Bollywood movie

CBFC asked producers to insert disclaimer on use of a word

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday disposed of a plea against Bollywood film Tanhaji The Unsung Warrior, which releases on Friday, after noting that the

Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) had asked the producers to insert a disclaimer on the use of the "Maratha" in the word

producers to insert at the any community".

beginning of the film a: "disclaimer in English and Hindi that the word Maratha is a general term referring to all soldiers of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maha-The CBFC had asked the raj, and not used to refer to

Azad's medical treatment: court upset with Tihar

STAFF REPORTER

A Delhi Court which directed the Tihar jail authorities to provide treatment for polycythemia to Bhim Army Chandrashekhar Azad, arrested in connection with violence during anti-CAA protest here, expressed displeasure at the jail authorities, which took no action despite being aware of Mr. Azad's condition.

The court noted that it was the duty of the State to preserve life even if a person is incarcerated. It passed the order on Mr. Azad's plea for proper treatment at AIIMS where he had been undergoing treatment. The court was also given a report from AIIMS that confirmed that Mr. Azad is suffering from Polycythemia.

Mr. Azad, in his plea, said he required continuous medical check-up at AIIMS.



highest no. of cases of crime against women

SAURABH TRIVEDI NEW DELHI

NCRB.

Act (Girl Child Victims only).

Shoaib Iqbal joins AAP

STAFF REPORTER

Former five-term MLA from Matia Mahal constituency, Shoaib Iqbal, joined AAP on Thursday in the presence of the party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "I want to welcome Shoaibji and his team to the party with all my heart. I strongly believe that his support will strengthen the work that we have done for the poor in Delhi. His addition to the party will help take forward the development that AAP always believes in and is devoted to."

Mr. Iqbal said: "AAP has worked towards the welfare and development of the downtrodden as well as the Dalit communities in Delhi. I have full faith in the strength of the party that it will come back with a record-breaking win of 70/70 Assembly constituency seats. I have worked with Arvind Kejriwalji during his 49-days government in Delhi, his attitude towards work is commendable."

Mr. Iqbal said won from Matia Mahal for five terms – 1993,1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 – and has served as the Deputy Speaker of Vidhan Sabha from 2003 to 2008, the party said.

CM's remark on bribery during Goa poll not appropriate: HC

Kejriwal had challenged two EC orders

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi High Court on Thursday noted that the controversial remarks on bribery made by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during the Goa Assembly election campaign in 2017 were "not appropriate".

The court suggested he make general statements, which does not point a finger in the upcoming polls.

Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva said there were some "specific imputations" in the statement which were not appropriate.

The court also refused to endorse a draft statement placed before it on behalf of the AAP convener. It remarked that there cannot be an endorsement from the court on what one can say.

Next hearing

The court, however, did not pass any order in the case. The counsel appearing for Mr. Kejriwal sought an adjournment in the post-lunch session. The court will hear the case on April 24 next.

Mr. Kejriwal had challenged the Election Commission's two orders of 2017, one censuring him for his remarks with a warning that a repeat of the same



would lead to action against him and his party and the second directing lodging of an FIR against him for his comments. The Chief Minister, had during a series of rallies in Goa during 2017 elections, asked voters to "accept money from the Congress and BJP candidates but vote for AAP".

The BJP had filed two complaints against Mr. Kejriwal, seeking his prosecution under various sections of the Indian Penal Code for asking voters to accept money. The Congress too had condemned his statement.

The Election Commission had directed that a complaint be lodged against Mr. Kejriwal under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act dealing with bribing voters and the relevant sections of the IPC.

CM compares work done by Delhi govt., civic bodies

BJP turned the city into 'garbage capital of India', he alleges

STAFF REPORTER

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday presented a report – BJP's civic bodies model vs govt. model –, saying the BJP has turned the city into "garbage capital of India".

Mr. Kejriwal said there are two models of governance in front of the people of Delhi. "I hope that the people will cast their votes based on the good governance model of AAP in Delhi," he said.

"Delhi's children say that MCD's full form is 'Most Corrupt Department'," he said. The BJP's "biggest gift" to Delhi is the landfill in Ghazipur, he added.

"There are open garbage dumping grounds and heaps of waste in every nook and corner of the city. This is a matter of shame for Delhi, which secures the bottom position in the BJP's Swachh Bharat Mission. The Centre in December 2019 had rated Delhi's civic bodies at bottom 10 of the 49 largest cities for cleanliness," he said.

The report also compares the work done by AAP and BJP in education, health



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

BJP's biggest gift to Delhi is the landfill in Ghazipur. According to

According to
Supreme Court,
the landfill will
have to be marked
with red lights to
warn airplanes

ARVIND KEJRIWAL Chief Minister

among other sectors. "The garbage and waste mountain in Ghazipuris expected to cross the height of the Taj Mahal. According to the Supreme Court, the landfill will have to be marked with red lights to warn airplanes," he added.

He said data shows that only 17 of the 230 engineers

in the north civic body do not have a chargesheet filed against them.

Full statehood

"People of Delhi want full statehood so that there is only one government in the city. It is not Kejriwal's demand," he said when asked why "full statehood" is not a main agenda for the party.

"Today people have chosen us, tomorrow it could be some other party, in the next five years or 10 years... Whichever party people chose, in democracy, all powers should be with them, which is not there today. This [current] system of governance is not good for the country, Capital or the people," he said.

Kejriwal owes ₹20K crore to civic bodies, alleges BJP

'Govt. has no achievements to show people'

 $\underline{\mathtt{SPEC}}_{\mathtt{IAL}} \ \mathtt{CORRESPONDENT}$

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has "no achievements" of his own government to show to the people and is yet to give ₹20,000 crore to the civic bodies, alleged the BJP on Thursday.

BJP State chief Manoj Tiwari and south Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri addressed a ioint press conference where they sought to place "questions being asked by the people of Delhi" to Mr. Kejriwal, seeking to expose the "claims" of AAP through the exhibition of videos and tweets illustrating broken roads, waterlogging, roadside filth and schoolchildren "endangering their lives while crossing open drain".

"Even after five years, he is avoiding talking about the achievements of his government and running away from the people. This is a *jhadu government* not a government that performs. In order to cover reality, Kejriwal talks about irrelevant things but does not talk about water supply, DTC buses, pollution, lack of colleges, flyovers and roads," Mr. Tiwari said.

He said the government has to pay ₹7,712 crore to the South Delhi Municipal CorEven after five years, he is avoiding talking about the achievements of his government and running away

from the people

MANOJ TIWARI

poration, ₹1,938 crore to the East body and ₹3,763 crore to the North body.

In order to paralyze the civic bodies out of "political malice", the Kejriwal government had not been releasing funds to the civic bodies due to which the people of Delhi are not being provided several "amenities", he alleged.

'One question daily'

"Has Kejriwal admitted that he has no answer to the questions being raised against his government? Out of the questions being raised by the people, we will ask him one question per day," Mr. Tiwari said.

"Today's question is why has Kejriwal concealed ₹20,000 crore due to the civic bodies like a thief? Since Kejriwal has withheld the funds, the civic bodies can't give salaries to its employees regularly," he said.

Tiwari flags off mega bike rally against JNU violence

Goel, other BJP leaders attend event

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bharatiya Janata Party State chief Manoj Tiwari flaggedoff a mega bike rally from the party's office here on Thursday against recent violence in Jawaharlal Nehru University.

He said the JNU incident was the "misuse" of the youth by opposition parties to "push their agenda".

Rally diverted due to stir The "Vijay Abhiyan Sankalp Rally" was scheduled to pass through Mandi House, Kashmiri Gate and Britannia Chowk but was, however, diverted to bypass Mandi

diverted to bypass Mandi House owing to a march by students and teachers in the area, said Delhi BJP media relations head Neelkant Bakshi. BJP MPs Harsh Vardhan,

Gautam Gambhir, Parvesh Verma and Meenakshi Lekhi took part in different legs of the rally, which Mr. Tiwari termed "historic and perhaps the biggest bike rally in the Capital so far".

"This rally was against the rumour being spread among the youth over Citizenship (Amendment) Act and their misuse by political parties," Mr. Tiwari, who had BJP Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Goel as his pillion rider, said. "When the zeal and power of youth decide to maintain the unity and integrity of the country then no one can damage it. But, the frustrated opposition parties are trying to push the youth into anarchy for its electoral gain," he added. Mr. Goel said the rally had signalled "the political farewell" of the Kejriwal government in Delhi.

"When such a large number of youth give their political support then it becomes clear that the Kejriwal government is an obstruction to the development of Delhi. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the works will progress at double speed in Delhi and I am confident that BJP will form a government here," he said.

Catching some rays



An old man sits in the sun while the other exercises in a park on a cold morning in the city. •R.V. MOORTHY

25-year-old man dies in printing press fire

Owners have been identified: police

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old man died in a fire that broke out at a printing press in Patparganj Industrial Area on Thursday morning, said officials.

Phool Dev from Bihar used to work as a help at the printing press, they said.

Fire call at 2.38 a.m.

A fire department official said a call regarding the blaze was received at 2.38 a.m. after which more than 30 fire tenders were pressed into service.

The fire was brought under control at 8 a.m. after which the cooling-off operation continued. The fire department said a search was conducted to see if anyone was trapped in the building. Dev was inside the building at the time of the incident and died due to suffocation, the police said. The blaze had engulfed the ground, first and second floors of the building except for the base-



The fire broke out in the building in Patparganj on Thursday morning.

- SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ment, said an official.

The police said they got a call from the press manager, Yogesh, about the fire at Kaveri printing press at 2.45

The press owners have been identified as Atul and Anuj Goyal, both residents of Sukhdev Vihar, they said.

of Sukhdev Vihar, they said. His family has been informed, said an officer. The body has been kept at Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital and the post-mortem will be after his family arrives, the police added.

Wrong injection claims life of teen; doctor held

STAFF REPORTER

A 13-year-old girl died after allegedly consuming wrong medicines, the police said on Thursday.

DCP (South) Atul Thakur said 47-year-old accused doctor Banshi Lal, who ran a clinic in Sanjay Colony, has been arrested. The complaint was received from the victim's father, Bachchu Paswan.

"Paswan from Bhati Mines said his daughter died because of wrong medicines and injections given by Lal," Mr. Thakur said.

During enquiry, the police said Lal produced an ayurvedic degree, which was verified from the department concerned. "It was revealed that Lal never obtained any qualifications and is not entitled to practice any system of medicine," Mr. Thakur added.

Subsequently, a case under Sections 304 and 419 of the IPC & 27 DMC Act was registered on Wednesday. "Lal was produced before the court and then sent to judicial custody," the DCP said, adding that further investigation is under way.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM
A few local residents hel

A few local residents held a silent protest in front of Town Hall in Civil Lines here on Thursday seeking the withdrawal of the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) Amendment Bill, 2019.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar was attending a grievance redressal meeting inside the Town Hall at that time. "We are here to convey to

"We are here to convey to our Chief Minister that we have elected this government to work for the welfare of the citizens. The PLPA Amendment Bill 2019 passed in the State assembly in February 2019 goes against the interests of the citizens and it needs to be withdrawn in the next Assembly session," said Sarika Verma, a protester.

The protesters sought the protection of the forests. They were holding placards, some of which read: "Protectors becoming Destroyers. Aravali Bachao", "Hamare Jungle Se Buri Nazar Hatao" and "Pragati=Van (Development is equal to forests)".

ment is equal to forests)".

The Supreme Court had put a stay on the PLPA Amendment Bill on March 1,



Locals seek withdrawal of controversial land Bill

They demand protection of Aravallis as Haryana has the 'lowest forest cover in country'

Protesters stand outside Town Hall in the Millennium City on Thursday. • Special ARRANGEMENT

2019, after the Haryana State Assembly had cleared it in February last year but a reply to an RTI application last month revealed that the Haryana Governor subsequently gave his approval to controversial bill which seeks to open 33% of the forest cover in the State for real estate development.

The protesters said Haryana already has the lowest forest cover in the country, a mere 3.59% and if the bill was notified by the government, then 60,000 acres of Aravallis in south Haryana and 10,000 acres in the Shivaliks would be concretised. Since another 50,000 acres of the Aravallis are not even

protected under any forest law, it is feared that the entire Aravallis would be destroyed if this Bill was notified.

'Violation of SC order'

Vaishali Chandra Rana, another protester, said: "The government is currently in violation of the Supreme Court orders. Instead of demolishing the illegal constructions on PLPA protected Aravallis, the government is trying to legalise them by opening our forests for the builder mafia through this Amendment Bill. This Bill comes into force from November 1, 1966, the date of formation of the Haryana, thus nullifying all actions under the Punjab Land Preservation Act since 1966 making the Act totally redundant in Haryana."

Anuradha Prasad Dhawan said the Aravallis are the lungs of the National Capital Region and "act as natural barriers protecting us from the sandstorms coming in from the Thar". If the Aravallis were destroyed, NCR cities would turn into a dust bowl, she added.

Prem Singh Tanwar and Rajbir Singh, both from villages in the Gwal Pahadi area, said: "A lot of illegal encroachments have come upon the Aravalli forest areas and water bodies. How will the groundwater get recharged with all these illegal constructions coming up? We have complained to the authorities but nothing has been done."

"Aravalli forests cover less than 10% of Gurugram and south Haryana and less than 2% of the entire State. As citizens, we demand that the PLPA Amendment Bill is withdrawn and the Aravallis is protected under law so we can leave this natural heritage for our future generations," said Neelam Ahluwa-

Three terror suspects held

'They are members of Tamil Nadu-IS'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Special Cell claimed to have arrested three members of Tamil Nadu-IS for allegedly planning a terror strike in the Capital, after a brief exchange of fire, said officials.

Two of them were out on bail in a Hindu Munnani leader K.P. Suresh Kumar's murder case, they said.

