



Pawan Varma is free to leave JD(U) if he so wishes, says Nitish
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Top UN court orders Myanmar to prevent Rohingya genocide
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Thiem and Wawrinka survive scares; Nadal cruises into third round
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NEARBY



'Peaceful protests will deepen democratic roots'

NEW DELHI
Referring to the ongoing agitation against the amended citizenship law and a proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens exercise, former President Pranab Mukherjee on Thursday said that the "peaceful protests" would lead to a deepening of India's democratic roots. He was speaking at the first annual Sukumar Sen Memorial lecture.

CITY ► PAGE 4

644 extremists surrender in Assam

GUWAHATI
A total of 644 extremists from eight banned outfits surrendered at an official function here on Thursday. The event, attended by Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, was part of a series of "mainstreaming" programmes for extremist groups held since 1992.

NEWS ► PAGE 13

Security beefed up in city ahead of Republic Day

NEW DELHI
With intelligence inputs warning of a terror strike and to prevent any disruption by anti-CAA protesters, adequate security measures have been put in place in the city for the Republic Day celebrations here.

CITY ► PAGE 4

FRIDAY REVIEW ► 4 PAGES

Virus-hit Wuhan locked down

Trains and planes indefinitely suspended; travel curbs in neighbouring cities too

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

China on Thursday locked down some 20 million people at the epicentre of the new coronavirus outbreak, banning planes and trains from leaving in an unprecedented move aimed at containing the disease, which has spread to other countries.

The respiratory virus, 2019-nCoV, has claimed 17 lives since emerging from a seafood and animal market in the central city of Wuhan, infected hundreds of other people and been detected as far away as the U.S.

Streets and shopping centres in Wuhan, with a population of 11 million, were eerily quiet after authorities told residents not to leave the city, where most of



On alert: A soldier uses a digital thermometer to check a driver's temperature in Wuhan on Thursday. ■ AP

the cases have been identified. Trains and planes out of Wuhan were indefinitely suspended and tollways on roads out of the city were closed, leading to fear and panic among those trapped. "We are feeling as though it is the end of the world," said a resident on China's Twit-

ter-like Weibo platform, voicing concerns about shortages of food.

Hours later, authorities in the neighbouring city of Huanggang, with a population of 7.5 million, announced that public transport and train services would be suspended at mid-

Indian nurse tests positive

An Indian nurse working at a hospital in Saudi Arabia tested positive for the novel Coronavirus when she and nearly 100 of her Indian colleagues, mostly from Kerala, were screened, the government said. She is being treated at Aseer National Hospital. ► PAGE 9

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CALL FOR HELP ► PAGE 14

India again rejects Trump offer on Kashmir

U.S. President's comments came after a meeting with Pakistan PM Khan at Davos

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Ruling out any role for a "third party" in the Kashmir issue, India rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's comments offering to mediate between India and Pakistan.

The President's latest offer was made at a joint press appearance with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan at the World Economic Fo-

rum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday, repeating a previous offer made in June 2019.

"We have seen President Trump's remarks. Let me once again reiterate that there is no role for any third party in the matter. If at all there are any issues between India and Pakistan to be discussed, it should be done bilaterally," MEA spokesper-

son Raveesh Kumar said, adding that "the onus is on Pakistan to create a conducive atmosphere free from terror and violence".

The Ministry of External Affairs has not yet confirmed a possible visit by Mr. Trump to India on February 24. However, asked in Davos about the planned visit, reported by *The Hindu* last week, Mr. Trump did not deny it, only

replying that as he had just met Mr. Khan, he would not require to visit Pakistan when he comes to India.

"What's going on between Pakistan and India – if we can help, we certainly will be willing to. We have been watching it very closely," Mr. Trump said.

(With PTI inputs)

FATF GOALS ► PAGE 14

In full finery



Getting it right: The BSF camel contingent at the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day parade at Rajpath in New Delhi on Thursday. Several roads were closed for the rehearsal, leading to traffic snarls in the city. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR (REPORT ON PAGE 9)

The condemned can't fight endlessly, says CJI

'A judge can only ensure punishment is proportionate'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

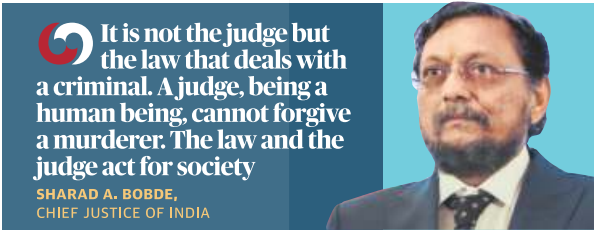
Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde on Thursday said a condemned person cannot fight the death penalty endlessly and it was important for the capital punishment to reach its finality.

The death penalty, he noted, cannot be questioned at every turn by the convict. "One cannot go on fighting endlessly for everything."

Cardinal duty

The CJI said it was not for a judge to forgive a crime. The cardinal duty of a judge was to see if the punishment was proportionate to the crime. The law applied whether the criminal was a first-timer or a hardened one.

"Courts punish crime. If you go by the innocence of a human being, the worst criminal would have an innocent heart. There is nobody who is a criminal at the depth of their heart... It is not the judge but the law that deals with a criminal. A



judge, being a human being, cannot forgive a murderer. The law and the judge act for society. Imagine a situation when a judge tells a murderer 'Yes, I forgive you!'. Imagine the impact!" the CJI observed.

He asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta whether a condemned person, who reforms after the award of the death sentence, should be spared the noose. Mr. Mehta replied, "If that is accepted, there will be no death penalty. You can't kill your parents and then claim mercy saying you are an orphan."

The oral remarks came a day after the Centre filed an application, in the background of the Nirbhaya case, to modify a 2014 judgment

of the court in the Shatrughan Chauhan case.

2014 guidelines

The 2014 verdict had issued guidelines, which primarily held that an unexplained delay in carrying out an execution would lead to commutation of the death penalty to life imprisonment.

