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NEARBY



Arvind Kejriwal to file nomination papers today

NEW DELHI
Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was expected to file his nomination papers for the Assembly elections after a massive roadshow on Monday, will file his papers on Tuesday, which is the last day for filing of nominations. He said that he "did not feel like leaving behind the people at the roadshow".

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Cong. releases second list of seven candidates

NEW DELHI
The All India Congress Committee late on Monday night released its second list of seven candidates for the Delhi Assembly elections. It has nominated first-timer Romesh Sabharwal to fight against AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal from New Delhi. Mr. Sabharwal was the State NSUI president in 1987-88 and has been an executive member of the DPCC since 2004.

CITY ► PAGE 4

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J&K L-G invites investors, says communication curbs will go

Externally sponsored militancy under control, Murmu tells business meet

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Highlighting investment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant-Governor G.C. Murmu said on Monday that communication restrictions, including the Internet ban, were "temporary."

A meeting of business delegates was held here in the run-up to the first-ever three-day Global Investors' Summit to be held in Srinagar and Jammu in April. The summit was scheduled to be held last year, but was postponed.

Mr. Murmu said, "We grab the headlines for militancy and terrorism. These are not the headlines conducive to investment. However, the ground realities are quite different. First, after the abolition of Article 370, the duality in which the people of Jammu and Kashmir existed has vanished..."

"Externally sponsored militancy is well under control. There are a few isolated incidents, which are so rare that they can be classified as crime. Only 10% of the area is affected by militancy and law and order incidents. We are tackling those pockets and will ensure safety and

security in a systematic manner," he said.

Some delegates questioned Mr. Murmu about the communication restrictions impacting trade. Chief Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam responded that more relaxations were on the way.

On August 6, 2019, Parliament revoked the special status of the erstwhile State, which was bifurcated into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The Valley and Jammu regions have been under an Internet clampdown for the past five months.

Mining reserve

K.K. Sharma, Adviser to the Lt. Governor, told *The Hindu* that Jammu and Kashmir had a huge mining reserve that could be exploited for production. "J&K has reserves of limestone and gypsum that we can exploit for production. For that, we are revamping the policy; industrialists from J&K can participate. The land allotment policy will also be revised. The Internet has been suspended for a limited period, it will not be long before it is restored," he said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12



On their toes: Army jawans during an encounter with terrorists in Shopian district of J&K on Monday. •PTI

3 Hizb militants killed in Shopian encounter

'Top leader, police deserter slain'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Security forces killed three Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants in an encounter in south Kashmir's Shopian on Monday.

"Three terrorists were eliminated in a joint operation in Wachi," said a Srinagar-based Army spokesman.

"Weapons and war-like stores were recovered," said the Army. A police deserter and a top-ranking 'commander' were among the three militants killed.

Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh, who termed the operation a major success, supported the idea of setting up deradicalisation centres for youth, who have gone astray.

Mr. Singh said Pakistan and its agencies have stepped up radicalisation in this area recently and "some of our young minds have been affected by it."

(With PTI inputs)

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

Supreme Court declines to stay poll bond scheme

It is being used to fill the coffers of ruling party: petitioners

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde on Monday orally made it clear that if the Supreme Court had found it unnecessary to stay the electoral bonds scheme earlier, it might not stay the scheme even now.

The comments came on a fervent plea by advocates Prashant Bhushan and Shadan Farasat that new facts had come up indicating that the scheme was being frequently opened to allow funds to fill the coffers of the ruling party.

EC, RBI overruled

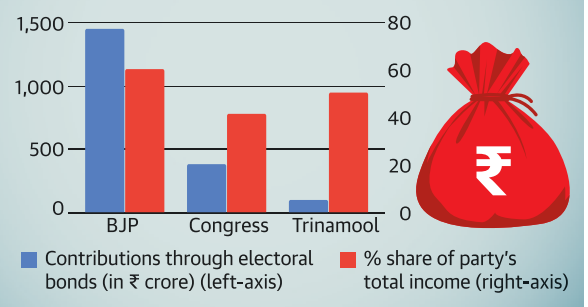
Mr. Bhushan said the scheme would be opened again now, with the Delhi election scheduled on February 8. Instead of opening the scheme exclusively for the Lok Sabha election, as envisaged, it had become a mechanism to funnel *benami* funds to fuel political parties.

Both the Election Commission (EC) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had strongly objected to the scheme and raised the red flag against it.

Mr. Farasat said over ₹6,000 crore had been drawn in through the scheme recently. They

Fund flow

Three national parties received ₹1,931.43 crore in FY19 through the electoral bond scheme, which allows anonymous donations to political parties. The BJP got ₹1,450.89 crore, the highest share among parties



SOURCE: ASSOCIATION FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

sought a stay on the scheme.

On April 12 last, the court passed an interim order directing political parties to provide complete information to the EC in sealed covers on every single donor and contribution received by them till date through electoral bonds. However, it did not stay the operation of the scheme.

"If the matter has been argued for stay and it was not granted, we will also not grant it," the CJI said.

Mr. Bhushan reiterated that the court should consider the scheme with a new eye as many novel and disturbing facts had come to the fore since April 12.