DCP (Special Cell) P.S. Kushwah said the accused have been identified as Khaja Moideen (52), Syed Ali Navas (32) and Abdul Samad (28), all from Tamil Nadu. The police said they received a tip-off about the trio who had allegedly pledged allegiance to ISIS. "We were informed that they had entered east U.P through Nepal and might move towards Delhi-NCR to carry out a terror strike," Mr. Kushwah said, adding that it was learnt that the persons were sent to Delhi their foreign-based

The police said they were also informed that the accused had taken a room on rent and procured arms and ammunition. A trap was then laid near Wazirabad

handlers.

We got information that the three might move towards Delhi-NCR to carry out a terror strike.

P.S. KUSHWAH DCP (Special Cell)

Bridge and the three men were nabbed from the spot.

"Moideen has links with ISIS. After being released on conditional bail in the murder case of Suresh, he made planned to revive the ISIS network in India through his co-associates," Mr. Kush-

wah said.

The police said Moideen was associated with "radical elements and indoctrinated youth" throughout. He was first arrested in 2004 for organising a training camp "wherein people were converted into Islam and trained in handling weapons and martial arts". He was arrested in 2014 in connection with Suresh's murder and was later arrested by the NIA in a terror case.

Navas was earlier involved in an attempt-tomurder case apart from Suresh's murder case. Samad is postgraduate in computer application, they added.

DUTA protests against delay in release of funds

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) protested against the delay in release of funds to 12 colleges run by the government at the Vidhan Sabha

on Thursday.
Following the expansion of the university on account of EWS reservations implemented in 2019, additional funds are required to support the increased intake of students as well as additional teaching and non-teaching posts and infrastructure improvements, the teachers

The additional posts are also essential to mitigate the crisis for ad-hoc teachers, who face job losses, said DUTA. The union also highlighted that several colleges have started new courses but did not have adequate teaching positions to cater to the same. However, no additional posts had been created for the same, it said, adding that the delay in sanctioning the posts was adversely effecting the teaching process.

M ND-NDE

CM YK SATURDAY, JAN. 11 RISE 07:16 SET 17:43 ► RISE 18:21 SET 07:38

SUNDAY, JAN. 12 RISE 07:16 SET 17:44 RISE 19:28 SET 08:32

| Delhi Weather Delhi City | max 15 | min 08 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Safdarjang | 15 | 80 |
| Palam | 13 | 80 |
| | | |

Delhi Palam Today

15°C Moderate fog with dense in patches likely in a cold morning. Chilly cool moderate wind likely on a sunny day. Pollution will remain moderate

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 16°C Marginal change in day/night temperature. Dry cool day with few clouds expected.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019 All rights reserved.

THEMAHINDU

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested verify and make appropriate enquiries satisfy themselves about the veracity an advertisement before responding satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THC PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher 8 Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event car the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper, company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

Six ex-Punjab policemen sentenced

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Six former Punjab policemen were on Thursday held guilty by the CBI court here in a 27-year-old case of disappearance of six members of a family.

Mohali's Special Judge Karunesh Kumar sentenced former Inspector Suba Singh, and Sub-Inspectors Bikramiit Singh and Sukhdev Singh to ten years in jail while another Sub-Inspector Sukhdev Raj Joshi was sentenced to five years in jail.

Rein in leaders violating 'coalition dharma', JD(U) tells Bihar ally

BJP MLC Sanjay Paswan had pitched for Chief Minister from his party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The JD(U) on Thursday asked its Bihar ally the BJP to act against its leaders violating the "coalition dharma", a day after BJP MLC Sanjay Paswan pitched for a Chief Minister from his party to replace Nitish Kumar.

JD(U) spokesman Rajiv Ranjan Prasad said deterrent action would have followed had a leader from his party made such a statement.

The State unit of the BJP distanced itself from the views expressed by Mr. Paswan, a former Union Minister.

"The people of Bihar now want to see a BJP leader as the Chief Minister... We are in a position to form a government in the State on our own, though we shall abide by whatever decision Narendra Modi and Sushil Modi

Sanjay Paswan with JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar ■FILE PHOTO (Deputy CM and BJP leader) take," Mr. Paswan had told

own and not the party's offi-"Had a member of the JD

The BJP quickly went into

damage control, insisting

Mr. Paswan's view was his

reporters on Wednesday.

(U) been guilty of repeatedly violating coalition dharma in this manner, he would have faced the consequences for sure. I hope the BJP takes note of leaders who keep shooting their mouths off

despite Amit Shah's inter-

vention and act against

them," Mr. Prasad said in a

Mr. Shah, the party president and Union Home Minister, has said in more than a couple of TV interviews in the recent past that Mr. Kumar, serving his third consecutive term as the Chief Minister, will be the NDA's face in the Assembly polls.

Repeated demand

Mr. Paswan, a dalit leader, had raised the JD(U)'s hackles a few months ago, too, when he demanded that Nitish Kumar be replaced as Chief Minister by a BJP leader.

"Sanjay Paswan is a senior and respected leader of our party. He may have said something in his personal capacity. It is not the party's ofstand," spokesperson Nikhil Anand

'Congress only party that can provide secular rule'

Preamble cannot be allowed to be tinkered with: Amarinder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Terming the situation prevailing in the country as extremely distressing, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday urged the youth to come forward to protect and safeguard the nation and its Constitutional principles of democracy and secularism.

He was addressing Punjab Youth Congress members and workers at the installation ceremony of the youth wing's newly-elected officebearers, including its president Barinder Singh Dhillon

Capt. Amarinder said the Congress was the only party that could provide secular, democratic rule in the country. "The Congress fought for India's independence and the Constitution was framed on the Preamble of a socialist secular democratic repu-



Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh •

blic," he pointed out, adding that though the various Articles of the Constitution had since undergone many amendments, the Preamble has remained untouched.

"The Preamble cannot be allowed to be tinkered with," said Capt. Amarinder, hitting out at the current attempts by the BJP to divide the nation. "What prevails today is not Lok Raj but goonda raj.

We all know what happened with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Uttar Pradesh," he said, underlining the need for youth to take the lead in saving the country.

Capt. Amarinder said that he would continue to lead the State in its growth and development and would not quit politics till he had ensured jobs for the youth and opportunities for all to grow in a progressive Punjab.

'I will be there for you'

"This is my State, you are all my people...I will always be here for you, and will not go anywhere till I have ensured the welfare of every citizen of Punjab," said the Chief Minister.

He also accused the previous Akalis with ruining the State to promote their self-interest and blamed them squarely for the spread of drugs in the State.

BJP minority cell secretary in M.P. resigns over CAA, NRC

Can't tolerate indecent remarks of colleagues: Akram Khan

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

The BJP's secretary for the minority cell in Madhya Pradesh has quit from his post over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens, charging party workers of making indecent remarks against a particular community.

"I respect the party's decision on the CAA and the NRC and have been serving it for

25 years," Akram Khan told reporters. "But some colleagues have been making indecent comments against a particular community, which is unbearable."

In the resignation letter, addressed to Sanvar Patel, BJP State minority cell president, Mr. Khan wrote, "I tender my resignation over NRC and CAA. Kindly accept it."

Stating that he had apprised the senior leadership of the comments, he said, "I can't resist provocative remarks made by fellow BJP workers.'

Denying the allegation, Lokendra Parashar, party State media incharge, said, "Akram ji has become a victim of the misinformation campaign on the law. After resigning, he should explain to everyone, especially the Muslims, anti-minority provisions in the law. If he fails in that, that means he even betrayed minorities.'

Punjab govt. nod for fast-track courts

The move aims to ensure speedy trial and justice in rape cases in the State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Punjab government has decided to set up seven fasttrack courts to ensure speedy trial and justice in rape cases, besides three special courts to adjudicate offences against children will also be

The State Cabinet, which met under chairmanship of Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday, also decided to establish 10 more family courts to cover all the districts of the State.

"Cabinet has approved

setting up of seven fast-track courts, with the creation of 70 posts to manage them, for dealing exclusively with the rape cases. Four of these courts will be set up in Ludhiana and one each at Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ferozepur. Seven additional posts of Additional and District Sessions Judges along with 63 supporting staff have been approved," said an official statement.

The courts, to be set up at an approximate annual expenditure of ₹3.57 crore, will be implementing the provi(Amendment) Act, 2018 to deal with the pending rape cases expeditiously.

sions of the Criminal Law

Two months time

As per the amendment carried out in Section 173 of Cr.PC in 2018, trial of rape cases is to be concluded within two months, said the statement.

The Cabinet also paved the way for setting up a Water Regulation and Development Authority by approving enactment of The Punjab Water Resources (Management and Regulation) Ordinance 2019.

The Ordinance, which was approved by the council of Ministers earlier at its meeting on December 4, 2019, is now all set for legislation as 'The Punjab Water Resources (Management and Regulation) Bill, 2020', according to the statement.

"The Bill proposes to set up a Punjab Water Regulation and Development Authority. The authority will be responsible for management of water resources of the State," the statement added.

Major fire at

Noida; no loss

of life, injuries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A major fire engulfed the

Employees' State Insu-

rance Corporation (ESI)

hospital in Noida on Thurs-

pressed into service. No

loss of life or injuries have

been reported. All the pa-

tients were safely evacuat-

ed," said Kamlesh Mishra,

Fire Safety Officer, Noida.

du there were 243 patients

in the hospital out of

which 43 were in the criti-

cal unit. They were shifted

Mr Mishra told The Hin-

"Five fire tenders were

day morning.

ESI hospital in _

Withdraw PPP model for govt. hospitals in Rajasthan: JSA

'NITI plan would reduce access to public health institutions'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Rajasthan Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (ISA) has demanded immediate withdrawal of the NITI Aayog's plan to link private medical colleges with the government district hospitals, in which the private entities can convert half of the hospital beds into paid

beds. The ISA urged Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to reject the public-private partnership policy formulated by NI-TI Aayog for the health sector.

The JSA, which functions

as a Statewide network of organisations working on health rights, said the NITI Aayog's proposal amounted to an "unnecessary intrusion" of the Union government with a "very regresmodel commercialise the already small public health system. The PPP model, if executed,

to public health institutions, it said. JSA convener Narendra

would further reduce access



CM Ashok Gehlot •

Gupta said it was ironic that the NITI Aayog was "so brazenly" admitting that the government lacked in resources and finances to meet the basic health needs of common citizens.

"This despite the fact that only 25% of non-hospitalised and 45% of hospitalised patients seek health care from public health institutions,"

A NITI Aayog draft policy document has stated that the PPP model was being proposed for offering district hospitals to private entities to set up medical colleges in view of limited resources available with the Union and State governments. The document also states that this model is based on the PPP arrangements operative in Gujarat and Karnataka and has been developed on the basis of "international best practices".

An investigation by JSA has revealed that there was no PPP model operative in Karnataka and only one such arrangement was functional in Gujarat, involving the Gujarat Adani Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhuj, under a corporate social responsibility project.

Letter to CM Gehlot

In a letter to the CM, signed by Dr. Gupta, health activist Chhaya Pancholi and civil rights activist Kavita Srivastava, the JSA said that no consultations with the State governments were carried out by NITI Aayog before formulating the PPP model. The JSA requested Mr. Gehlot to reject the proposal with a message to NITI Aayog to desist from formulating such models in future.

to nearby private hospitals and the government hospi-Situated in Sector 24, ESI hospital is a seven-sto-

rey building.

'Fire caused by sparks' Mr Mishra said the hospital authorities had listed the time of the fire as 9.15 a.m. "We got the call at 9.40 a.m. The fire started from the basement in the batterv bank. Prima facie, it seems the fire was caused by sparking in one of the battery's terminal. It caused dark and dense smoke which causes suffocation. When we reached the spot, the building was filled with smoke," he said.

Mr. Mishra pointed out the hospital lacked fire safety features.

"Fire safety equipment was not present on every floor and those which were there were not functioning properly. It was difficult to provide an outlet to the thick smoke. The fire was put out in half-an-hour but it took us more than three hours to get rid off the smoke."

The officer admitted the patients had to spend time in the open before they were gradually shifted to nearby private hospitals and government hospital.

M ND-NDE

Dense fog claims 8 lives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Eight persons were killed on Thursday when the van they were travelling in collided with a bus due to dense fog on the Jaipur-Bikaner national highway, the police

Six peersons died on the spot while two succumbed to their injuries on the way to a government hospital here.

The police said the van driver failed to see the bus coming from the opposite direction due to dense fog.

06. on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002, Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).

5 EAST

DELHI THE HINDU

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2020

Protests planned against PM Modi's Kolkata visit over the weekend

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Multiple civil society groups, social organisations, human rights platforms and cultural bodies in Kolkata have planned a demonstration under a common slogan on Saturday when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the city.

There will be posters and banners urging the Prime Minister "to go back." An elaborate 'civil disobedience movement', branded as "no NRC, no NPR, no CAA campaign," has been planned. Mr. Modi is expected to attend four programmes in the city over the weekend.

From early Saturday morning, the groups will mobilise people from the city and suburbs to march to two points. At Kaikhali traffic crossing near the airport, the objective will be to stop the Prime Minister from entering the city, the organisers said. However, it is not yet clear if Mr. Modi

will be flown into the city from the airport in an Army copter or taken by road all the way to his first programme venue in Dalhousie Square. He is expected to visit Belur Math founded by Swami Vivekananda on Saturday evening.

city, the organisers said. However, it is not yet clear if Mr. Modi assemble near Raj Bhavan . "We

appeal to participants to carry only the national flag and not the flag of any political party," said Prasenjit Bose, a key organiser.

Meanwhile, protests continued in parts of Kolkata on Thursday. At one anti-NRC, CAA programme, research scholars from various universities and indepen-

dent institutes demanded "creation of awareness to examine the connection of government exercises [like NRC and CAA] with the day-to-day issues" of the people. The group, Democratic Research Scholars' Organisation, said more than 100 scholar representatives participated in the programme.