In its application, the government asked the court to set short deadlines for death row convicts to seek legal remedies. It wanted the court to limit the time for filing curative petitions. A mercy plea should be filed within a week of issuance of the death warrant.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12
NEEDLESS IMPATIENCE
► EDITORIAL

Rajasthan govt. to introduce resolution against CAA

It is likely to be tabled and passed in the Assembly on Saturday; Congress issues whip

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Slamming the Centre over the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot on Thursday said the State government would introduce a resolution against the implementation of CAA in the Assembly session beginning on Friday. The ruling Congress has issued a whip asking its MLAs to attend the session on the first two days.

The session will com-

mence with the customary address of Governor Kalraj Mishra. The resolution is likely to be tabled and passed in the House on the second day of the session, which will be extended after a gap for presentation of the State budget next month.

The Kerala and Punjab Assemblies have passed similar resolutions to build pressure on the Union government over the contentious citizenship law while the ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal is planning to introduce a

resolution on January 27.

Mr. Pilot, who is also the Pradesh Congress Committee president, said the State Assembly would request the Union government to reconsider the statute and withdraw it at the earliest. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot had earlier asserted that the CAA will not be implemented in Rajasthan.

Rahul rally

The Deputy CM reviewed the preparations for Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Yuva

Aakrosh Rally' in Jaipur on January 28 at a meeting held at the PCC headquarters here. He said Mr. Gandhi would raise the "real issues" concerning the people and focus on the fear and unrest among the youths, who were facing unemployment as well as challenges of economic recession.

"The BJP government at the Centre should listen to the people protesting against the CAA across the country. There is no dialogue with them... They are being at-

tacked and called anti-nationalists," Mr. Pilot said, adding that the peaceful protest was a constitutional right of citizens.

Mr. Gandhi's rally, to be held at the iconic Albert Hall where anti-CAA demonstrations are being staged every day, will be attended by Congress workers, youths and students.

This will be the first in a series of rallies of the Congress leader to be organised in different cities across the country.

India slips two places on corruption index

Opaque political financing blamed

Status check

The Corruption Perceptions Index uses a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). The global average for 2019 is 43

Country	Score in 2019	Rank in 2019	Change in rank from '18
Denmark	87	1	0
New Zealand	87	1	1
U.K.	77	12	-1
U.S.	69	23	-1
India	41	80	-2
China	41	80	7
Brazil	35	106	-1
Pakistan	32	120	-3
Russia	28	137	1
Bangladesh	26	146	3
Somalia	9	180	0

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019) has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the previous year, Transparency International said on Thursday, questioning the "unfair and opaque political financing" in the country. Its score of 41 out of 100 remains the same.

In democracies such as India and Australia, unfair and opaque political financing, undue influence in decision-making and lobbying by powerful corporate inter-

est groups have resulted in stagnation or a decline in the control of corruption.

The report has revealed that a majority of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption. "Our analysis also shows corruption is more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments listen only to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals," Transparency International said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

‘Decide if you want a govt. which works or one which only protests’

Amit Shah addresses rallies, promises to make Delhi ‘the best capital in the world’

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday accused the Congress, AAP and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of violating the atmosphere of the Capital by “inciting the youth and minorities” to run riot.

“The campaign for Delhi elections begins today, it begins now. It is for you to decide whether you want a government which works for five years or one which only does *dharna pradarshan* [sit-in protests]...there are as many as 112 Central government schemes which the Kejriwal government is stopping you from getting the benefits of,” Mr. Shah said at his first public meeting in Matiala Assembly constituency, adding: “We will make Delhi the best capital in the world... For 15 years, you gave the Congress a chance and five years ago, the people reposed faith in Kejriwal’s party, but they [AAP] forgot their promises.”

At public meetings in west Delhi’s Matiala and Nangloi Jat Assembly constituencies, with a roadshow through the Uttam Nagar constituency in between, Mr. Shah also alleged that former Congress



Home Minister Amit Shah addressing a public rally in New Delhi on Thursday. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

president Rahul Gandhi, Mr. Kejriwal and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan “spoke the same language” and questioned their association behind the scenes, in addition to raking up the issues related to the amended citizenship Act, the Ram Mandir, Article 370 and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

“Just today, [Deputy CM] Manish Sisodia said he is with the people of Shaheen Bagh. If they come to power, will Delhi be safe? Do those who want a riot to occur have the right to be in power? I have been observing that Rahul Gandhi and Kejriwal says the same thing that Imran Khan says... I want to ask them

the back of the Anna [Hazare] movement but after coming to power, did nothing in this connection. Prime Minister Narendra Modi got the Bill on Lokpal passed in Parliament,” he alleged.

“Kejriwal had said Modiji does not allow him to work and now he is saying that ‘*paanch saal khoob kiya kaam, lage raho Kejriwal*’. I say *Dilli ka peecha chhod do Kejriwal*,” he added.

Mr. Keriwal has not won any election in the last five years, including the corporation and Lok Sabha elections, he said.

The Chief Minister and the Congress “never wanted a Ram Mandir” but the BJP and Modiji have “made it possible” and would ensure that, over the next four months, a “towering Ram Mandir” is built.

“Should people who raise slogans asking for the disintegration of India be allowed to roam free? Should refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh not be given Indian citizenship? When we spoke about doing so, people like Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi tried to put stumbling block in our way,” he alleged.

Will focus on building more schools: Atishi

Kejriwal takes out roadshows in Kalkaji, Tughlakabad, Matia Mahal, Uttam Nagar, Vikas Puri

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Amid drumbeats and speakers playing “*Lage Raho Kejriwal*”, Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal and the party’s Kalkaji candidate Atishi took out a roadshow in the constituency on Thursday.

Thousands of supporters welcomed the leaders by showering rose petals on them. The roadshow, which started from Gurdwara Baba Banda Singh Bahadur in Kalkaji at 5.45 p.m., ended an hour later at C. Lal Chowk. Mr. Kejriwal and Ms. Atishi waved at their supporters from their open jeep but none of them gave speeches.

Before the roadshow, when asked about what are the issues she is focusing on, Ms. Atishi told *The Hindu*, “I will focus on traffic, providing basic facilities in slums and building more schools.”