The court initially gave

four weeks to the EC to file a reply to the plea for a stay. However, Mr. Bhushan argued that it would be too late by then as Delhi election was due on February 8. The court then asked the EC to file its reply in a fortnight.

The April 12 interim order was meant to ensure that the balance was not tilted in anybody's favour before the general election in May 2019. The court then ordered political parties to provide the EC with "detailed particulars of the donors as against the each bond; the amount of each such bond and the full particulars of the credit received against each bond."

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

+ 19 convicted in Muzaffarpur shelter home case

Arguments on the quantum of sentence will be heard on January 28

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday convicted key accused Brajesh Thakur and 18 others of sexual and physical assault of girl inmates of a shelter home in Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

Arguments on the quantum of sentence will be heard on January 28.

Additional sessions judge Saurabh Kulshreshtha convicted Thakur of aggravated sexual assault under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, gang rape, rape and other related offences under the Indian Penal Code and the Juvenile Justice Act.

Vicky, one of the accused, has been acquitted.

The court had postponed the verdict and sought a response from the CBI, follow-



A file photo of key accused Brajesh Thakur being taken to a court in Delhi. •PTI

ing allegations by the accused that the testimonies of the victims were not trustworthy.

34 inmates abused

The case pertains to the allegation that at least 34 inmates were sexually assault-

Nirbhaya case: plea dismissed

The SC dismissed the plea of a Nirbhaya gang rape convict against the Delhi HC's rejection of his claim that he was a juvenile at the time of the crime. The court said the plea of juvenility cannot be reargued once successive courts had rejected the claim. ►PAGE 9

ed.

The CBI took over the probe in 2018 following a Supreme Court directive. It recorded statements of the victims and made several arrests.

It was alleged that Thakur would bring in people for

sexually assaulting the inmates. Some of them were also taken to hotels where they were raped.

After the CBI filed a charge sheet, the court framed charges against the accused persons on March 30, 2019.

They were tried for a range of offences, including gang-rape, sexual assault and harassment, cruelty to child under the authority of shelter-home functionaries and Social Welfare department officials, and administering drugs to the victims.

The shelter home was run by NGO 'Sewa Sankalp Evam Vikas Samiti.'

The instances of sexual assault were first made public through a report by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Nadda elected unopposed as BJP president

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister J.P. Nadda was on Monday elected unopposed as the BJP's national president, making him the 11th party chief.

PM Narendra Modi, who was at the party headquarters to felicitate Mr. Nadda, 59, on his election, called him an "outstanding *karyakarta* [party worker]".

Mr. Modi said the event reflected the party's long-time policy of promoting workers vertically while expanding the party horizontally across the country. "That is the reason why generation after generation, we have leaders to take the party forward."

'SPREADING LIES' ► PAGE 12

'JNU CCTVs not damaged in vandalism'

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

Neither biometric systems nor CCTV cameras were broken or destroyed at Jawaharlal Nehru University in the first week of January, according to the response to a Right to Information query, despite the university's claim that vandalism by students damaged these systems.

However, there is no continuous CCTV footage available from JNU's main gate for the afternoon and night of January 5, when students and teachers were attacked on the campus, says the RTI response to a plea filed by Saurav Das, a member of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, on January 9. The reply exposes several discrepancies and ambiguities in the FIRs.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 4

Police file criminal cases against protesters

Most of those named in the FIRs are women, including daughters of Urdu poet

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh police have lodged three criminal cases against the protesters, mostly women, demonstrating against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) at the Clocktower Park in Lucknow since Friday.

The police have named around two dozen persons in the FIRs, while more than 135 are unidentified protesters. Most of those named in the FIRs are women and include Sumaiya Rana and Fauzia Rana, daughters of Urdu poet Munawwar Rana, a Sahitya Akademi Award winner.

No arrests

The SHO of Thakurganj police station, where the FIRs were lodged, confirmed to *The Hindu* that the protesters were booked in three separate cases but no arrests were made yet.



On the ground: Women writing slogans on the floor during a protest at Ghanta Ghar in Lucknow on Monday. •ANI

In one of the FIRs, the Rana sisters and others have been booked under Sections 147, 145, 188 and 283 of the IPC. The charges are unlawful assembly, rioting, disobedience to order and causing anger or obstruction in public way or line of navigation.

The case was lodged for *dhakka mukki* (pushing and

shoving) by the protesters against the police on duty, a police officer said.

The FIR, lodged on the complaint of the women constables on duty, alleged that on January 18, the persons named "pushed and shoved them out" of the site when they had gone there to disperse the crowd. The police said the protest gathering

was held without any permission and violated the prohibitory orders under Section 144 of Cr.Pc.

Ms. Sumaiya Rana condemned the police action and said the government was trying to save its face by booking the protesters.

CM's stand

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday hit out at political parties opposing the CAA, saying they spread negative propaganda to malign the country's image by "pushing women to the front". He did not refer to any incident or event.

At a rally in support of the CAA in Gorakhpur, he urged supporters of the new law "not to remain silent", and asked them to send postcards to Prime Minister Narendra Modi endorsing it.

He alleged that the Opposition was trying to "mislead people" on the CAA.

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