Explosion in Naihati rocks both banks of Hooghly, 2 policemen hurt

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A massive explosion in West Bengal's Naihati on Thursday rocked both banks of Hooghly river in North 24 Parganas and Hooghly districts. Non-concrete roofs of a number of houses in Naihati were blown off and glass panels of many buildings, including the municipality in Chinsurah, were shattered due to the impact of the explosion.

The blast occurred when police were trying to defuse materials seized from a firecracker factory in Naihati. At least two policemen were injured in the blast.

Videos of the explosion showed an enormous cloud of smoke rising several metres over the surface, triggering panic among people who came out their homes in both districts. "We will investigate why the impact of the explosion was so high. Huge quantity of explosives were seized and the bomb disposal squad was trying to dispose them of," said Barrackpore Police Commissioner Manoj Verma said. The materials were seized following an explosion in the firecrackers manufacturing unit at Naihati killed four workers on Janaury 3.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar tweeted videos of the explosion saying it "leaves nothing to imagination". "It calls for a thorough probe in view of its seriousness, intensity and damage caused. Only expert investigation can unearth issues involved. This ominous development should be an eye-opener for law enforcing and regulatory regime in State," Mr Dhankhar said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she had sent the local MLA to take stock of the situation. "If there are any cracks because of the explosion we will provide compensation to the people," she said.

Activists protest felling of trees for road widening in Berhampur

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Environmental activists in Odisha's Berhampur are protesting against indiscriminate cutting of trees for widening of two roads, despite past directive of authorities to transplant mature trees.

Since Wednesday, activists from different organisations, including Berhampur Sabuja Bahini (BSB), Anchalika Vikash Parishad (AVP) and Mahatma Helping Hand, have started regular vigil to protect the remaining trees from getting cut. In August 2019, similar protests by green activists had saved 188 mature trees from getting cut from MKCG medical college campus in the city for road widening work.

At present, mature trees are being cut for widening of roads connecting Mango Market to old Berhampur area via Andhapasara road and the stretch from Mango market to sub-registrar office square.

Due to persuasion of BSB, office of superintending engineer of Roads and Buildings for southern circle, through a letter on July 19, had directed all its executive engineers concerned to limit cutting of trees during road construction or widening and transplantation of trees wherever possible.

The green activists alleged that despite the directive, 37 mature trees were cut down during past few days for widening of the two roads. "To save the rest of the mature trees, we started documenting all of them through special numbering on their trunks and photographs," said BSB president Sibaram Panigrahy. There are 105 trees that face the danger of being cut down, he said.

Two tents gutted in fire at Rann Utsav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Two tents were destroyed in a minor fire on Thursday morning at the ongoing Rann Utsav in Tent City, a famous tourist destination in Gujarat's Kutch district, a fire official

While there was no casualty, an NRI family claimed to have lost all their belongings in the mishap.

Some tourists who had booked the tents claimed that short-circuit in a water heater may have caused the blaze, the official said, adding that an inquiry was on to ascertain the exact cause of the fire.

"Two tents were gutted in a fire in the morning. No one was injured in the incident as the occupants were out for breakfast. Our fire engines stationed at the Tent City brought the blaze under control," fire officer Anil Maru said.

Tourists from across the world come to stay at the Tent City during the Rann Utsav between December and February.

While no one was injured, an NRI family claimed they lost all their belongings.

Easy to torch houses, hard to ensure State to review industrial people have food to eat, says Uddhav subsidies in Vidarbha

'Instead of complaining about economic slowdown, Maharashtra will fight it'

TANVI DESHPANDE

"It is easy to torch houses but hard to ensure people have food to eat," Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said in Aurangabad on Thursday after inaugurating an Advantage Maharashtra Expo-2020. Mr. Thackeray also said that instead of complaining about economic slowdown, Maharashtra will

Accompanied by Industries Minister Subhash Desai and Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray, the Chief Minister, who is on a two-day tour of Aurangabad and Jalna districts, said, "The people of this State deal with a lot of serious issues."

After referring to the incidents of violence across the country, Mr. Thackeray reiterated his commitment towards farmers and also said his government would ensure that not a single industry goes out of the State. "We are committed to creating economic growth in the State by assimilating agriculture and industry and acting as a catalyst between the two sectors. If we keep complaining about the economic



Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. • FILE РНОТО

slowdown, we won't be able to fight it. We will fight it," he

Food processing park At the four-day expo, organised by the Marathwada Association for Small Scale Industries and Agriculture (MASSIA), 450 entrepreneurs will be showcasing their products. The expo features stalls from automobile, engineering, agriculture, animation, IT, electronics, trading, infrastructure and other sectors.

neurs," the Chief Minister

Industry Minister Subhash Desai said three Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) areas (industrial colonies) will be established in Marathwada, and 1,018 hectares of land will be acquired for

The new MIDC areas will come up in Shendra, Nanded and Osmanabad, he said.

"Sixteen companies have decided to invest ₹8,360 crore in Marathwada," Mr. Desai added.

Sunik Kirdak, convener of the exhibition, said the government should help the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector by cutting red tape. "We don't want red carpet treatment but don't spread thorns in the path of MSMEs. We request you to provide space for the factories which are currently operating from rented premises," Mr. Kirdak

The president of MASSIA Dyandeo Rajale demanded that the Aurangabad-Pune highway should be expand-

(With PTI inputs)

We need to introduce some financial discipline: Ajit Pawar

Restructuring the subsidy

Annual revenue expenditure: ₹2.82.630 crore

SHARAD VYAS

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Thursday said the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government will review the subsidies given to select industries in Vidarbha over the last five years. Vidarbha, a stronghold of the Bharativa Janta Party (BJP) and its leadership, receives an annual power subsidy of ₹1,200 crore and another ₹1,000 crore in textile subsidy. All of these will be under "reconsideration", the Finance Minister told The Hindu.

Mr. Pawar, who has reviewed the State's finances after assuming charge, said some financial discipline has to be introduced in the spendings, especially the undue subsidy doled out by the previous BIP regime. He said. "The previous government doled out a lot of benefits to industries, especially in Vidarbha. It is our responsibility to check how many industries benefited from these subsidies and how many new industries came up owing to these measures. We will also check if some of these industries actually exTotal subsidy burden: ₹22,136 crore (7.8%) Interest on borrowings **Debt burden** ₹4,72,000 crore ₹34,207 crore "The previous government doled out a lot of benefits to industries, especially ■ Power subsidy: **₹1,200 cr** in Vidarbha. We will also check if some of these industries actually ■ Textile subsidy: ₹1,000 cr

existed.'

AJIT PAWAR, Deputy Chief Minister

The State currently has a subsidy burden of ₹22,136 crore, which is a big chunk of annual revenue expenditure of ₹2.82.630 crore. The Finance Minister said prudence and discipline is the need of the hour. The State is looking at rationalisation of expenditure, at the same time increasing taxes as a way forward to come out of its debt trap, he said. Maharashtra currently has a debt of ₹4,72,000 crore. "As of now I have not passed any orders, but going by the re-

view of State finances so far, there is no way forward but to cut spend," he said.

Senior officials said the government is looking at rationalising administrative expenses including salary paid to nearly nine lakh employees and five lakh teachers who are on the State's payroll. The salary burden on the government is around ₹1,14,249 crore, with pensions accounting for ₹36,368 crore. The interest on borrowings is ballooning at ₹34,207 crore.

Painting on the wall



Delhi-based artist Ruchin Soni painting a mural of former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on a wall of Ismail Yusuf College in Jogeshwari as part of a beautification drive. ■ AADESH CHOUDHARI

Man posing as U.P. minister stays at Goa guest house, arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Goa Police have arrested a man for allegedly posing as a minister from Uttar Pradesh, submitting fake documents and staying at a State guest house here for

Four of his accomplices, who were staying with him at the guest house have also been arrested, a senior Goa Crime Branch official said on Thursday.

The accused, Sunil Singh, was nabbed after Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant alerted the police about him.

State guest house here for almost 12 days before being caught on Tuesday. He had even sought an appointment with the Chief Minister, the official said.

"He had shown his designation as Minister of Cooperation from the Uttar Pradesh government, and was also provided a personal security officer from the Goa Police," the official said.

After his behaviour was found to be suspicious, Mr. Sawant brought it to the not-

ice of the Goa Police. "I asked the Crime Branch

Mr. Singh stayed at the to arrest the person. He had produced forged letters and e-mails to claim that he was a minister in the Uttar Pradesh government," Mr. Sawant told reporters here.

The accused also met Goa Cooperation Minister Govind Gawade in the ministerial block here last week and discussed various issues related to the department.

When asked about it, Mr. Gawade said, "I was told that he was a State guest and a minister in the UP Cabinet. I didn't meet him for much time. He was with me for 10 minutes.'

Not keen to be Kolhapur's guardian minister: Thorat

'Am already holding two major posts... will speak to CM'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

The Chief Minister an-

nounced a new food pro-

cessing park in Aurangabad's

Bidkin and also reviewed va-

rious projects of Osmanabad

district. He also announced

a new skill development

centre in the State to create

skilled manpower to meet

the increasing demand of

will be established in DMIC

(Delhi-Mumbai Industrial

Corridor) over 500 acres, of

which 100 acres will be re-

served for women entrepre-

"A food processing park

industries.

A day after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray released names of guardian ministers for all districts, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) chief and State Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat has expressed unwillingness to take up his responsibility as Kolhapur's guardian minister.

Sources said Mr. Thorat would have been comfortable had he been assigned Ahmednagar which is his sphere of influence. Two ministers from Kolhapur district – senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and Rural Development Minister Hasan Mushrif, and Satej 'Bunty' Patil of Congress, who is Minister of State for Home - have been allotted Ahmednagar and Bhandara districts respectively.

"I am not personally keen on accepting it. I am already holding two major posts [Revenue Minister and MPCC chief] which require my complete attention. I will speak to the Chief Minister about it and urge him to consider a Congress Minister who has not been given any guardian responsibility...as I am senior, I feel younger people must be given a chance," said Mr. Thorat, adding that he would be writing to Mr. Thackeray to

reconsider



Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat. • FILE PHOTO

appointment.

Given their strong influence in Kolhapur, both Mr. Mushrif, an oft-elected MLA from the Kagal constituency, and Mr. Patil, an MLC and a tall leader in the district's cooperative sector, were in the running for the post here.

Three ministers, all from the NCP, have been made guardian ministers in their respective constituencies in the five 'sugar belt' districts in western Maharashtra – Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Ajit Pawar (Pune), Water Resources Minister Jayant Patil (Sangli) and Cooperation Minister Bala-

saheb Patil (Satara). "In addition to getting the Revenue portfolio as well as being MPCC chief. Mr. Thorat would naturally have been keen on guardianship of Ahmednagar, where he would have consolidated his position against his nemesis, exCongressman-turned BJP Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil," said an

However, a section within the Congress feels that Mr. Thorat ought to step down as MPCC chief and make way for a 'new face' to galvanise the Congress rank-and-file across the State, and western Maharashtra in particular, ahead of the crucial 2022 civic body polls.

Mr. Thorat's politics has mainly been restricted to Ahmednagar district. He lacks the necessary organisational experience needed to resuscitate moribund party organisations. More over, the post of an MPCC chief is a full-time job requiring a leader's undivided attention," said a Congress leader, requesting anonymity.

"This is the right time for the Congress to cash in on this success by getting someone senior like [former Chief Minister] Prithviraj Chavan, who has not been assigned any responsibility, to helm the MPCC," said a city-based political

However, yet another section of Congress leaders feel that Mr. Thorat's 'rejection' of his appointment as Kolhapur's guardian minister is symptomatic of the resentment brewing within the party and smacks of opportunism and self-interest.

Declare Goa sanctuaries as 'tiger reserve': activists

'State government must follow up proposal sent to Centre in 2017'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Activists and politicians from Goa have demanded that certain areas in wildlife sanctuaries of the State be notified as 'tiger reserve'.

The demand has come following the death of four tigers in Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary of Sattari taluka in North Goa district in the last few days.

In 2017, the State government had sent a proposal to the Centre according to which, about 500 sq km area of Mahadayi, Netravali and Cotigao sanctuaries and some part of Mahaveer National Park was to be selected and marked as 'tiger reserve', considering the presence of the striped ani-



Congress activists in a heated argument on Thursday with Santosh Kumar, assistant principal chief conservator of forest (not in the pic), over the death of four tigers. • ATISH POMBURFEKAR

mals in those places.

Former forest minister of Goa Rajendra Arlekar said in 2017, the State Wildlife Board approved the proposal and it was sent to the Central Wildlife Board.

"The State government should follow up the proposal so that there is proper protection and conservation of tigers in these areas," the BJP leader said.

Carcasses of a tigress and

her three cubs were found in the Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary earlier this week.

Three locals were arrested for suspected poisoning of the four wild cats, which were captured roaming in the area on cameras set up by the forest department on

December 23, 2019. Union Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change has constituted a high-level committee to inquire into deaths of the

Environmentalist Rajendra Kerkar, who was the first to moot the proposal for tiger reserve, said the State government should form a 'task force' for the protection and conservation of wild cats.

Residents will be relocated: Goa CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A day after the arrest of three persons for allegedly poisoning a tigress and her three cubs in a wildlife sanctuary in Goa, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Thursday said people living in the tiger territory in the State will be shifted elsewhere to man-animal

Talking to reporters here, Sawant said, "I have already asked the forest department to identify

conflict.

the human habitats within the territory of tigers, so that people can be rehabilitated to avoid mananimal conflict," he said.

The Forest and Revenue Departments have also been asked to initiate the process of relocating the people, he added.