‘Solutions for all’

After the roadshow, when she addressed the media, she said: “Kalkaji is a mini Delhi. There are rich people here and also people who live in kachhi colony and jhuggis. Our party’s speciality is that it works for people from all sections – for instance, we take care of



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and party leader Atishi at a roadshow in Kalkaji. ■BIBEK CHETTRI



traffic issues near posh colonies or solve problems of water and sewer in kachhi colonies and jhuggis,” she said, adding that response from the people has been “extremely positive”.

Many people said they will vote for Mr. Kejriwal even though they did not know the local candidate. Talking about the roadshow, they said it was the first major election rally in the area.

Mukesh Yadav (45), chips and cigarette seller in C. Lal Chowk, is originally from

UP and has been a Delhi resident for past 20 years. He claimed that while schools in the city have become better, the work done by the sitting MLA from the constituency – Avtar Singh – has not been enough

Delhiites on schools

“My daughter studies in Class XI in a government school in Nehru place. The teachers are better now,” he said, adding that the school has improved in many ways more than one.

However, Mr. Yadav, who had voted for AAP in the 2015 Assembly election, said the party had promised to make their shops permanent but it is yet to happen.

Two women – Asha (43)

Our party’s speciality is that it works for people from all sections – for instance, we take care of traffic issues near posh colonies or solve problems of water and sewer in kachhi colonies and jhuggis

ATISHI
AAP senior leader

and Suman Joshi (51) – who were out to buy vegetables at that time said things are almost the same but their electricity and water bills are less.

“The government hospitals have improved by 50%...they are cleaner and also have more medicines. But more work is needed,” said Ms. Asha from Govindpuri.

Mr. Kejriwal, who the party said will cover 60 constituencies through roadshows, held a rally in Tughlakabad in the evening and in Matia Mahal, Uttam Nagar and Vikas Puri in the morning. He will also hold eight town hall sessions.

Delhi Assembly polls is scheduled for February 8 and the counting of votes will take place on February 11.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	212	Gurgaon	190
Ghaziabad	235	Faridabad	202
Noida	224	Greater Noida	214

Good 0-50 Satisfactory 51-100 Moderate 101-200 Poor 201-300 Very poor 301-400 Severe >401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB



Temporary tea stall outside AAP headquarters in New Delhi. ■V.V. KRISHNAN

Safai Sena to hold meetings in slums, invite party leaders

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Safai Sena, an association of waste pickers, small scrap dealers and reprocessors, will be holding “town halls” in slums, inviting representatives of political parties to present their views and listen to issues, for a week starting Friday.

Discuss problems

The meetings will discuss the problems of air pollution affecting the residents of the city and especially the poor, said the head of NGO Chintan, which works with waste pickers, Chitra Mukherjee.

More than 200 slum dwellers from different parts of Delhi will put their problems in front of the representatives, she added.

The meetings have been planned in the constituencies of Badli, Jangpura, Matiala Mahal, Kondli, Delhi Cantonment, Brijwasan, R. K. Puram and New Delhi.

AAP members launch ‘Kaam ki Chai’ campaign

Tea stalls to be set up in all constituencies

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday launched “Kaam ki Chai” campaign under which varieties of tea named after achievements of the party like “vikas wali chai”, “swasthya wali chai” and more will be sold from stalls set up in all Assembly constituencies.

Praful Billor from Ahmedabad, who runs a temporary tea stall outside AAP headquarters here, is known as “MBA Chaiwala”, the party said. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh launched “MBA Chaiwala Stall” on Thursday afternoon.

“Praful has named the tea varieties after the development projects undertaken by AAP...the first one goes by the name ‘Education Tea’ or *Shiksha Wali Chai* that showcases educational facilities like the sports university and Mega PTMs. He named a chai ‘Health Tea’ or *Swas-*

3 BJP MLAs, 2 Cong. candidates report hike in movable assets






Adarsh Sharma, Vijender Gupta and Jagdish Pradhan declare decrease in immovable assets

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A comparison of 2015 and 2020 affidavits of three BJP MLAs and two ex-AAP MLAs – who are now contesting on Congress tickets in the Delhi Assembly polls – shows that all of them saw increase in movable assets.

Movable assets of former AAP MLA Alka Lamba, who is contesting on a Congress ticket from the Chandni Chowk constituency, has increased from ₹18 lakh reported in 2015 to ₹41 lakh in 2020. She has reported an increase in immovable assets from ₹1.2 crore to ₹2.8 crore in her latest affidavit.

Former AAP MLA Adarsh Sharma contesting on Congress ticket from Dwarka reported a small hike in movable assets – from ₹1.13 crore to ₹1.59 crore. However, his immovable assets have decreased from ₹1.12 crore to ₹75 lakh.

WORTHIES' WORTH Affidavit details of prominent leaders ahead of Delhi Assembly elections					
	CONSTITUENCY	ASSETS		VEHICLES	CASES
 Alka Lamba (Congress)	2015 Chandni Chowk	2015 Movable assets: ₹18 lakh	2020 Movable assets: ₹41 lakh	2015 Hundai Getz	2015 0
	2020 Chandni Chowk	Immovable assets: ₹1.21 cr. ↑	Immovable assets: ₹2.8 cr. ↑	2020 Hundai Getz, Honda Scooter	2020 0
 Adarsh Shastri (Congress)	2015 Dwarka	2015 Movable assets: ₹1.13 cr. ↑	2020 Movable assets: ₹1.59 cr. ↑	2015 Elantra, Superb, Polo	2015 0
	2020 Dwarka	Immovable assets: ₹1.12 cr. ↑	Immovable assets: ₹75 lakh	2020 Maruti Baleno	2020 0
 Vijender Gupta (BJP)	2015 Rohini	2015 Movable assets: ₹82.5 lakh	2020 Movable assets: ₹1.5 cr. ↑	2015 Toyota Innova	2015 ●●2
	2020 Rohini	Immovable assets: ₹2.79 cr. ↑	Immovable assets: ₹1.48 cr. ↑	2020 Toyota Innova	2020 ●●2 CASE DETAILS: ■ Two cases of criminal defamation
 Om Prakash Sharma (BJP)	2015 Vishwas Nagar	2015 Moveable assets: ₹3.7 cr. ↑	2020 Moveable assets: ₹6.8 cr. ↑	2015 -	2015 0
	2020 Vishwas Nagar	Immovable assets: ₹6.7 cr. ↑	Immovable assets: ₹7.2 cr. ↑	2020 Corolla Altis, Toyota Innova	2020 ●●2 CASE DETAILS: ■ Alleged intimidation near Patiala House Courts ■ Alleged obstruction of public servant in carrying out sealing action
 Jagdish Pradhan (BJP)	2015 Mustafabad	2015 Moveable assets: ₹31 lakh	2020 Moveable assets: ₹65.99 lakh	2015 Skoda Octavia	2015 0
	2020 Mustafabad	Immovable assets: ₹13.3 cr. ↑	Immovable assets: ₹10.95 cr. ↑	2020 Innova Crysta 2015, Innova Crysta 2017	2020 0

