



IN BRIEF
DVK lodges complaint against Rajinikanth
COIMBATORE/SALEM
The Dravidar Viduthalai Kazhagam petitioned the Coimbatore City Commissioner of Police seeking action against actor Rajinikanth for remarks he made about social reformer Periyar E.V. Ramasamy. He allegedly said Periyar undertook a rally in Salem in 1971 in which images of an unclothed Lord Ram and consort Sita were displayed.

SC lets Karti withdraw ₹20 crore from registry
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Friday allowed Congress MP Karti Chidambaram to withdraw ₹20 crore, which was deposited with the court registry as a condition for allowing him to travel abroad. The condition was imposed by the top court after the Enforcement Directorate opposed his plea for travel abroad. PTI

Lt. Gen. S.K. Saini to be Vice-Chief of Army Staff
NEW DELHI
Lt. Gen. S.K. Saini, currently the Southern Army Commander, will be the next Vice-Chief of Army Staff. He will assume charge on January 25, defence sources said here on Friday. He is from the 7 Jat Regiment. The post has been vacant since Gen. M.M. Naravane took over as the Chief of Army Staff on December 31.

INTERVIEW | VENKATRAMAN RAMAKRISHNAN

‘Science depends on being able to question authority’

Anything that excludes communities and creates an atmosphere of intolerance is probably not good for science, says Nobel Laureate

DIVYA GANDHI
BENGALURU

Nobel Laureate Venkatraman ‘Venki’ Ramakrishnan, who switched academic tracks to take up biology after a doctorate in physics, emphasises the need for an inclusive atmosphere and questioning of authority if science is to thrive in the country, citing the setback to German science during the Nazi years. He spoke in Bengaluru, where he will deliver a lecture as part of the TNQ Distinguished Lectures in the Life Sciences.

Could an understanding of the structure of the ribosome help in discovering new therapies that target antibiotic-resistant organisms? And has research hit a roadblock in creating a new class of antibiotics against superbugs?

■ There are many ways of targeting bacteria... In fact, about half of the natural antibiotics target the ribosome or general translational machinery. And when the structures came out, it was thought that they would be very useful to study how natural antibiotics bound to the ribosome and inhibited them. But then, that would also allow you to design better antibiotics that might be more effective against resistant bacteria, and possibly have fewer side effects.

I think the problem is that antibiotics are not a huge profit-maker necessarily because it costs about a billion dollars to develop a new medicine. And the problem is a new antibiotic is only given to people to whom old or generic antibiotics don't

work. So, the patient pool is small, and also if it's any good, the patient is cured. It's not like a cholesterol or blood pressure drug that you have to keep taking the rest of your life.

The result is that for the last several decades, there has been no new class of antibiotics developed. So I question whether the business model is correct for developing new antibiotics. And, one has to remember that penicillin, the first of the big natural antibiotics, was actually developed by the British government in response to WW II with a massive effort at Oxford. There's no reason why governments and non-profit organisations should not invest heavily in antibiotic research, and I think they should do it before the problem becomes a huge crisis. We're already seeing superbugs. I think we always have to stay one step ahead of the bacteria, which will evolve to become resistant.

You recently made a strong statement against the Citizenship (Amendment)



■ K MURALI KUMAR

Act. What made it important for you, as a scientist, an Indian-born scientist, to speak out?

■ I don't normally like to make statements about Indian politics; I like to stick to science. My concern about the CAA is – you know, technically it is not targeted at Indian Muslims – but it does send a message that somehow one religion is excluded, while others are okay. And the rationale is that the countries that people are coming from are Muslim countries, so why should them being Muslim actually be an issue?

Well, I think it could be an issue because they are looking at Muslims as a homogeneous group. And they are not a homogeneous group. And so I think, rather than spelling it out that way, they could have decided everything on a case-by-case basis.

History says that when you start becoming less open, and discriminatory, you end up hurting science

And I also think India has a secular Constitution, and it's not clear that having a religious criteria for a particular law is going to hold up in courts.

Science and technology always flourish, I think, in an atmosphere that is inclusive and tolerant.

You have cautioned against the rise of pseudo-science in India. Do you see a rising correlation between a new culture of science, the polity and the shift to majoritarianism?

■ Whenever these people make some outlandish statement, tying some ancient

scripture to some major scientific discovery, whether it's nuclear weapons or stem cells, I don't think scientists in India take them at all seriously. I don't even know if the politicians who make these statements actually believe in it. But I think it's just generally bad to have people in authority make these pseudo-scientific statements because it brings India into ridicule. India then looks to be a sort of backward-looking, superstitious country, when, in fact, the majority of educated Indians and the majority of Indian scientists are very much like scientists anywhere else.

Could laws that exclude communities eventually undermine science?

■ History says that when you start becoming less open, and discriminatory, you end up hurting science; and the classic example, of course, is Nazi Germany, which effectively destroyed German science for probably two or three generations. It took about 50 years to recover. I think science flourishes best when people are free to talk, free to question ideas, free to question authority – because that is how progress is made.

Science really depends on being able to question authority. So, I think anything that excludes communities and creates an atmosphere

Azam Khan's son gets no reprieve from SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to stay an Allahabad High Court decision to annul the election of Samajwadi Party leader Mohammad Azam Khan's son to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly. The High Court had declared Abdullah Azam Khan's election invalid on

the ground that he was underage to fight the 2017 Assembly polls.