Carcasses of the tigress and her third cub were recovered from Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary in Sattari taluka on Wednesday, days after her two other cubs were found dead



Four held for blocking Michael Levitt

ALAPPUZHA A day after supporters of Wednesday's nationwide houseboat carrying Nobel laureate Michael Levitt in Kuttanad, the police on Thursday arrested four persons in connection with the incident. Prof. Levitt and a fellow foreign traveller visiting Kuttanad had a harrowing experience on Wednesday after the houseboat they were travelling in was blocked for over two hours.

Trial run of demolition of Maradu flats today

A trial run of the demolition, minus explosion, of H2O Holy Faith and Alfa Serene, the two illegal structures that were built in violation of the CRZ norms in Kerala's Maradu, will be held on Friday to ensure that safety and recovery operations, including the entry of fire tenders and ambulances to the site, are performed as planned, said Snehil Kumar Singh, the Fort

DGCA suspends licences of two pilots

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation on Thursday announced the suspension of a GoAir expatriate commander for six months and the co-pilot's licence for three months after they were found to be involved in a case of serious runway excursion in Bengaluru on November 11. The DGCA said the GoAir flight G8-811 from Nagpur to Bengaluru with 180 passengers on board was involved in a serious incident when the crew lost visual reference at about 50 feet above ground but continued to land in violation of norms

Want Rajini to help Tamil Nadu: Kamal **'Muslims have no**

The actor-politician says Dravidian politics is the mainstay of the State

STAFF REPORTER

In yet another sign of his willingness to work with colleague and friend Rajiniactor-politician Kamal Haasan on Thursday said he wanted the latter to help Tamil Nadu.

To a question by N. Ram, Chairman, The Hindu Group of Publications, on the fraternity shared by the two actors at a recent event, Mr. Haasan said he would try to convince his friend.

"He is proudly a Tamilian now... I want him to invest in Tamil Nadu. That's what I'll try to convince him [to do]. He is of that mindset," he said at a conversation organised on Thursday by Algebra - The Arts and Ideas Club.

Divisive politics

Mr. Haasan said he almost stepped into politics when he made Hey Ram. He said the signs he saw at that time about the country reaching the political situation it is in today prompted him to make that movie.

"Today, making that film will be difficult," he said. On how the country went to the



N. Ram, Chairman, The Hindu Group of Publications, in conversation with actor and MNM president Kamal Haasan in Chennai on Thursday. • B. JOTHI RAMALINGAN

present phase of divisive politics, he said democracy was not infallible and constant vigil was needed to keep it

On the domination of Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu, Mr. Haasan said it emerged as it was the need of the hour.

"But it later became 'their' [certain parties'] need," he said. Stating that Dravidian politics is the mainstay of Tamil Nadu and there was no need to change that, he, however, said there was a need to take it in the right direction.

Criticising Tamil Nadu for

He said there was a sinister attempt now to consolidate the Hindu vote bank and make India a Hindu Rashtra in the long run.

Mr. Kulkarni said there was a move to mould the BIP on the vision of V.D. Savarkar, which was different from that of M.S. Golwalkar and Deendayal Upadhyaya.

He said there was a need to make a section of the legacy of the BJP and the RSS as an ally in the fight against the present extremist version of Hindutva

'There is a need to engage the Hindus who voted for Mr. Modi. The [political] Left must also change its strategy in engaging them," he said.

He said that even in these "dark times" there were some very good things happening as part of the opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. He said the country was seeing students coming out in large numbers, which even surpassed the magnitude witnessed during the Emergency period.

There is also a display of Hindu-Muslim unity that has not been witnessed in a long

grounds to fear CAA'

Will change Act if even one citizen is affected: Kishan Reddy

V. GEETANATH

The Government of India is ready to change the Citizen-(Amendment) Act (CAA) if "even one citizen of the 130 crore is adversely affected by it," asserted Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy on Thursday. "Our government has brought forth the CAA with full responsibility as a special drive to provide citizen status to refugees from the neighbourhood who had faced religious persecution,"

Stating that the government had not expected such a "vicious false propaganda against the CAA," Mr. Reddy said Muslim citizens had no ground to fear and assured that even in the census operations about to commence for the National Population Register (NPR), no document needed to be shown and urged them not to believe "wrong stories being circulated on the social

Participating in the 'Meet the Press' programme organised by the Telangana Union of Working Journalists (TUWJ) here, Mr. Reddy said though the Bharatiya Janata Party did mention about the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the government had not taken it up and there had been no discussion in the Union Cabinet.

'PM has the final word'

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the final word on NRC, it does not matter what anyone else has said," he said. The Minister said the government was still trying to frame rules and regulations for the CAA. "The government has taken note of apprehensions in some



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Mysuru police have invoked sedition charges and initiated an investigation after taking suo motu cognisance of a "Free Kashmir" placard that was allegedly raised during a protest organised by the students of the University of Mysore on Wednesday.

The University of Mysore Research Scholars' Association and the Dalit Students' Federation organised it to condemn the violence on the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus in Delhi and express opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment)

Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens.

One of the demonstrators held the placard and the photograph was published in a section of media on Thursday. Following this, the police initiated investigation and invoked provisions of Section 124A of the IPC against the organisers, including association president Mahadevaiah.

General secretary of the association Mahesh Sosle said the organisers and other leaders were marching in the front and were oblivious to the person holding it at the rear.

States about the CAA, including those in the northeast and its intent is not to bulldoze them into accepting it," Mr. Reddy said.

'We will hold discussions with such States and seek to remove misconceptions be-

cause this has been a long standing assurance of the government from the time of first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to accept minorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who faced discrimination," he said.

Key accused in Gauri murder case held

Deodikar arrested from a small town in Jharkhand

STAFF REPORTER BENGALURU

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Thursday arrested a key member of the unnamed organisation behind the murder of activist and journalist Gauri Lankesh. The accused, Rushikesh Deodikar, had managed to evade investigators until recently.

The SIT, which is also

probing the assassination of M.M. Kalburgi, caught the trail of Deodikar in December 2019. The arrest was made from Katrasgarh, a small town near Dhanbad, Jharkhand, where Deodikar was hiding and working at a book store.

Deodikar, 44, hailing from Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, went by the names of Murali and Shiva. He was a key member of the unnamed criminal syndicate behind the murders of Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi



being one of the most cor-

rupt States, he said the sys-

tem could not be changed

Sudheendra Kulkarni, socio-

political activist, who was

formerly with the BJP, spoke

on the need to overthrow the

present BJP regime, in a sep-

arate conversation with Mr.

He said the present dis-

pensation led by Prime Mi-

nister Narendra Modi and

Home Minister Amit Shah

was very different from the

one led by the late Prime Mi-

nister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

without seizing power.

'Sinister attempt'

Ram at the event.

Rushikesh Deodikar

and Gauri Lankesh between 2013 and 2017. The chargesheet in the Gauri Lankesh murder case has several references to his role. Multiple key accused in the case Sharad Kalaskar, Vasudev Suryavamshi, recruiters for the gang in Karnataka Sujith Kumar and Manohar Edave – have said Deodikar was an ideological motivator and recruiter.

Deodikar will be produced at a local court in Katrasgarh, Jharkhand, on Friday and will be brought to Bengaluru by Saturday on a transit warrant. He will be produced before a city court where the SIT will seek his custody, sources said.

Jagan's appeal to Amma Vodi beneficiaries

'Contribute ₹1,000 from total benefit of ₹15,000 towards maintenance of schools'

STAFF REPORTER

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday urged benefici aries of the Amma Vodi scheme to make a contribution of ₹1,000 from their total benefit of ₹15,000 to: wards maintenance of schools in their areas. It would also bring a sense of responsibility among them, he said.

Addressing the gathering after launching the scheme at the PVKN Government Degree College grounds here, Mr. Reddy said: "This will go a long way in the holistic development of schools. The beneficiaries can question the officials about the functioning of toilets and deployment of watchmen. Amma Vodi is a revolt against outdated syllabus and it will also bring about a phenomenal change in the mid-day meal

He said Amma Vodi bene-



Schoolchildren greeting Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in Chittoor on Thursday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

fits 42.12 lakh mothers and guardians, covering a total of 81.72 lakh students. All eligible families should submit their applications before February 9 and they could seek the assistance of village volunteers and village secreta-

The Chief Minister made it clear that 75% of attendance would be made mandatory to avail the benefit.

Mr. Reddy said the seed for the launch of Amma Vodi was sown during his walkathon, "as I observed the difficulties of mothers who were unable to send their children to schools and colleges due to financial stringency," he said.

The Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment to reach out to poor students through two more

schemes – Jagan Anna Vidya Deevena and Jagan Anna Vasathi Deevena. All government schools would be deveoped in line with Naadu-Nedu concept.

English medium

He said English medium would be introduced from the next academic year in all government schools from classes 1 to 6.

Criticising the previous governments for delayed supply of uniforms and textbooks, the Chief Minister said as and when the academic year starts, each student would be immediately supplied with a kit, including three pairs of uniform, and textbooks.

Mr. Reddy took a dig at his predecessor N. Chandrababu Naidu, a media organisation and "a cinema actor" for throwing mud on the YSRCP government's commitment to English medium education.

New beat



Cultural show: Students of a government school rehearsing for a performance as part of the Rangotsav celebration at the Jawahar Bal Bhavan in Puducherry on Thursday. ■ s.s. KUMAR

SCR seeks cheaper power for traction network

Tariffs charged by Andhra Pradesh's power utilities are too high, says South Central Railway

STAFF REPORTER

The South Central Railway (SCR) is likely to start buying power for its traction network in Andhra Pradesh through the open access route due to rising tariffs being charged by the State power utilities.

SCR's Chief Electrical Distribution Engineer G.V. Mallikarjuna Rao requested A.P. Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) Chairman Justice (Retd.) C.V. Nagarjuna Reddy to issue a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) for sourcing power from cheaper sources at the public hearing on Discoms' Annual Revenue Requirement (ARR) and proposed tariffs for

2020-21 here on Thursday. Making a plea to that effect, Mr. Mallikarjuna Rao



ability-Based Tariffs (ABT) said the Indian Railways had opted for open access in 12 meters at the traction substa-States, and it would prefer tions that help in monitoring the same for SCR, which inand billing bulk inter-utility cluded the Vijayawada, Gun-

takal and Guntur divisions. Having met other pre-con-The SCR had already paid ditions, the SCR sought the nearly ₹28 crore for the pro-NOC by treating it as a distrivision of high accuracy Availbution licensee under Sec-

Overall burden Mr. Mallikarjuna Rao further

tion 14 of the Electricity Act,

said that the average unit rate, which was ₹5.14 earlier, was sought to be increased to ₹7.89, and energy charges by ₹2.75 per KVAh. The demand charge stands at ₹350 per KVA. The overall burden on account of the increased tariffs was estimated to be ₹430 crore.

Besides, the Railways is paying huge sums towards cross-subsidy surcharge. It has, therefore, resolved to buy power from independent producers, or energy exchanges, at the tariffs that are affordable for it.

The SCR has completed 887 km of electrification projects in the last two years, and works are in progress on another 955 km stretch. Besides, 1,564 km of electrification projects have been proposed.

The crux of the issue (purchasing from the State power utilities) is that higher traction tariffs will slash the rate of return for the new railway electrification projects.

Basic argument

The Railways is requesting a special consideration to go for open access with the basic argument that a hike in tariffs will eventually force it to pass on the burden to traders and passengers as a last resort, leading to a spurt in commodity prices and inflation. It cannot avoid electrification lest the utilisation of diesel should grow tremendously.

Migrant Telangana workers caught in U.S.-Iran crossfire

Over 10,000 from State believed to be working in Erbil

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Tens of thousands of migrant workers from the State, especially from the undivided districts of Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Adilabad, have been reportedly stranded in Iraq without work and food for some days now. They are suffering the worst of the bomb attacks and crossfire between Iranian and American armies in the wake of the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani on

Sunday. The Iran-U.S. unrest increased the woes of the Telangana workers following the missile attacks on an Iraqi airbase at Bardarash, 50

Kurdistan where the U.S. forces are based. About 10,000 workers from the State are reported to be working in Erbil and 100 in Bardarash.

km from Erbil, the largest

populated city in the Iraqi

At wits' end

The workers, who were already in dire straits owing to invalid visa and shutdown of a number of factories, are at their wits' end. "They are spending sleepless nights on the streets, unable to get enough food," said E. Dakshina Moorthy, who has just returned from Erbil on a 15-

Belonging to Kondukur of Nirmal district, Mr. Moor-

day company leave.

supervisor on regular employment visa in DPR-Hewa company. He had gone to the Gulf country nine years ago and ensured the evacuation of many workers who were denied the Akama (official work visa) to the home "About 80% of workers

thy, has been working as a

from Telangana in Erbil don't have proper documents," said Mr. Moorthy, who is also Gulf Telangana Welfare and Cultural Association representative in Erbil. GTWCA president P. Basanth Reddy said unless the Central and Telangana governments intervened, the workers stranded in Iraq could not be rescued.



T.N. to file defamation case against Stalin

The Tamil Nadu government has decided to file a criminal defamation case against DMK chief M.K. Stalin for accusing Municipal Administration Minister S.P. Velumani of having indulging in corruption to the tune of ₹1,000 crore.

Keeladi reports in 24 Indian, global languages

The findings of the Keeladi excavations in 24 languages were released on Thursday in Chennai and the copies are available at the stall of the Department of Archaeology. Tamil and English versions are priced at ₹50 and copies in other languages cost ₹200

FSSAI issues directive on online usage of its logo

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed that no entity can register its website with the domain name comprising the word 'FSSAI', or use its name

U.P. tops list in crimes against women

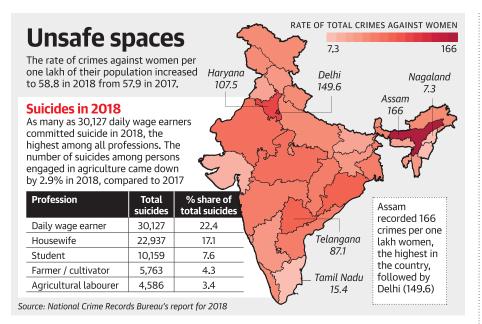
NCRB publishes Crime in India Report 2018

VIJAITA SINGH NEW DELHI

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) published the annual Crime in India Report 2018 on Wednesday. It was published with provisional data, as five States -West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim - did not send clarifications sought by the NCRB despite repeated reminders.