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION

BJP candidate from Vishwas Nagar Om Prakash Sharma’s reported a jump of ₹3.1 crore in his movable assets – from ₹3.7 crore to ₹6.8 crore.

Mr. Sharma reported an increase in immovable assets

from ₹6.7 crore to ₹7.2 crore. His present affidavit shows two cars.

His wife Geeta Sharma’s moveable assets increased from ₹1.6 crore to ₹2.7 crore. However, Ms. Sharma re-

ported a drop in immovable assets from ₹7.36 crore to ₹4.75 crore.

BJP MP from Mustafabad Jagdish Pradhan reported a hike in moveable assets from ₹31 lakh to ₹65.99 lakh. His

wife also reported an increase in movable assets from ₹4.85 lakh to ₹6.6 lakh. Mr. Pradhan, however, reported a decrease in immovable assets from ₹13.3 crore to ₹10.95 crore.

The road less travelled



Security personnel stand beside a two-seater aircraft used by the NCC, which made an emergency landing on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway following engine failure, in Ghaziabad on Thursday. ■PTI

Green Bench seeks report on petition alleging groundwater contamination

Haryana pollution board told to file report within a month

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) to furnish a report on a plea which alleged that waste water being discharged had damaged crops and contaminated groundwater.

Taking note of a November 2019 report furnished by the pollution control board, a Bench headed by NGT chief Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, “Let further action be taken in terms of the recommendations and compliance report filed by the Board within one month.”

In its report, the HSPCB had said, “Sewage treatment plant [STP] at Barwa-



la, Haryana, is not complying with the prescribed norms of the HSPCB. The agricultural field of complainant is flooded with discharge of STP water. The STP is installed in a low-lying area and there is no drainage arrangement for the disposal of treated water.”

The Tribunal was hear-

ing a plea moved by Sukhwanti who alleged that the discharged waste water had damaged crops, contaminated groundwater, led to the death of livestock and affected soil fertility.

‘Drainage network’

In a slew of recommendations, the report had suggested “Public Health Engineering Department [PHED] to improve operation and maintenance of STP and make arrangements for laying suitable drainage network for disposal of treated effluents” and “environmental compensation to be levied by HSPCB on PHED for period of non-compliance of Barwala STP as per approved guidelines”.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Nobel Laureate and President of The Royal Society Dr Venki Ramakrishnan will deliver a lecture on “My Adventures in the Ribosome” at Jawaharlal Auditorium, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Campus, 4-30 p.m.

Dance: India International Rural Cultural Centre (IRCCN) presents a Hindustani vocal recital by Amrita Dutta at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Rajouri Garden Extn., 9 a.m. and Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, No.1, Subhash Nagar, 11 a.m.

Exhibition: A solo photography show by Sandeep Gupta at Delhi ‘o’ Delhi Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: “Confluence: Celebrating India Bangladesh Printmaking”, a group show by various artists from India & Bangladesh at Shridharani Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Exhibition: “Mitti Da Bawa”, rare drawings and paintings of the late artist Manjit Bawa, organised by Bobby and Varsha Bedi at Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

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

Haryana rights body seeks report on govt. hospitals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

Taking suo motu cognisance of a newspaper report on the plight of patients and their attendants in government hospitals in several districts in the State, the Haryana Human Rights Commission has sought a report from the Direction General, Health Services and Director, ESI, within four weeks.

In its two-page order, the commission said the poor patients were being deprived of basic health facilities due to the apathy of doctors towards the patients as said in the newspaper report and it was a “violation of human rights”. Referring to the newspaper report, the commission said the attendants of the patients were also suffering because there was no space for them for temporary stay and in the chilling winter night they were compelled to stay in open “which is again a violation of human rights”.

A team of correspondents of a Hindi daily had visited several hospitals on December 25 last year following complaints.

Four arrested with illegal weapons

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

Four persons were arrested by the Haryana Police in Hisar for allegedly being in possession of illegal weapons. The police claimed to have recovered six pistols, 12 magazines and three cartridges. A compact SUV has also been impounded.

Giving this information on Thursday, a spokesperson of Haryana Police said that the accused were identified as Sandeep, a resident of Matloda; Nishan of Kharia; Amardass of Daulatpur and Ajay alias Bagri of Bhaini Badshahpur.

He said that a team of Anti-Vehicle Theft staff, who was on routine patrolling near bus stop, Matlauda, had got a tip-off that some armed miscreants were roaming outside Bhanbhori village. Working on the input, the police team conducted a raid and arrested all the four accused. When searched, five .32 bore pistols, one .30 bore pistol, 12 magazines and three live cartridges were recovered from their possession.

Cases under the provisions of Arms Act had been filed against them. Further investigation is under way.

Report sought on plea seeking ban on nylon kites

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT), following a plea seeking a ban on the use of kites made of non-biodegradable material, has directed the CPCB to furnish an updated report on the compliance of previous orders of the Tribunal after obtaining facts from all States and UTs.

An NGT Bench said, “In view of the allegations, we consider it necessary to require CPCB to ascertain the status of compliance of the [previous] directions from all States and Union Territories and furnish a consolidated report to this Tribunal within three months.”