However, a Bench headed by CJI Sharad A. Bobde issued notice to the Election Commission and Nawaz Ali Khan, who was the petitioner in the High Court, on an appeal filed by Mr. Abdullah, represented by senior advocate Kapil Sibal.

GSAT-30 gives India a communication boost

The 3,357-kg satellite, launched from Kourou, will replace the ageing INSAT-4A

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The nation's latest communication satellite, GSAT-30, was launched into space from the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou at 2.35 a.m. IST on Friday.

The 3,357-kg satellite will replace INSAT-4A, which was launched in 2005 and marks the first mission of the year for Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The high-power satellite is equipped with 12 normal C band and 12 Ku band transponders.

ISRO quoted Chairman K. Sivan as saying, "GSAT-30 will provide DTH [direct to



Flying high: An Ariane 5 rocket carrying satellites, Eutelsat Konnect and GSAT-30, at Kourou in French Guiana. ■ AFP

home] television services, connectivity to VSATs [that support working of banks] ATMs, stock exchange, tele-

vision uplinking and teleport services, digital satellite news gathering and e-governance applications. The sa-

tellite will also be used for bulk data transfer."

ISRO opted for a foreign launch as the GSAT-30 is much heavier than the 2,000-kg lifting capacity of its geostationary launch vehicle GSLV-MkII.

While the newer and more powerful GSLV-MkIII can lift up to 4,000 kg, the space agency plans to save the two or three upcoming MkIIIs for its first human space flight Gaganyaan of 2022 and two preceding crew-less trials, Dr. Sivan recently said.

The first Indian crew-less test flight is planned for later this year.

Govt. failed in e-mobility mission, says plea in SC

Court seeks response from Centre

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday sought the response of the government on a petition that alleges non-implementation of the National E-Mobility Mission Plan, 2020. The plan, initiated in 2012, had made several recommendations for the adoption of electric vehicles, including electric-powered government fleets and public transportation and subsidies for those who opt for electric and zero emission vehicles.

A Bench led by Chief Jus-

tice Sharad A. Bobde directed that the Union Ministry of Surface Transport and Highways through its Minister Nitin Gadkari be impleaded in the case.

The petition was filed by NGOs Centre for PIL, Common Cause and Sitaram Jindal Foundation, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan. The petition contended that the governmental apathy has violated the fundamental rights of citizens to health and clean environment guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18:00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning at isolated places over Jharkand.

Table with 7 columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN, CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Lists weather data for various Indian cities.

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Table with 7 columns: CITIES, SO, NO, CO, PM2.5, PM10, CODE. Lists air quality data for various Indian cities.

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

NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

Merger plan of RSTV and LSTV in final stages

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The merger of Rajya Sabha Television (RSTV) and Lok Sabha Television (LSTV) is in the final stages, with a six-member committee expected to submit a report by this month-end to Upper House Chairman Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The final decision will be taken by them. There has been an overwhelming demand that the live transmission of the proceedings of the two Houses should not be disrupted.

The committee, constituted on November 7, consists of Prasara Bharati Chairman Surya Prakash, Additional Secretary to the RS Secretariat A. Rao, the Lok Sabha Secretariat's Ganpati Bhatt, Financial Adviser to RSTV Shikha Darbari, and CEOs of RSTV and LSTV Manoj Kumar Pandey and Aashish Joshi respectively. Its mandate was "to work out the modalities and prepare the guidelines for pooling resources, manpower and technology for the merger of the two channels".

Two options

The committee, sources said, was weighing two options. The first was to have a single channel and, during the Parliament sessions, to have a "variant" to broadcast the live debate of both the Houses. The second option, was to continue with the two channels but under an "integrated management" with a common pool of technical and human resources.

An official said, "Parliament is in session for close to 100 days in a year and for the remaining period, we don't really need two channels."

LSTV was launched in 2006 by Speaker Somnath Chatterjee. RSTV followed this launch.

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HIGH COURT OF DELHI : NEW DELHI
(website: www.delhihighcourt.nic.in)
DELHI HIGHER JUDICIAL SERVICE EXAMINATION-2019
CORRIGENDUM
In continuation of this Court's notice published in various newspapers, on the website and elsewhere on 28.12.2019 whereby 19 vacancies [16 existing vacancies and 03 anticipated vacancies] have been advertised for Delhi Higher Judicial Service Examination-2019, it is hereby notified that the category wise bifurcation of 19 vacancies for Delhi Higher Judicial Service Examination - 2019 shall now be read as under:

Table with 4 columns: Category, Break up of vacancies (Fresh, Anticipated), Total No. of Vacancies. Lists vacancy details for the Delhi Higher Judicial Service Examination.

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Applications are invited for the post of Technical Officers on deputation basis in Finance (Inspection-Technical) Department
As per Notification No.1172682/Admn-C2/19/Fin, Dated 02.01.2020, the last date for receiving the application for empanelment of Technical officers on deputation basis in the Finance (Inspection-Technical) Department, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram is extended upto 31.01.2020. The details are published in the official website of (www.finance.kerala.gov.in) Finance Department.