The 2017 annual crime report was published on October 21 last year, after a delay of two years.

According to the report, 3,78,277 cases of crime against women were reported, up from 3,59,849 in 2017. Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 59,445 cases, followed by Maharashtra (35,497) and West Bengal (30,394). The conviction rate in rape-related cases stood at 27.2% even though the rate of filing chargesheets was 85.3% in such cases. Cruelty by husband or his relatives (31.9%) followed by assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (27.6%) constituted the ma-



jor share of crimes against women, the report said.

The NCRB also released the Accidental Death and Suicides in India 2018 report, which said that 10,349 people working in the farm sector ended their lives in 2018, accounting for 7.7 % of the total number of suicides in the country. The total number of people who committed suicide in 2018 was 1,34,516, an increase of 3.6% from 2017 when 1,29,887 cases were reported. The highest number of suicide victims were daily wagers -26,589, comprising 22.4% of such deaths.

The majority of the suicides were reported in Maharashtra (17,972) followed by Tamil Nadu (13,896), West Bengal (13,255), Madhya Pradesh (11,775) and Karnataka (11,561). "West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Goa, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Puducherry reported zero suicides by farmers/cultivators as well as agricultural labourers," the NCRB report said.

The incidents registered under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes related Acts saw a decline from 6729 incidents reported in 2017 to 4816 in 2018. A total of 29,017 cases of murder were registered in 2018, showing an increase of 1.3%

Most political murders in West Bengal

NEW DELHI

West Bengal reported the maximum number of political murders in 2018, says a report by the NCRB. The number of murders due to "political reason" in the State stood at 12, followed by nine in Bihar and seven in Maharashtra. In all, 54 political murders were reported in the country in 2018. In 2017, the number of such cases stood at 98. However, the data is not in consonance with an advisory sent by the Ministry of Home Affairs to West Ben-

In a June 15 advisory, the MHA had said political violence had claimed 96 lives and that the "unabated violence" was a matter of deep concern. The NCRB said the clarifications on data were pending from West Bengal. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim, and the data might be treated as provisional

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

gal government last year.

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

WEATHER WATCH

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS Forecast for Friday: Cold day conditions likely over Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Odisha.

| CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN | CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN |
|-------------|--------|------|--------|---------------------|------|------|------|
| Agartala | | 21.0 | .13.0 | Kozhikode | | 35.0 | 25.0 |
| Ahmedabad | | 26.0 | .11.0 | Kurnool | | 31.0 | 21.0 |
| Aizawl | . 13.4 | 18.0 | .12.0 | Lucknow | 4.8 | 16.0 | 10.0 |
| Allahabad | . 13.4 | 18.0 | .12.0 | Madurai | | 32.0 | 21.0 |
| Bengaluru | | – | – | Mangaluru | | – | |
| Bhopal | | – | – | Mumbai | | 29.0 | 19.0 |
| Bhubaneswar | | 26.0 | .17.0 | Mysuru | | 00.0 | 00.0 |
| Chandigarh | 2.9 | 14.0 | 6.0 | New Delhi | 10.8 | 15.0 | 8.0 |
| Chennai | | 30.0 | .21.0 | Patna | 15.0 | 20.0 | 14.0 |
| Coimbatore | | 30.0 | .21.0 | Port Blair | | 31.0 | 24.0 |
| Dehradun | . 32.2 | 18.0 | 5.0 | Puducherry | | 30.0 | 19.0 |
| Gangtok | 3.3 | 7.0 | 3.0 | Pune | | 27.0 | 15.0 |
| Goa | | 33.0 | .21.0 | Raipur | 1.4 | 25.0 | 15.0 |
| Guwahati | | – | – | Ranchi | | 21.0 | 9.0 |
| Hubballi | | 30.0 | .19.0 | Shillong | | – | |
| Hyderabad | | 27.0 | .19.0 | Shimla | 27.2 | 7.0 | 2.0 |
| Imphal | | – | – | Srinagar | | – | – |
| Jaipur | | 19.0 | 4.0 | Thiruvananthapuram. | | 32.0 | 23.0 |
| Kochi | | 33.0 | 24.0 | Tiruchi | | 31.0 | 21.0 |
| Kohima | | – | – | Vijayawada | | 30.0 | 21.0 |
| Kolkata | | 23.0 | . 15.0 | Visakhapatnam | | 29.0 | 21.0 |
| | | | | | | | |

(Rainfall data in mm: temperature in Celsius) Pollutants in the air you are breathing

| CITIES | SO_2 | NO_2 | co | PM2.5 | PM10 | CODE |
|---------------|--------|--------|----|-------|------|------|
| Ahmedabad | 52 | .19 | 43 | 58 | 84 | |
| Bengaluru | 11 | .60 | 35 | 56 | 82 | |
| Chennai | 60 | .42 | 53 | 115 | 42 | |
| Delhi | 9 | .28 | 49 | 289 | .148 | |
| Hyderabad | 2 | .46 | 26 | 92 | 80 | |
| Kolkata | 10 | .93 | 41 | 259 | .170 | |
| Lucknow | 14 | .66 | 57 | 360 | 66 | |
| Mumbai | 9 | .61 | 41 | 159 | .145 | |
| Pune | 88 | .34 | 83 | 119 | .100 | |
| Visakhapatnam | 9 | .76 | 52 | 151 | .191 | |

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Muzaffarpur, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI) 502: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues

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

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

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

Teenager in hit-and-run to be tried as 'child': SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A loophole in the juvenile law will see a teenager who allegedly drove his father's luxury car over a 32-yearold man in Delhi being tried as a child rather than an adult who has committed a heinous crime.

A Supreme Court Bench led by Justice Deepak Gupta on Thursday used its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitu-

tion to declare that a juvenile above 16 years of age, who commits an offence for which the Indian Penal Code (IPC) prescribes a maximum prison sentence of more than seven years but for which the minimum sentence provided is less than seven years or even no minimum jail term, should be tried as a "child" under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

Panel approves scheme to 'trade' in forests

It allows Forest Dept. to outsource reforesting to non-government agencies

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI The Forest Advisory Committee, an apex body tasked with adjudicating requests by the industry to raze forest land for commercial ends, has approved a scheme that could allow "forests" to be traded as a commodity. If implemented, it allows the Forest Department to outsource one of its responsibilities of reforesting to non-government agencies.

In the current system, industry needs to make good the loss of forest by finding appropriate non-forest land equal to that which would be razed. It also must pay the State Forest Department the current economic equivalent – called Net Present Value – of the forest land. It's then the department's responsibility to grow appropriate vegetation that, over time, would grow into forests.

Industries have often

complained that they find it hard to acquire appropriate non-forest land, which has to be contiguous to existing forest. Nearly ₹50,000 crore had been collected by the Centre over decades, but the funds were lying unspent because States were not spending the money on regrowing forests. The Supreme Court intervened, a new law came about with rules for how this fund was to be administered. About ₹47,000 crore had been disbursed to States until August, but it has barely led to any rejuvenation of forests. The proposed 'Green Cre-

dit Scheme' allows agencies - they could be private companies, village forest communities – to identify land and begin growing plantations. After three years, they would be eligible to be considered as compensatory forest land if they met the Department's criteria.



Mining deep

While opening up the coal mining sector, the govt. must protect the interests of Coal India

The Centre's decision to liberalise norms for entry into coal mining and relax regulations on mining and selling coal in the country is significant in many respects. Amendments to two legacy Acts through the Mineral Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 cleared by the Cabinet on Wednesday will free the sector from restrictions that were inhibiting its development. This will open up the coal mining sector completely, enabling anyone with finances and expertise to bid for blocks and sell the coal freely to any buyer of their choice. Until now there were restrictions on who could bid for coal mines – only those in power, iron and steel and coal washery business could bid for mines and the bidders needed prior experience of mining in India. This effectively limited the potential bidders to a select circle of players and thus limited the value that the government could extract from the bidding. Second, end-use restrictions inhibited the development of a domestic market for coal. The ordinance essentially democratises the coal industry and makes it attractive for merchant mining companies, including multinationals such as BHP and Rio Tinto, to look at India. The move was overdue considering that the country spent a huge ₹1,71,000 crore in coal imports last year to buy 235 million tonnes; of that, 100 million tonnes was not substitutable, as the grade was not available in India, but the balance 135 million tonnes could have been substituted by domestic production had it been available.

Large investment in mining will create jobs and set off demand in critical sectors such as mining equipment and heavy commercial vehicles. The country may also benefit from infusion of sophisticated mining technology, especially for underground mines, if multinationals decide to invest. However, for that to happen, the government needs to do more such as whittling the time taken for approvals of mining leases and also easing the procedures for clearances. The test would come when 46 producing mines, whose leases expire in March, come up for bidding shortly. The opening up of coal mining effectively ends Coal India's (CIL) monopoly status. Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi took care to emphasise that CIL has been and will be allotted adequate blocks and that it will be supported and the interests of labourers will be taken care of. The company has been set a target of one billion tonnes production by 2023-24 - last year, it produced 606 million tonnes. CIL is a Maharatna PSU and tremendous public resources have been invested in the company over the years. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that CIL is not compromised the way BSNL has been by the opening up to private players. The company employs about three lakh people, is listed and is a national asset. It has to be nurtured even as private players are welcomed.

A continent on fire

Australia must adopt policies that will foster environmental protection

ustralia's catastrophic fire season that began in August last year is unprecedented, and has Leaused large scale destruction, mainly in New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland. Fire is no stranger to the dry continent's woodlands, but the inferno this time has devastated over 10 million hectares of land, killing at least 25 people and tens of millions of animals, besides forcing the evacuation of entire communities. Shocking images of kangaroos burnt in their tracks as they tried to flee and koalas desperately escaping the fire are indelibly imprinted in the consciousness of people around the world. This is a moment of reckoning for Australia. The government of Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who has sought to downplay the impact of changing climate, is struggling to pacify angry citizens who are calling for a reconsideration of the country's relationship with fossil fuels. Warnings have been sounded by scientists that even with a global average temperature rise of 1°C, the raging fires have engulfed an area the size of Switzerland. In a world set to warm at least half a degree more in coming decades, Australia's encounters with devastating fires could become more frequent, perhaps even once in eight years, making large parts of the continent uninhabitable. The current fire season presents a cross-roads, and a wise choice would be to move to a greener future, one that strengthens an already diverse economy through innovation.

As scientists have been pointing out for years, the coal industry has a sway over politics in Australia that is disproportionate to its share of economic production. This was evident when Mr. Morrison held up a big piece of the black rock in Parliament in a gesture to highlight its economic importance. The display may have reassured the mining industry, which has torpedoed a profits tax in the past, but it shocked researchers who worry about greenhouse gas emissions increasing in Australia, and in countries to which it exports the fuel. Credentialled specialists at the country's Climate Council have had to crowdsource funds to continue their work after the official Climate Commission was shut down by the government six years ago. Today, they are raising the alarm over the lowest ever rainfall recorded in parts of NSW and Queensland, and high peak temperatures, producing a tinderbox effect across the large Murray-Darling Basin. The situation is bound to worsen without policy change, as temperatures are predicted to soar to 50°C. Over the past half century, the number of hot days and very hot days each year have steadily increased. It would be tragic if this scientific insight is ignored. Long-term prosperity for Australians and a future for its charismatic animals can be secured only through policies that foster environmental protection.

A nation losing democratic steam

Beyond the undermining of India's pluralism, the CAA signals New Delhi's low regard for neighbouring countries



KANAK MANI DIXIT

These are bewildering times for members of civil society in countries bordering India, who are no longer able to appeal to New Delhi on the platform of reason, pluralism and even humanity. When New Delhi appeared arrogant or tone-deaf in the past, there were ways to make yourself heard, but today there is a silencing within that weakens not only the spirit of India, but the prospects of peace in South Asia.

While the first term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi saw adventurism, from demonetisation within to blockade without, his re-elected government seems intent on changing the face of India through majoritarian intolerance under the banner of Hindutva. While putting fear in minority communities, this trajectory is also accelerating India's economic decline and weakening New Delhi's international influence.

A geopolitical folly

While the adoption of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in December has triggered India-wide dissent, it began as an act of geopolitical folly. For domestic appeasement, Home Minister Amit Shah and Mr. Modi brought forth a Bill that essentially accused three selected countries of discrimination against their Hindu, Jain, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist and Parsi minorities. In one stroke, New Delhi distanced itself from the friendly state establishments of Dhaka and Kabul, and deepened the divide with Islamabad.

Even discounting the fact that residents of glass houses must resist the urge to throw stones, this was an unexpected accusation. While no South Asian country is free of majoritarian discrimination, the concern of New Delhi's rulers was clearly not the well-being of the minorities of Pakistan. Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who have been in fact been made more vulnerable by the Act. The Indian authorities did not engage in sustained international effort to address the issue, such as through the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues. The appropriate approach here would have been to join the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, and to be open to foreigners of any faith or persuasion who seek refuge. To cherry-pick among non-citizens on the basis of religion was crass.

Now, the human rights community and intelligentsia in the neighbouring countries are left in an awkward position when challenging the CAA's selectivity their interest is to promote inclusion within rather than demand that India become an 'equal-opportunity' host for Muslims as well. Nevertheless, one must challenge India's Home Ministry as to why the CAA ignored the larger number of Muslims of different sects enduring sectarian strife. These include Ahmadiyya and Shia, particularly Hazara, of Pakistan and Ahmadiyya and Bihari Muslims of Bangladesh. And why ignore the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India and the vulnerable Rohingya of Myanmar?