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by Khalid Ashraf who sought enforcement of a previous order passed by the Tribunal. In 2017, NGT had prohibited the use of thread made of nylon and synthetic material for kite-flying.

Eight injured as school bus collides with cluster bus

Students, attendant sustain injuries; driver of cluster bus held

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A school bus collided with a cluster bus in west Delhi’s Naraina, leaving seven students and a woman attendant injured, said a police officer on Thursday morning.

They suffered minor injuries on their hands, legs and face and all of them were discharged after treatment, the officer added.

According to the Fire Department, they received a call at 7.10 a.m. regarding an accident near Sagar Ratna signal.

“On reaching the spot, it was found that a cluster bus had hit a school bus of Salwan Public School, Rajinder Nagar. Twenty seven children on board were rushed to two nearby hospitals and they were discharged after treatment, he said.

Based on statement by the witness, a case was registered under Sections 279 (rash driving) and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Indian Penal Code, he added.

The driver of the cluster bus, Parbhat Malik, has been



The school bus that met with an accident in the city on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

arrested and further investigation is under way, the police said.

The mother of a Class VI student, who did not wished to be named, said: “My son was sitting near the window seat when he saw the cluster bus speeding and all of a sudden it hit the bus. The bus toppled and crashed near the footpath. Children were afraid and started crying. Police personnel and firemen pulled them out. My son got stitches on head, but he is doing fine now.”

She added that there was only a bus conductor and a woman attendant in the school bus besides the

driver.

Reeta Singh, (29), who has been employed as a marshal in the cluster bus for last three months said their vehicle started from Shivaji Stadium for Madhu Vihar and the accident occurred at around 7 a.m.

“Usually, I sit in the last row of the bus. But on the day of accident, I sat in the front seat meant for the staff. There were hardly four-five passengers in the bus. The accident occurred near the signal when the bus was coming down the flyover. It all happened suddenly. The impact was such that the school bus turned sideways. I fell down from my seat. One of the woman passengers in the bus started shouting. I calmed her down and went to check the school children. They were injured and were accompanied by a woman. I called up the ambulance and informed the police,” said Ms. Singh.

Four students were treated at Kapoor hospital while others were rushed to Mehta Hospital from where they were discharged after administering first aid.

‘Submit status report in AirAsia case’

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to submit a status report of its investigation in a money laundering case lodged against some officials of AirAsia India whose flying licence has been challenged by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy.

Mr. Swamy, in his petition, has challenged the airline’s flying licence and Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance granted to AirAsia.

The High Court directed the agency to submit the status report in a sealed cover before the next date of hearing on May 14.

3 held from M.P.

“It was found that Sonu and Suresh – friends of Ajay – helped him in the murder. Police conducted raids, but all of them were absconding. After getting a tip-off about their location, a police team was sent to Satna district in Madhya Pradesh. All of them were held with the help of local police and brought to Delhi,” said Ms. Arya.

Ajay conspired to kill Satyanarayan, the officer said. On January 4, Ajay consumed liquor with him and then killed him with the help of his friends, the DCP said.

“We have arrested all the accused, including the victim’s wife, under charges of murder,” added the DCP.

Report questions process of recruiting judges

‘Candidates being selected to the post unlikely to have significant life experiences’

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH NEW DELHI

The abolition of three years of mandatory experience as a practicing lawyer before one could apply and become a District Court judge has led to selection of candidates who are “unlikely to have significant life experiences”, a report by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy said.

This, the report said, has brought down the average age of new judges in India to about 26-27, except in Kerala where the average age is 33.

“Not only are such candidates likely to have little to no experience at the bar, they are also unlikely to have significant life experiences having lived a sheltered experience with their parents or on a university campus,” the report said.

The issue becomes significant as these judges not only deal with the largest num-

The average age of new judges in India has been brought down to about 26-27, except in Kerala where the average age is 33

REPORT BY VIDHI CENTRE FOR LEGAL POLICY

ber of cases in the country, but also are the first point of contact for the millions of Indians seeking justice before the courts.

The Supreme Court had in 2002 done away with the minimum experience requirement for becoming a judge on the pretext that it could be compensated through rigorous training at the judicial academies. The Law Commission too had noted in favour of abolishing the requirement.

However, it appear that the Law Commission and the Supreme Court overesti-

mated the ability of the Indian State to impart such skills to young inexperienced advocates through a structured training system, the Vidhi report said.

The report, titled ‘Schooling the Judges – The Selection and Training of Civil Judges and Judicial Magistrates’, has attempted to address this issue by studying two critical aspects – the process of recruiting judges to the district judiciary and their training at the State judicial academies.

‘Worrying problem’

“The most worrying problem with the judicial service examinations conducted in India, according to academics working in this area, is that most judicial service examinations are designed to test candidates on their ability to memorise the law instead of testing

their ability to reason and apply the law,” the report stated.

Every High Court now has at least one State judicial academy under its jurisdiction for the purpose of providing induction training to entry-level judges as well as refresher training to sitting judges.

However, providing meaningful induction training to new trainees has proved to be a challenge, the report said, adding that many of the State judicial academies lack the faculty required to deliver a structured induction training programme for new judges.

“In our opinion, if the State judicial academies are to mature into respectable institutions of learning, it is necessary for them to develop independent of the High Courts,” the report suggested.

Court allows bank to recover house loan dues

NIRNIMESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has allowed a public sector bank to recover ₹7.57 lakh from two house loan defaulters and the Amrapali Leisure Valley Pvt. Ltd. from whom the two had bought an under construction flat in Greater Noida in 2013.

According to the loan agreement between the bank, the buyers and the seller, the builder had agreed to return with interest all the loan amount received by him from the purchaser to the bank in the event of the borrower and/or builder/land owner failing to complete the sub-lease/sale transaction and registration thereof.

The flat buyers had taken a loan of ₹25.45 lakh from the

bank. After repaying about three-fourth of the loan amount, they defaulted on the remaining amount of ₹7.57 lakh. Despite issuance of demand notices and reminders thereafter, the three defendants failed to honour the loan agreement. Thereafter, the bank approached the court with a recovery suit.