In reality, the adoption of the CAA is just a way-station on the Hindutva highway, which considers not just modern-day India but all of the notional 'Jambudvipa' as the Hindu homeland. Those gal-

loping along this highway believe in a selective rendering of a Hindu subcontinent overrun by invaders from the northwest. This exclusivist project seeks to paint the variegated belief system of 'Hinduism' with a broad ideological brushstroke. Faith has been turned on its head, becoming less a quest for spiritualism. Many godmen, god-women, gurus and babas have boarded this Hindutva wagon, notably the mahant of Gorakhnath temple who is now also the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister.

The Indian establishment has thus super-charged its social engineering campaign, specifically targeting the country's Muslim citizenry. The campaign started with the revocation of the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir, followed by the Ayodhya verdict that privileged mass belief over evidence. The enactment of the CAA and the scheme to confirm citizenship through the National Register of Citizens is part of the plan.

Hunger for political power Of course, India's population of 200 million-plus Muslims will not be going anywhere. India is their homeland, and they have no extra-

territorial magnet similar to Israel vis-à-vis the Jewish people. One searches, therefore, for an explanation as to why Indian society has

thus been led to the cliff's edge. This seems to be motivated by nothing more than a hunger for political power using religion and ultra-nationalism as tools. Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah have essentially lined up behind Muhammad Ali Jinnah's two-nation theory, leaving India's Muslims emotionally drained and fearful.

In a world increasingly defined by populist ultra-nationalism, seen in the ascent of figures like Donald Trump, Rodrigo Duterte and Jair Bolsonaro, India with its ancient-civilisational and modern-Gandhian heritage should have been framing the democratic response to myriad pressing issues, from global warming to nuclear weaponisation. A confident, egalitarian-minded India would also have been leading the discourse on international migration and challenging China for its internment camps for Uighurs and for using facial recognition technology for surveillance. Instead, we have a regime whose topmost leader terms Muslim immigrants as 'termites' fit to be dumped into the Bay of Bengal; which keeps Rohingya refugees away with threats of deportation; and which is itself rushing to catch up with Beijing in building internment camps and using facial recognition and drones to control dissent.

Looking at India from the outside, we see a ruling establishment that values mythology more than history and a society losing its scientific edge, its great universities being run to the ground. India under Mr. Modi is losing democratic steam, with its weakened courts, progressively politicised military, and a police force and investigating agencies that are willing instruments of power-brokers. Many of us have been there, done

The genie that has been released through the enactment of the CAA must be forced back into the bottle, taking into consideration the sheer scale of human tragedy possible in the subcontinent. And, while the ongoing countrywide dissent against the CAA by lay-citizens has been spontaneous and heartfelt, it may not be enough to challenge a party that has just been elected with an overwhelming majority for a five-year

Seeking greater federalism

One used to regard India's Central government as the protector of citizens when the States went renegade, but what happens when the Centre goes rogue? Devolution of power and authentic federalism is clearly the solution for human dignity and social justice in a country as vast and diverse as India. Here, as a former Chief Minister of Gujarat, Mr. Modi could have set an example as the great federalist Prime Minister. Instead, he has presided over a further Centralisation of governmental power, with the Hindutva agenda part and parcel of this process.

And this is why it is vital to recognise the institutional resistance to the CAA emerging from the States run by non-BJP parties. Amidst the gloom, one sees in the State-side reaction not only an immediate response to the CAA, but the glimmer of possibilities of a longer-term restructuring of the Indian state towards governance that is more accountable to the people. The centripetal force represented by Narendra Modi requires a centrifugal counter from the

Kanak Mani Dixit, a writer and journalist based in Kathmandu, is founding editor of the magazine 'Himal Southasian'

CDS and the path to jointmanship

His role is not just about tri-service cooperation, but also to ensure that acquisitions do not exceed capital allocations



HARSH V. PANT & KARTIK BOMMAKANTI

The announcement on a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) last Gen. Bipin Rawat as the first CDS has been one of the key policy decisions made by the Narendra Modi government in its second term. In the aftermath of an emphatic election victory in May 2019, Mr. Modi pushed the needle on a longpending reform for the establishment of a CDS, which was recommended by the Kargil Review Committee in 2001. The CDS will be "first among equals" in that he will consult and solicit the views of the services, but the final judgment will be the CDS's alone and he will be the principal military adviser to the Defence Minister.

The role here will be confined to the acquisition matters exclusive to each service and won't extend to the procurement of bigticket items such as warships or fighter aircraft, which will remain under firm control of the Department of Defence (DoD). The CDS will be the single-point military adviser to the Defence Minister on

matters involving all three services and the service chiefs will be obliged to confine their counsel to issues pertaining to their respective services. The CDS is also vested with the authority to provide directives to the three chiefs.

A chief as well as an adviser

Additionally, the CDS will lead the Department of Military Affairs (DoMA) dealing with the three services. Gen. Rawat will enjoy the rank of Secretary within the DoD and his powers will be confined to only the revenue budget. However, he is vested with the authority in prioritising inter-service procurement decisions as Permanent Chairman-Chiefs of Staff Committee. While the CDS does not enjoy any command authority, in his capacity as DoMA, he will wield control over issues governing promotions, travel, appointment to key posts, and overseas assignments. Consequently, the CDS will enjoy a substantial amount of influence. He will also perform an advisory role in the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA). Above all, his core function will be to foster greater operational synergy between the three service branches of the Indian military and keep inter-service frictions to a minimum. Fundamentally, the CDS will perform two roles, as the single point military advisor to the Defence Minister and as head of the DoMA.



With his inauguration as India's first CDS last year, Gen. Rawat has hit the ground running with some important announcements. He has sought the establishment of an Air Defence Command (ADC) by directing the Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) to develop a proposal by June 30. An integrated ADC will enable nationwide coverage, prevent fratricide in the event of war and sustain jointmanship in air defence operations. In addition, Gen. Rawat has declared his intention to synergise logistics support, particularly in areas where two or more services are co-located.

Three main challenges

Gen. Rawat faces three main challenges. First, there are concerns over matters relating to service parochialism, though there have

been no initial indications in this regard. If he privileges support for the Army, his parent service, he is likely to put himself on a collision course with the Naval and Air Force chiefs. A corollary is that as an infantry officer, he may become susceptible to bias in matters concerning procurement decisions or personnel issues focused on the infantry. The latter outcome could needs of the armour and artillery corps. Any parochialism could potentially derail the primary objective of creating the CDS - promoting synergy and shaping acquisition priorities both within and between the services. Indeed, one of the tasks the CDS is to avoid wasteful expenditure and duplication of equipment in the inventories of the services.

But, the CDS's role is not simply about tri-service cooperation, it is equally about fostering better cooperation between the MoD bureaucracy and the services and ensuring that projected and planned acquisitions of the services do not exceed capital allocations. A secondary challenge stems from the sheer levels of manpower in the Indian Army, which is the service that consumes the lion's share of the defence budget. As it is a manpower-intensive fighting force, pruning the number of personnel in the Army will remain perhaps the most vexed challenge for possibly the entirety of Gen. Rawat's tenure. This will demand innovation, given the fact that infantrybased operations geared for counterinsurgency warfare, which a large part of the Army is dedicated to undertaking, are manpower in-

There are no instant remedies, but one pointer is towards greater investment in Artificial Intellivitiate his capacity to address the gence (AI) over the long term, a process that has already begun, but will require a dedicated push from the CDS over the course of his tenure. The application of AI technology is likely to lend itself to tanks and artillery systems, as is visibly evident from the vigorous pursuit of AI by China's People's Liberation Army.

The final challenge facing the CDS will be the extent to which he can encourage the services to support indigenisation. Cost saving is not simply about reducing manpower in the Army, it is equally about getting all the services, particularly the capital-intensive services, to rally behind a committed enterprise to support the native Research and Development for production and eventual deployment of weapons systems, which when procured from abroad drive a massive hole in the budget

Harsh V. Pant is Director of Research at Observer Research Foundation, Delhi where Kartik Bommakanti is an Associate Fellow

Asia (Editorial page,

within," Ian. 9). But his

"Betrayals from outside and

proposed cure – an appeal

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.

Dialling down tensions Fortunately, better counsel backed away from

has prevailed and U.S. has escalating the conflict (Front page, "Trump backs away from further conflict after Iran hits U.S. troops," Jan. 9). The truth behind the diametrically opposite claims of "minimal damage" by U.S. and "80 American terrorists" having been killed by Iran may or may not be known immediately. But, the world has heaved a sigh of relief that a disastrous war has been averted. As it has taken the revenge for the assassination of Oassem Soleimani, Tehran should desist from issuing further threats. It would be in the best interests of the volatile region for Iran to make peace with the U.S. As

has called upon the other signatories of the earlier nuclear accord to work for a new deal, Iran should also come forward to negotiate a fresh accord. KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,

JNU V-C should resign After remaining absent for long when a set of his students were attacked by masked hooligans with allegiance to right-wing elements, it is uncharitable that Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Vice Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar advised the affected students to bury the past. Looking at the manner in which the events took place – goons were allowed free entry into the campus; the security guards and the police acted as mute

attacks; and electricity was cut off for some time – we can deduce that the administration must have had some knowledge of what was in store. Mr. Kumar should submit his resignation immediately, in deference to the wishes of the students and teachers. THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,

Centrist bias The founders of the Indian Constitution cannot be faulted for framing a Constitution with an explicit 'Centrist bias', considering the background of Partition (Op-ed page, "The Indian Constitution's unitary tilt," Nov. 9). Perhaps they hoped that the democratic process would deepen in the years to come and electoral reforms would

follow. This has not happened, as amply revealed by the lack of any meaningful electoral reforms. A single-party dominance would not have occurred had India switched to proportional representation. As a consequence, the Bharatiya Janata Party, which secured 37.36% of votes, is now in a position to initiate changes which have far-reaching implications. The declaration of a few States that they will not implement the Centre's moves on citizenship is unlikely to have any significant impact. More than legality, it is the fiscal dimension that is going to dampen the activism of States. In India's fiscal federalism, powers are disproportionately tilted in favour of the Centre. The

Goods and Services Tax has further exacerbated this. Part of the problem lies in the unwillingness of the States to tap the potential of the assigned taxes. Kerala, which is in the forefront of the opposition to the Centre, is in deep fiscal stress and mostly dependent on the Centre to meet its committed items of expenditure. The message that comes out of the recent developments seems to be: to fight the centralisation tendencies, the States have to become more fiscally independent. JOSE SEBASTIAN,

Schisms within Islam The writer has rightly

diagnosed Islam's internal schisms as the cause of and not as the consequence of U.S. interference in West

to Muslims to shun orthodoxy – appears as a mere palliative. Conspicuous by its absence is any mention of the role of Muslim nations like Saudi Arabia in propagating extremist ideology.

Ordinary Muslims are powerless to counter the coalition of powerful rulers and fundamentalists. How then can the syncretic and benign Islamic vision that remains in the margins of popular imagination go mainstream? Where is the courageous reformer who will challenge the intolerant scriptural narratives? V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,

Thiruvananthapuram



President Donald Trump spectators to the gruesome

What is the state of 'open source' in India today?

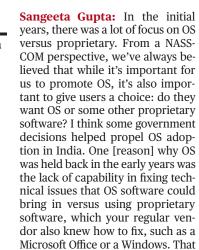
PARLEY

It is the new normal, but we still need to go a long way to adopt open source tools in Big Data

The open source movement, which has focused on democratising technology access, has over a two-decade history in India. In a conversation moderated by **Jacob Koshy**, Venkatesh Hariharan and Sangeeta Gupta discuss its relevance to digital technology, privacy, and software patenting. Edited excerpts:

Open source (OS) has been a part and parcel of software programming and code development for a while. Since the advent of Linux (an OS operating system) in the 1990s, what do you think is the state of the OS movement in India now?

Venkatesh Hariharan: When we started the campaign for more OS in 2000, we had political, cultural and economic reasons to believe it was important. Politically, we wanted to ensure more diversity in the kind of players that existed in the market with twin objectives: that we were independent from a technology standpoint and that software was localised to Indian languages. From a cost perspective, if we were dependent on multinational companies for core technology like operating systems, that would have been a drain on the exchequer. So that was the logic. Today, some of the largest e-governance projects and start-ups in India are running on OS. The early days when we had to campaign for people to use OS is over; now we are in a new era where OS is the new



is what has happened now with the democratisation of technologies, cloud computing, Artificial Intelligence (AI) – OS has become much more mainstream.

Do you think proprietary forms have co-opted OS? Yes, sharing software and tweaking source code happens, but largely have major tech companies monopolised OS?

VH: The commercial support for OS ensures that people can use it in mission-critical applications like the stock exchange or e-government applications. That has played a major role in boosting the adoption of OS. Now, if you look at the amount of code that has been written, in the initial days OS was an imitation of proprietary software or a replacement for it. For instance, Linux as an alternative to NetWare or Unix for Microsoft. The pace of innovation in OS, because of its collaborative nature, outstrips that in proprietary software. So, if you look at the current areas of explosive growth such as Big Data and analytics, the pace of innovation in OS is so rapid that there is no proprietary competitor. We are in an OS 2.0 era where we are no longer catching up with proprietary software; we have leapfrogged. We see the pragmatism of Microsoft joining the open invention network. And now what they are realising is that OS is not a competitor, but maybe an OpenOffice is a competitor to Microsoft

One of the things about OS was that it would democratise code creation and train coders to use basic tools to make commercial products. Do you think the government and the tech industry have done enough to promote OS technologies and introduce them in school and engineering curricula?

SG: Software education in universities in India continues to lag behind. But it's good to see the All India Council for Technical Education and others introduce new courses on some of the newer technology



We are in an open source

2.0 era where we are no

longer catching up with

proprietary software; we

have leapfrogged. We see

Microsoft joining the open

the pragmatism of

invention network.

and some other things. There is

hope that we will get into more ef-

fective usage, whether it's for

healthcare or education. Some of

these will be locally built for India.

And some of these may be solutions

that we will adopt from other mar-

kets. But I do believe that many of

these entertainment apps have

played a role in removing the fear of

technology from people's minds.

There was a time when debates

used to be around the patenting

of software. We're in the era of

AI, machine learning, Internet

of Things. But multinationals

moved into a post-OS era. Are

patenting even relevant now?

VH: We will continue to see pres-

sure on the Indian government to al-

low for patenting of software. The

law says that software per se is not

patentable. But the interpretation of

'per se' has been twisted and that

game of football has been going on

for almost a decade now. The intent

of Parliament was that software

shouldn't be patentable. The reason

we will continue to see pushback by

multinational companies is because

these are the largest patent holders

anywhere in the world and the ba-

continue to be the biggest

patentees in India. We've

debates around software

around OS and proprietary

VENKATESH HARIHARAN

areas. NASSCOM is trying to do a number of things to upskill software developers and students and bring in the industry-academia connect.

The promise of OS was that programmers everywhere could learn to code and apply them to various contexts. But India has few creators and is mostly a passive consumer of technology. Have barriers imposed by language along with limited access to technical education sharpened the digital divide?

VH: The digital divide has been bridged: the mobile phone is in the hands of an estimated 800 million people today. It's the first computing device that they have been introduced to. Combine this with the fact that bandwidth has become far cheaper in India. Among the largest YouTube channels are three Indian channels. That has also changed a lot of things in terms of consuming technical content, which is relevant to OS. We also need to work on the mindset of people. We are in an era where people have to continuously update themselves.

SG: When we look at the digital divide, I think the first part of it is about access, where you may have your low-hanging use cases like entertainment. This access has been addressed to a great extent because [content on] the computer was once only in the English language. The computer was expensive and was meant for people who could afford it. I think the ability of the smartphone combined with cheap data has enabled a lot of access for people. I believe, by the use cases, people are starting with entertainment

lance of power and software patentees is with them. If patents are allowed in India, they will be able to charge royalties from domestic software technology players. There are billions of dollars at stake for this and it is never going to go away unless the Indian government removes the term 'per se' from Section 3(k) of the Indian Patent Act.

SG: I agree. But given that we are living in a world still dominated by companies, India needs to invest in building its own intellectual property. And that means we need to have our own patents. We see a number of Indian service companies patenting whatever products or solutions they are building in the U.S. and other key markets. So I don't see this as an era where patents will not exist; I think patents will become an even more important tool for supremacy or whatever you want to call it in this new technology era.

When these initial debates were happening in the '90s, it was a world of globalisation. But now we have more trade barriers and authoritarianism. So should India get more serious about patenting?

VH: We're living in an era where data is abundant and I look at the commonality between code and data. The ideals of the OS movement were about collaboration and the shared ownership of knowledge. And within that context, the proliferation of data and the fact that it's only a few players who are able to monetise that data means that we now need to move to an era where it's not just a few platforms that benefit from our data, but that individuals are able to leverage and are empowered with their own data. So, in a sense, I see a commonality with the OS movement in that even a college student sitting in Sweden or any other part of the world should be able to write an operating system that can be used in any part of the world. Now, we should be able to build systems where individuals can take control of their data and be in control of how other people monetise it and leverage it for loans, etc.

Privacy, or the lack of it, is the dominant concern around the technology debate. What can the OS movement contribute, beyond activism and legislative participation, to make ordinary Indians more informed about protecting their privacy?

VH: Clearly we need new approaches. What might happen in the next few years is that there will be AI tools which will act as personal data brokers between me and the platform so that I need not surrender my privacy to access book and music recommendations from platforms. Many of these tools will be built on the back of OS. And the other bit of it is that the platforms that are being built in India, like the account aggregator, are built on top of OS. The idea and intent is to give people more control over data.

SG: The data privacy issue requires every creator to build trust. Trust is going to be an important feature for any data-led industry as we move forward. There are two or three different roles that the OS sector could play. One is organisations like the Mozilla Foundation, which is doing a lot of good work in demystifying what privacy notices mean for the average user and how they could make privacy-aware decisions. The second is when you create tools that will help organisations either enhance their compliance on privacy or create an intermediary between me and the organisation that is providing me the tools or software to do that. The third can be about building privacy-maturity discussions or building frameworks. OS has a key role to play.

Do you think legislation will help regulate the scene?

SG: Legislation is important; there is the Data Protection Bill. Our focus at NASSCOM has also been about practices. It should not only be about regulations. Whether you have the right practices that will help comply with these regulations is equally, if not more, important.

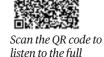
VH: The government has two roles. One, lawmakers have to ensure that they pass laws that benefit citizens. And the second is that the government is also one of the largest data controllers apart from platforms. So what kind of governance they have around the data is going to be a really critical part of the data ecosystem in India.



Venkatesh Hariharan is a Senior Fellow at the IDFC Institute



is Senior Vice
President, National
Association of
Software and
Service Companies



interview online

Teaching research ethics better

Image preparation should be included as part of the UGC's course on research ethics

R. PRASAD

Years after ignoring the elephant in the room, the UGC has finally made it compulsory for PhD scholars to take up a course on research and publication ethics as part of their pre-registration course work. Effective from the coming academic session, the course carries two credits and entails 30 teaching hours. It covers several aspects of research conduct, publication ethics and misconduct, open access publishing and databases, and research metrics. But on closer scrutiny, it looks like the course will not help much. It will create "awareness about publication ethics and misconduct" but it will not equip students to steer clear of unethical research practices. For instance, 'scientific conduct' deals with a range of issues that research students might face during research. This includes plagiarism, falsification and fabrication, misrepresentation of data, selective reporting, duplicate publication, and segregation of data and publishing as multiple papers. All this is to be magically covered in just five hours.

Substantial copying of text from previously published papers and even paraphrasing without due citation are quite common in papers published from India, particularly from state universities. The introduction of plagiarism-checking software in most universities and compulsory checking for plagiarism prior to paper publication by most journals has largely addressed the problem.

Preparing images

While the course does cover data falsification and fabrication, there is no mention of teaching researchers the basics of preparing images for publication. While certain changes to images are acceptable, hundreds of papers are corrected or retracted every year for image duplication and manipulation. Unlike plagiarism, journals have woken up to inappropriately altered images and manipulation only since the early 2000s.

As Dr. Elisabeth M. Bik and others had noted in a June 2016 paper in the journal *mBio*, the instances of "inappropriately duplicated images" suddenly peaked in 2003 and has been 4-5% since then. Over 8,100 papers

screened from *PLOS One* for a 16-month period from 2013 to 2014 revealed that papers published from India had 1.93-fold higher probability of containing "problematic images", the highest in the world.

Unlike in the case of data falsification and fabrication, duplication and manipulation of images is relatively easy to identify post-publication. That *PubPeer*, a website that allows independent scientists to publish post-publication review of scientific papers, is flooded with reviews of papers with questionable images is proof that the scientific community has become alert to a malice that has so far been largely overlooked.

A big Indian problem

In India, dozens of papers with questionable images have been published by researchers from a few Council of Scientific and Industrial Research labs, and reputed institutions such as IIT-Dhanbad, the Indian Institute of Science, and Bose Institute. It is far worse in the case of state universities. Recently, Dr. Bik identified problematic images and plagiarised text in over 200 papers from Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu. Several papers from Periyar University in Tamil Nadu and Banaras Hindu University too can be found on *PubPeer*.

The magnitude of the problem can be judged by scanning the largest database of retracted papers maintained by the *Retraction Watch* blog. The blog reveals that of the 1,050 papers from India retracted since the 1970s, 330 have been for plagiarism and nearly 200 for image duplication and/or manipulation. There is no ballpark figure for papers corrected for problematic images. Though the U.S. and China have the most number of journal papers retracted, India has a higher rate of retractions, says a paper in *Science*.

If UGC is serious about teaching research and publication ethics, it should make scientific conduct and publication ethics separate courses with sufficient teaching hours or retain it as a single course and devote more time to teach research ethics and include image preparation as part of the course.

prasad.ravindranath@thehindu.co.in



NOTEBOOK

Political cartoons in the age of memes

Social media can both challenge and inspire cartoonists

 $\underline{\mathbf{SATW}}\mathbf{IK}\;\mathbf{GADE}$

The job of the editorial cartoonist has changed considerably since the advent of social media. The editorial cartoon used to be placed on a pedestal; this is no longer the case.

With the advent of 24X7 news channels, access to breaking news stopped being the privilege of the newsroom. Since an editorial cartoonist's job is to observe and comment through the comic medium, the exclusivity of observation was the first loss. What they still retained, however, was the space for response, the hallowed political cartoon space. At the time, political cartoons did not evolve to the video format beyond the occasional Gustakhi Maaf (a TV programme with puppets). The cartoon space of important newspapers could inform readers what political news was 'trending' the

previous day. Cartoons be-

gan to be shared via email and became 'viral' in the email era. All these changes only served to make the cartoonist's space more sacrosanct.

social media But changed all that. Today, everybody has a space to respond. And there is no exclusivity of observation whatsoever. At times, a child sitting in his bedroom can access expert opinions of distinguished journalists more quickly than an editorial cartoonist can while sitting in a newsroom. He can also respond to it without being bound by the necessary drawing skills. In other words, with the creation of memes, the cartoonist's life has changed forever.

Today we live at a time where the 'one point witty comment' space has become the most crowded and dynamic space on the Internet. Observations in this space are not always commonplace; they are often deep and insightful. In

fact, some of the most profound observations come from regular people with a small number of followers. All these changes have forced cartoonists to reflect not just on political affairs, but the space they occupy in political humour.

in political humour.

These rapid changes have also pushed cartoonists from the cosy and exclusive gentleman's club into the muck of unfiltered online commentary. This can be a harrowing experience, but often liberating too. Having your ego shattered a hundred times a day can educate you but also free you in a way.

However, not all is bad. I find memes and web cartoons a great way to exercise my brain. A lot of stray comments serve as inspiration for my work, and college students are sometimes my mentors. People ask me to address specific issues, so there is constant feedback. And amidst all the trolling I deal with, I al-

so receive really positive comments.

The political climate is also important for cartoonists. What has really changed over the last decade or so is the manner in which cartoonists have been censored. India once again finds itself in an authoritarian regime without a sense of humour. Cartoonists want to say a lot but are often silenced by editors, trolls, political parties and the worst of them all, Sections 124A and 295A of the Indian Penal Code.

We find solace in the fact that the best work and the most dynamic ways of resistance always come in the worst of times. Cartoonists must balance the dual task of being neutral and witty political observers and being activists who constantly push boundaries and attempt to reclaim lost spaces through innovation and persistence. These are not easy times, but they sure are exciting times.

The MAR Kindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 10, 1970

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 10, 1970

U.K. collusion with Pakistan disclosed

Brigadier Ghansara Singh, who was Governor of Gilgit at the time of partition of the country in August 1947, exposed here [Srinagar] to-day [January 9] in detail British collusion with Pakistan in capturing Gilgit. Ghansara Singh was appointed by the Jammu and Kashmir Government to take over charge of Gilgit from the British Government to which Gilgit had been leased by Kashmir for 60 years. After termination of British rule in India the Brigadier flew to Gilgit on July 31, 1947 but was taken prisoner in a mutiny jointly sponsored by British officers and some Muslim officers. Eleven months later he was sent to Pakistan from where he was sent to India in exchange of prisoners after another three months. Brigadier Ghansara Singh, who is 79 and leads a very active life in Jammu, fully supported the view expressed in the book "Slender was the Thread" by Lt.-Gen. Sen that what happened in Gilgit in 1947 prior to and during the tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir strengthened the inference that British officers were involved in Pakistan's plan and that the loss of Gilgit was the result of "piratical

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 10, 1920

Prison Reform. (From an editorial)

The evidence tendered by Lt Col. Fearnside to the Jail Committee, at Coimbatore a day or two ago, is of a nature to arrest the attention of these who are interested in ameliorating the lot of the Indian prisoner. All the evidence tendered by Col. Fearnside is not to hand, but we may be excused for commenting on some important matters in which an experienced jail officer's opinions are of exceptional interest. Apart from his suggestions and views on jail management and control, Colonel Fearnside's evidence related to matters of wider application in which large sections of the public are interested; such as imprisonment for debt, the abolition of transportation to the Andamans, and Government competition with private enterprise. With regard to civil prisoners, Colonel Fearnside was of opinion that imprisonment for debt should be abolished as in England. But the Debtor's Act imprisonment for debt was abolished in England in 1869, and it now exists only as a punishment in certain cases which involve fraud, misconduct, wilful disobedience to an order of the Court, and intention to abscond.

FROM PAGE ONE

Foreign envoys in J&K on a fact-finding visit

"We apprised the delegation of the current situation. We told them that people were hurt by the abrogation of Article 370; the matter is before the apex court now," said Mr. Bukhari. He stressed the need to restore statehood for Jammu and Kashmir, introduce domicile laws to safeguard land,

and find jobs for the locals. The politicians also called for "immediate release of all political leaders and the youth in the Valley."

Prominent political faces that met the foreign envoys included Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Party Nationalist's Ghulam Hassan Mir, PDP's Noor Muhammad Sheikh, Rafi Mir, Javaid Baigh, Abdul Raheem Rather and Majeed Padder and Congress's Hilal Shah and Shoaib Lone.

PDP action

Shortly after the meeting, a tweet from the PDP's official handle said, "Certain party leaders are part of parleys which go against the interests of J&K, the official position and core beliefs. The disciplinary committee has recommended expulsion of these leaders."

However, Rafi Mir told The Hindu that he did not go against people's aspirations or the party's stand. "I have my own mind and no one can control me," he said.