The court decided the matter ex-parte as the defendants failed to appear before it despite the publication of the summons to them in a newspaper. “It is held that the defendants are individually and severely liable to pay to the plaintiff bank a sum of ₹7,57,913, along with accrued interest for the period ending April 4, 2018,” District Judge Sanjay Sharma-1 said.

Don’t compel accused to unlock phone, says court

Bribery case against official, businessman

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked the CBI not to compel a businessman and a senior Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) official, arrested by the agency in connection with a bribery case, to unlock the phones allegedly seized from them at the time of arrest.

The High Court’s direction came on the pleas by the duo challenging legality of a trial court order asking them to provide passwords of the seized phones or unlock them.

Petitioners Chander Shekhar, a senior DRI official, and businessman Ra-

jesh Dhanda, through their counsel told the High Court that the direction to unlock the phones or provide the passwords was a violation of their right against self-incrimination.

The lawyer for the CBI said the phones were seized from the accused at the time of their arrest.

The trial court’s January 22 order had come on CBI’s application seeking directions to the accused to unlock their phones seized at the time of arrest.

Dhanda was arrested on January 1 by the CBI along with Shekhar, then DRI Additional Director General (ADG) of Ludhiana in connection with the case.

Peaceful protests will deepen democratic roots, says Pranab

Former President says people's faith in the Constitution is heartening to see

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Referring to the ongoing agitation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and a proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise, former President Pranab Mukherjee on Thursday said that the “peaceful protests” would lead to a deepening of India’s democratic roots.

Mr. Mukherjee was speaking at the first annual Sukumar Sen Memorial lecture organised by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in memory of the first Chief Election Commissioner of In-



Pranab Mukherjee

dia. “Indian democracy has been tested time and again. The last few months have witnessed people come out on the streets in large numbers, particularly the young to voice out their views on is-

sues which, in their opinion, are important. Their assertion and belief in the Constitution of India is particularly heartening to see. Consensus is the lifeblood of democracy. Democracy thrives on listening, deliberating, discussing, arguing and even dissent,” he said.

He added: “I believe the present wave of largely peaceful protests that have gripped the country shall once again enable the further deepening of our democratic roots.”

Complimenting the ECI on its achievements, Mr. Mukherjee said challenges re-

mained before the electoral system.

He said the ECI embargoes sanctioning and implementation of development projects during elections, which impacts administration.

He also suggested that the Model Code of Conduct could be amended to ease the restrictions.

On the number of Parliamentary seats, he said that if the freeze on the number was lifted, it could go up to 1,000 Lok Sabha seats. On the issue of women’s representation, he called for the “immediate passage of the Women’s Reservation Bill”.

Police, security officers on their toes ahead of R-Day

Security stepped up in the Capital as intelligence inputs warn of terror strike

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

With intelligence inputs warning of a terror strike and to prevent any disruption by anti-CAA protesters, adequate security measures have been put in place in the national capital for the Republic Day celebrations here.

A police officer said that they have given clear instructions to security personnel to be vigilant, adding that no person with placards will be allowed in New Delhi on January 26. “Visitors entering the enclosures to watch the Republic Day parade will have to undergo strict security check. As per instructions, visitors will have to open their jackets for the security officers to check if they are wearing any black outfit and



Security officers at Rajpath in New Delhi.

■ FILE PHOTO

ensure that they are not wearing anything with anti-CAA slogans on them,” said the officer. Policemen in plain clothes will be deployed to stop protesters from entering the enclosures, he said.

The intelligence wing is al-

so keeping a watch on protests going on in the city. Around 40,000 security personnel have been deployed across the Capital.

Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik had held a meeting with all district DCPs and other senior officers after the Republic Day rehearsal parade here. He had asked all police officers to increase foot patrolling in their respective districts.

The multilayer security arrangements include deployment of traffic officials, mobile hit teams, anti-aircraft guns, sharpshooters and snipers atop high-rise buildings to keep a watch on the 8-km-long parade route from Rajpath to Red Fort.

Police personnel have been directed to stay utmost

alert with the Delhi Assembly Elections scheduled for February 8. Anti-terror measures like tenant and servant verification, border checking, security of vital installations, malls and markets, patrolling in areas with heavy footfall are being carried out.

“We have intensified patrolling in public places. Group patrolling, night patrolling and vehicle checking is being carried out with the help of Central Armed Police Forces. Frisking at metro stations, railway stations, airport and bus terminals have also been tightened,” a senior police official said. At least 150 CCTV cameras have been installed in the areas covering Red Fort, Chandni Chowk and Yamuna Khadar, the officer added.

Everyone has a right to protest: Chief Minister

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday, while talking to a TV news channel referring to protests in Shaheen Bagh, said that everyone has the right to protest, but if it is creating any inconvenience, then it is not right.








“Everyone has the right to protest peacefully on any issue, under Article 19 of the Constitution, but it should not create any problem to others,” he said.

Speaking about the protests in Shaheen Bagh, Mr. Kejriwal said, “I have not gone there, so I do not know the details... My going there will not end the NRC and the CAA. Only the Centre can put an end to it,” the Chief Minister said.

‘Irrelevant’

He added that the CAA and the NRC were not going to “take the country forward” and termed it as “irrelevant”. Mr. Kejriwal said that instead of the NRC and the CAA, the central government should focus on the economy of the country.

He further said that the BJP did not have the courage to talk about unemployment in India. “The decision regarding the amended Citizenship Act and the NRC has been taken only to divide the people of the country. But the citizens of India will not let this happen.”

 Timings DELHI		
FRIDAY, JAN. 24		
 RISE	07:14	SET 17:54
 RISE	06:47	SET 17:24
SATURDAY, JAN. 25		
 RISE	07:13	SET 17:55
 RISE	07:34	SET 18:20
SUNDAY, JAN. 26		
 RISE	07:13	SET 17:55
 RISE	08:15	SET 19:16

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	20	09
Safdarjang	20	09
Palam	20	07

Delhi Palam Today
20°C Haze is likely to prevail during the morning hours. Day will be windy with a mostly sunny sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
21°C Dry weather will prevail. Haze will prevail during the morning hours. A mainly clear sky lies ahead.

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THE HINDU
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Balyan floats 'solution' for Jamia, JNU protests

Give 10% reservation to the students of western Uttar Pradesh: Union Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Union Minister Sanjeev Balyan believes a 10% reservation to the students of western Uttar Pradesh could be an effective way to deal with student protests in Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Addressing a rally in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 in Meerut on Wednesday with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the Union Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy, and Fisheries said he would

After tussle with Home Minister, Khattar finally gets CID portfolio

CM is supreme and he can take away or divide any department, says Vij

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Amid the ongoing controversy between the Chief Minister's Office and State Home Minister Anil Vij over who controls the Criminal Investigation Department, the State government has handed over its charge to Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

Late-night move

In a late night development on Wednesday, the Haryana government issued orders allocating the CID, among other departments, to the Chief Minister. Home Minister Anil Vij will now cease to hold the portfolio.

Reacting to the decision on Thursday, Mr. Vij said he had always maintained that the Chief Minister was supreme and he (Chief Minister) can take away or divide any department.



CM Manohar Lal Khattar



Home Minister Anil Vij

An official statement on Wednesday said that the Governor of Haryana, on the advice of the Chief Minister, has allocated some new portfolios to the Chief Minister and to two Ministers.

"As per a notification issued by the Chief Secretary, the portfolios of the Criminal Investigation Department, and the departments

of Personnel and Training and of Raj Bhavan Affairs have been allocated to Chief Minister Manohar Lal in addition to his existing portfolios, with immediate effect," the statement said.

Other portfolios

Apart from this, the portfolio of elections has been allocated to Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma

while the portfolio of Art and Cultural Affairs, hitherto allocated to the Transport Minister, has now been allocated to Education Minister Kanwar Pal, in addition to their existing portfolios.

"Thus, Home Minister Anil Vij will cease to hold the portfolio of Criminal Investigation Department and Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma will cease to hold the portfolio of Art and Cultural Affairs," said the statement.

Unhappy with CID

Notably, Mr. Vij had pointed fingers over the functioning of the CID and had sought an explanation from a senior officer for not responding to his queries.

He had also sought replacement of State CID chief Anil Rao, who is an ADGP-rank officer.

Journalist detained, released in Aligarh

He was covering anti-CAA protests

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

The Aligarh police on Thursday detained a young video journalist who was covering the protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in the Shahjamaal area of the city. Shaheen Abdullah is a student of mass communication at Jamia Millia Islamia and works with Maktoob Media. He was released after about four hours.

"When I was covering the protest, some policemen asked me to come with them to the police station. I showed them my Press card but they didn't listen and repeatedly called me an *ant-tankavadi* (terrorist)."

'Laptop taken away'

At the police station, Mr. Abdullah told *The Hindu*, they took away his diary, laptop, and phone. "When I told them I was from Jamia, they described it as *atankavadi-yan ki* university (university of terrorists) and asked why



Shaheen Abdullah

I was humiliating police through my work."

Later, he said, some senior officers came and tried to play "good cop". "They said they were just verifying my credentials. When I said it could have been done at the protest site, they digressed and kept delaying my release." He said his SD card which has some crucial recording was still with the police. "They have promised to return it later in the night."

Mr. Abdullah is the same journalist who was beaten by the Delhi police near Jamia Millia Islamia and was saved by some girls.

M.P. students to read out Preamble

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL

Government school students in Congress-led Madhya Pradesh will now have to read out the Preamble of the Constitution during morning assemblies and Bal Sabhas.

"Orders have been issued to all district education officers to this effect," said K. K. Dwivedi, Deputy Secretary, State Department of School Education.

Each Saturday after morning prayer, the senior most teacher of government schools would have to read out the Preamble, with students repeating after him or her, according to a note issued by the department.

Anti-CAA protests spread to 11 Bihar districts

Women and girls mostly leading agitations while men manage the crowd

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

The ongoing protest at Delhi's Shaheen Bagh against Citizenship (Amendment) Act, National Register of Citizens and National Population Register has spread to at least 11 districts of Bihar.

Protesters, mostly women and girls, can be seen waving national flag, singing patriotic songs and reciting poems at dharnas in parks and open areas. In Patna alone, such protests are being held at three places for the past several days.

'No party flags'

Politicians and social activists like Brinda Karat, Kanhaiya Kumar, Yogendra Yadav, Tejashwi Yadav and Shivanand Tiwari have addressed the protesters, explaining the implications of the CAA. "We



CPI leader Kanhaiya Kumar at a protest in Patna. ■ FILE PHOTO

don't allow them to make political speeches here. They come to lend us support, nothing more," said Omair Khan, who has been leading one such protest at Gaya's Shanti Bagh.

"Leaders are welcome to lend us support, but no party flags are allowed," said Mohd.

Sarfaraaj, who has been sitting on protest at Patna's Subzibagh.

Phulwarisharif and Mangal Talab are the other two areas in Patna which have been seeing continuous anti-CAA-NRC-NPR protests. Hundreds of women of all ages and even small children can be seen sitting round-the-clock and raising slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government's "anti-people" policies. Mothers holding babies in their arms discuss how CAA-NPR-NRC would impact their lives, while the men are mostly engaged in managing the crowd.

"We will not move from here till this law is withdrawn by the Modi government even if it takes months or years," says a veiled Akbari Khatun, who has been com-

ing to the protest site every day for the last 17 days.

Students at forefront

Similar protests are being held in Kishanganj, Katihar, Bettiah in West Champaran, Begusarai, Nalanda, Muzaffarpur, Gopalganj, Gaya, Darbhanga and Madhubani districts. At some places like Bettiah, girl students from Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia have been leading the protests. "The CAA, NRC and NPR have put a question mark on our identity in our own country. Who are these people to ask us for our identity," asked a young girl from Darbhanga.

"The day is not far when such protests will spread to all corners of the country and force the government to withdraw this law," said Nafisa Parveen at Gaya.