Mr. Mir said he shared his "way forward to restore peace and normalcy in I&K" with the envoys.

No prominent civil society group or trade body met the envoys. An NC spokesman termed the visit "a guided tour."

The Army hosted the envoys at its headquarters in Badamibagh and apprised them of the current security scenario, including the issue of terrorism, and Pakistan's attempts to "destabilise the situation on the Line of Control (LoC) and the mainland in the Union Territory."

The envoys left for Jammu in the afternoon, where they will meet Lt. Governor G.C. Murmu on Friday.

Government officials involved in the planning of the visit said that they were "satisfied" with its outcome, and their objective had been to "show first-hand the efforts being made by the government normalcy".

SC to rule on J&K curbs today

Petition said the restrictions crippled essential services and communications

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court will on Friday pronounce its verdict on the legality of the restrictions on the fundamental freedom of movement and the shutdown of communications in Jammu and Kashmir since August 5.

The judgment will be delivered by a three-judge Bench, led by Justice N.V. Ramana.

The clampdown followed the revocation of the special right and privileges enjoyed by the Kashmiri people under Article 370 and the bifurcation of the erstwhile State into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Anuradha Bhasin, one of

the petitioners and Editor of The Kashmir Times, said the restrictions had crippled the freedom of the press, essential services and even communications between families. A pall of suspicion was cast on the entire seven million people, who lived in a state of imprisonment. Restrictive orders under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr.PC) were issued without application of mind, she said. Activist Enakshi Ganguly and Con-



On guard: Security personnel setting up a road block after the arrival of 16 envoys from foreign countries in Srinagar on Thursday. • NISSAR AHMAD

gress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad are the other petition-

However, the Jammu and Kashmir government had maintained that normalcy had returned to the Valley.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for Jammu and Kashmir, had said the authorities acted on heaps of material, including intelligence and military, about inflammatory material and speeches, circulation of fake news, morphed images and videos spread on social media.

PDP a divided house

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) patron Muzaffar Hussain Baigh on Thursday took pot-shots at jailed party president Mehbooba Mufti and backed the demands to restore statehood and grant domicile laws on land and

"Ms. Mufti made a wrong statement that 'If Article 370 is scrapped no one will raise

the national flag in J&K'. It should not have been made. You cannot threaten Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval to get your demands fulfilled," said Mr. Baigh at a press conference here.

He said Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah understand the people of Jammu and Kashmir and "were not anti-Muslim".

Centre has double standards: Congress

'Indian politicians barred from J&K'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Congress on Thursday accused the Union government of adopting double standards by taking Ambassadors on "guided political tourism" to Jammu and Kashmir, while barring Indian politicians from the Union Territory.

"We don't have a problem with the visit of the envoys, but the government is adopting double standards by allowing the envoys to visit Jammu and Kashmir, but not Indian politicians," Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said at a press conference.

The party's attack came on a day when the Ambassadors from 16 countries, including U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Juster, arrived in Srinagar on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir. It is the first visit by diplomats since last August when the erstwhile State was divested of its special status and bifurcated into Union Territories.

Mr. Ramesh pointed out that former Chief Ministers Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, of the National



Jairam Ramesh

Conference, and Mehbooba Mufti of the PDP, were still in detention. Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha and another former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury had to take the Supreme Court's permission to visit Srinagar, he said.

"We demand that the government allow all politicians unfettered access to Jammu and Kashmir and not resort to guided tours for envoys," he said. "There have been no meaningful political activity in Jammu and Kashmir since August last. We demand that the Centre immediately start a meaningful political pro-

SC rebuffs plea to declare CAA constitutional

Ms. Dhanda said an "anti-India stand has become fashion of many students belonging to these institutions [Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University] which, otherwise, were famous for the achievements of their legendary stu-

She sought strict action by the Ministry of Informaand Broadcasting against newspapers and media houses that were "spreading false information and rumours". She asked the Supreme Court instead to clarify and declare that the CAA was "not against the spirit of Constitution of India and in no sense against any citizen of

The plea may be listed on January 22 along with the 60 anti-CAA petitions filed by parliamentarians, rights groups, NGOs, political parties, activists and citizens from all walks of life

Mamata to skip Opposition meet on CAA

CM upset over 'violence by Left and Congress'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said in the Assembly that she would stay away from the January 13 meeting of the Opposition parties in protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act convened by Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Ms. Banerjee said her decision followed the violence unleashed by the Left and the Congress during the 24hour general strike on Wed-

nesday. The strike affected life and violence was also reported from different parts of the State.

'It is hooliganism'

"I won't attend the meeting convened by Sonia Gandhi as a protest against the Congress-Left hooliganism during Wednesday's strike," she said. She said she would fight against the CAA and the NRC She said she had earlier

agreed to participate in the meeting but had withdrawn after what the CPI(M) and the Congress had done. The decision of the Chief

Minister assumes impor-

At the forefront: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee leading a rally in North 24 Parganas. • PTI gress chairperson had held multiple protests against the

CAA including a march at

Madhyamgram in North 24

Parganas on Thursday.

Leader of the Opposition and Congress MLA Andul

call from the All India Congress Committee asking about the cancellation plan of the Chief Minister. "I got a call from Delhi. I

told them that we wanted to bring a resolution against the CAA in the Assembly which was not allowed," he told presspersons

Leader of the Left Legislature Party Sujan Chakraborty said the success of the strike in Bengal had infuriated the Chief Minister.

"She has not got approval from her bosses in Delhi that is why she is not going for the Opposition meeting," Mr. Chakraborty said, alleging tacit understanding between the Trinamool and the BJP.

Justice Dilip Bhosale quits Lokpal post

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Lokpal member Justice Dilip B. Bhosale (retd.) has resigned from his post citing personal reasons.

"I have tendered my resignation from the post of judicial member, Lokpal on January 6, with effect from January 12, 2020, due to personal reasons," tweeted Justice Bhosale on Thursday.

There is a provision for eight Lokpal members, who are appointed for a term of five years or till 70

T.N., Kerala launch hunt for suspected ultras

the police photographs of the suspects and footage from the surveillance cameras. They also announced a reward for information leading to the capture of the two

Mr. Tripathy visited the Padanthaalumoodu checkpost in the afternoon, "Efforts are on to nab the assailants," he told journalists before leaving to pay his respects to the slain police officer, whose body was buried with police honours around 3.30 p.m.

Police said the assailants were seen entering a mosque near the check-post after the shooting and might have fled in a vehicle parked behind the mosque. A surveillance camera later picked them up at Parassala in Kerala.

Deliberate act

Though it was initially stated that the police officer was shot dead by the occupants of a car when he checked the vehicle, CCTV footage collected from the spot showed that the assailants, who came to the Padanthaalumoodu check-post on foot, entered the check-post around 9.25 p.m. and opened fire at Wilson at

The Kerala Police released point-blank range. The offic er died on the spot.

> "It categorically proves that the assailants had intentionally killed the police officer," an officer privy to the ongoing investigation said.

Meanwhile, the Karnata-

ka police with the help of their Tamil Nadu counterparts, had nabbed a person from Ambasamudram and two others from Tenkasi in connection with a case registered in Bengaluru.

An officer said, "The killing of Wilson is an obvious attempt to send strong signals to the Tamil Nadu Police as few of their accomplices have been nabbed. A team recently police searched the houses of Shameem and Thoufique and grilled their family members to get more information about the duo. So it's an attempt to threaten the police force," the police officer suspected.

Meanwhile, a special team from Kanniyakumari district searched the house of S. Al Kabir, 28, at Vazhukkodai in Tirunelveli around 4 a.m. on Thursday.

"Since Kabir reportedly has links with the trio nabbed by the Karnataka police, we are looking for him," the police said.

India, Sri Lanka hold 'productive' talks

Visiting Minister seeks support for vocational training and capacity building

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

India and Sri Lanka on Thursday discussed the "entire gamut of bilateral ties", during talks between the visiting Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Relations, Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations, Dinesh Gunawardena, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar here on Thurs-

The visit by the Sri Lankan Minister, his first visit abroad after taking charge, comes after the visit by Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in November as "a followup" to his discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

More cooperation "The Sri Lankan Foreign Mi-

nister reiterated the importance laid by President Rajapaksa on exploring newer areas of cooperation with India with emphasis on skill development, vocational training and capacity build-

Ejaz Lakdawala

from the country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

After spending over 20 years

on the run, gangster Ejaz

Lakdawala was arrested by

the Crime Branch of the

Mumbai Police in Patna on

Wednesday. Maharashtra

Home Minister Anil Desh-

mukh lauded the police's ef-

had escaped



Boosting ties: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, right, with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. • PTI

Gangster caught after 20 years on the run

ing and requested India's support," the External Affairs Ministry said, laying emphasis on skilling and opportunities for people-to-pe-

ople ties. Mr. Gunawardena also met Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Mahendra Nath Pandey, and Minister of State for Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar.

However, officials clined to comment on whether the meeting with

the new Sri Lankan Foreign Minister had discussed taking forward some of the commitments made by the previous Sri Lankan government on infrastructure projects in Trincomalee and Colombo as well as the Northern region, or about taking forward the Economic and Technical Cooperation (ETCA) preferential trade agreement talks that have been stalled for several years.

On climate change According to the Ministry,

the ministers also discussed issues of climate change and terrorism.

In a tweet after the meeting Mr. Jaishankar said he had "productive discussions" with his counterpart on "bilateral issues and regional concerns". In response Mr. Gunawardena described the discussions as

On Friday Mr. Gunawardena will visit the Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya.

Modi govt. policies harm economy, says risk firm

Eurasia Group puts out report

SUHASINI HAIDAR NEW DELHI

India has been ranked the fifth highest "geopolitical risk" in 2020, according to a list of 10 global risks in the year ahead, compiled by the Eurasia Group, a leading global political risk management consultancy. It said that in its second term, the Narendra Modi-led NDA government's "social" policies were affecting India's economic agenda and foreign policy image.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spent much of his second term promoting controversial social policies at the expense of an economic agenda. The impacts will be felt in 2020, with intensified communal and sectarian instability, as well as foreign policy and economic setbacks," said the report entitled "Top Risks 2020", co-authored by Ian Bremmer and Cliff Kupchan of the Eurasia Group, pointing to the widening fiscal deficit, low GST collections, and the latest six-year low in

GDP growth. What makes the Eurasia Group listing significant is that this is the first time in many years that India has

been mentioned for social and political developments.

Mr. Bremmer, who is the founder and president of the Eurasia Group, has also in the past been a major supporter of reforms under the Modi government, and praised him in several articles and television appearances since 2014. In June 2019, Mr. Bremmer wrote for Time magazine that Mr. Modi was "India's best bet for economic reform".

Poll shift "It really shifted with the election." Mr. Bremmer told The Hindu, when asked about the shift in his opinion. "[Mr.] Modi's need to win while the economy was softening led him to deprioritise reform and turn to Hindu nationalism and the RSS. Both political strands were always there, but the priorities changed, and that led to the change in our

According to the report, amongst the risks for India in 2020 are "sectarian conflict", anti-CAA protests, and possible violence in Kashmir, which it describes as a "powder keg" after the dilution of Article 370.

view," he added.

Nirbhaya case convict files curative plea

"After the pronouncement of judgment in 2017, there have been as many as 17 cases involving rape and murder in which various threejudge Benches of the Su-Court have preme commuted the sentence of death," the petition

contended. It argued that this "corpus of case law" had caused sentencing jurisprudence. Hence, this would require Sharma's case to be reheard. The court had recently

a "definite change" in the

dismissed a review petition filed by another of the four condemned men, Akshay Singh, to review its May 5, 2017 judgment confirming the death penalty.

forts at a press interaction in Mumbai. Lakdawala, 50, who fled

ween 1998 and 1999, was wanted in a string of cases, including murder, attempt to murder and extortion, registered since 1989. Crime Branch officers said that so far, they had 25 cases registered against him. His daughter Shifa alias Soniya was arrested by the Anti-Extortion Cell on December 28 last in a fake passport case, and has been in police custody.

the country some time bet-

On Wednesday, the Anti-Extortion Cell received information that Lakdawala



would be in Patna and rushed a team there. "A team of the Mumbai police sought our assistance in arresting

someone in the Jakkanpur police station area last night [Wednesday] and the local police helped it arrest Ejaz Lakdawala... After his arrest, the Mumbai police completed the legal formalities, and Lakdawala was handed over to them," Bihar Additional Director-General of Police (Law and Order) Amit Kumar told journalists in Patna. The reason for his return

to the country has evoked curiosity, with the police believing that he could have come down to help his daughter come out of jail.

Name of Patient: Master Mohd Yasin Sheikh, 3 years. Hospital Name: Christian Medical College. Diagnosis: Thalassemia major. This is a type of Blood Disorder which is life threatening. The best option for him would be to undergo Allogeneic Peripheral Blood Stem Cell Transplant (PBSCT). The estimated cost of PBSCT at this hospital is approximately Rs. 14,00,000/r. We request kind hearted Pullanthronists to save him. Kindly.

We request kind hearted Philanthropists to save him. Kindly

APPEAL

send donation by Cheque / D.D / M.O favouring Save Poo Lives and on the back of cheque write A/c Mohd Yasin Sheikh S/B Account No. 20000913487. State Bank of India, Raja Annamalaipuram Branch and IFSC Code: SBIN0001855, which is exempted under 80G of I.T. Act. Contact: SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST, (ADMIN

DIVISION) Flat No. A1, Ceebros Garden, Ground Floor, Old No. 76, Kamarajar Salai Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai-600028, Ph. 044-42044165, Mobile: 9884607377, E-mail: savepoorlives@gmail.com Our website: www.savepoorlives.com DONATION GIVEN TO PATIENTS UPTO MARCH 2019 FOR Rs. 4.26.89.335/- AND SCHOLARSHIP 7.30.800/- NOVEMBER DONATION GIVEN Rs. 4.71.734