Former BJD MLA held on corruption charge

Assets worth ₹3.42 cr. unearthed

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

Former BJD MLA Anam Naik was arrested after the anti-corruption wing of the State police allegedly unearthed properties disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Mr. Naik had represented the Bhawanipatna Assembly constituency in Kalahandi district from 2014 to 2019.

During the recent raids conducted by the vigilance department at multiple locations, the former BJD MLA and his family members were found to have assets worth ₹3.42 crore.

Mr. Naik had entered into government service as a junior clerk in the Kalahandi

District Collectorate in the year 1990. Subsequently, he held clerical duties in the office of Tahasildar and Block Development Officer at Bhawanipatna.

He had resigned from service about 15 years ago and entered into active politics.

'Building and plots'

According to the vigilance department, during the course of their search, Mr. Naik and his family members were found to be in possession of assets amounting to ₹3.42 crore, which included buildings, market complexes, plots of land, vehicles and deposits in different banks amounting to over ₹49 lakh.

3 of Chandigarh family found dead at home

Husband hit by train, in hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

A 45-year-old woman and her two children were found dead at their home in the city's Manimajra area, the police said on Thursday, adding that a case against unknown person has been registered.

The police said the deceased have been identified as Sarita Arora, her daughter Sanchi, 22, and son Arjun, 15. Sarita's husband Sanjay Arora, who was hit by a train was also seriously injured and admitted at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research.

According to a statement issued by the police, Mr. Karamvir, who is an associate of Sanjay Arora (running a

sweet shop), received a call from the PGI about the critical condition of Sanjay Arora, who had sustained injuries after being hit by a train.

Gate locked

Mr. Karamvir then rushed to the hospital and tried to contact the family members. When he was unable to contact the family on telephone, he went to the house of Mr. Arora, where he found the gate locked from outside. Sensing suspicion he called the police, the statement said.

Inside the house the bodies of Sarita, Sanchi and Arjun were found. The police have registered a case and a probe is on.

Hindu man's liver gives life to Muslim woman

Transplant presents a classic case of religious harmony, says doctor at SSKM Hospital

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Setting an example of religious harmony and humanity, a Hindu family in Kolkata donated the liver of a member who passed away on Tuesday to a Muslim woman suffering from end-stage liver cirrhosis.

Doctors at the School of Digestive and Liver Diseases (SDLD) of SSKM Hospital in Kolkata successfully conducted a liver transplant on Sahana Khatun (29).

Though it was seventh liver transplant performed by SDLD doctors since January 2019, what made the procedure unique was that the donor, Kalyan Kumar Roy-

chowdhury (67), was a Hindu and the recipient, Ms. Khatun, a Muslim.

Speaking to *The Hindu* about the transplant, Dr. Abhijit Chowdhury, who heads the SDLD, said that it was only a coincidence that the donor and the recipient were from different religions.

"What matters for a transplant is that the blood group and other parameters should match. The patient on whom the transplant is to be carried out is selected on the basis of a priority list. Till a few hours ago, we were not aware that the donor and the recipient were from different religions," Dr.

Chowdhury said.

The doctor added that it was only after interest was shown by media that they realised that the transplant presented a "classic case of religious harmony".

"In the present times, this is possibly one of the examples of communal harmony and it proves that all human beings are the same," Dr. Chowdhury said.

'Won't hesitate'

S.K. Shabbir Ali, the brother of Ms. Khatun, said they had been waiting for a donor for quite some time. "In my life if I get an opportunity I will not hesitate to donate my organs to a person from a

different religion," said Mr. Ali said.

The family members of Roychowdhury, a resident of Bally in Howrah district who met with an accident on Monday and was declared brain dead on Tuesday, said they are very happy that his organs has saved lives.

"My mother said that if my father had faced such a situation, he would have taken the same decision of donating the organs," said Adrita Roychowdhury, the daughter of deceased.

His kidneys have been transplanted to another patient at a private hospital in the city.

Will also invite Congress, NCP to join CM on Ayodhya visit, says Raut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday said their allies Congress and NCP are welcome to join Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray when he visits Ayodhya in March to mark the completion of his 100 days in power.

He said offering prayers to Lord Ram has got nothing to do with the common minimum programme, on the basis of which the three ideologically different parties came together to form a government in Maharashtra.

It will be Mr. Thackeray's first visit to Ayodhya since his party severed ties with the BJP over sharing of power after elections in October last year.

"We will invite everybody, including our allies to join. Everyone worships Lord Ram at home. So, they can join us in offering prayers at Ayodhya," said Mr. Raut.

Mr. Thackeray had earlier put off a visit to Ayodhya in November 24, 2019 after the NCP's core committee resolved to form an alternative government.

Mr. Thackeray was sworn in as Chief Minister on November 28, 2019 and recently completed 50 days in office.

Mr. Thackeray last visited Ayodhya in June last year and offered prayers at the makeshift Ram Lalla temple along with 18 newly-elected Lok Sabha MPs of his party.

Maratha outfits object to new MNS flag with Shivaji's seal

Inappropriate for any party to use seal for petty political purposes: Sambhaji Brigade

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Several Maratha outfits, including the Sambhaji Brigade, have objected to the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's newly minted flag incorporating Chhatrapati Shivaji's royal seal or 'Rajmudra', with the Brigade approaching the Pune police on Thursday demanding that an FIR be lodged against MNS chief Raj Thackeray and his party for using the Maratha King's seal for 'crass' political purposes.

The Brigade leaders submitted a written application to the police urging a probe and an FIR against the 'misuse' of the seal.

Lashing out at Mr. Thackeray, the Brigade said it would also approach the Maharashtra Election Commission to lodge a complaint against the MNS.

"Chhatrapati Shivaji's Rajmudra [royal seal] was created by the king for the welfare of the people. Its purpose was to ensure a fair and just administration, and it lent a great weight to Shivaji's decisions owing to his ideals of Swarajya. It is a symbol of great import and significance to the admirers and followers of the Chhatrapati. But it is highly inappropriate for any party to use the seal for petty political purposes," said Santosh Shinde, district president, Sambhaji Brigade.

He said the Brigade would also approach the Chhatrapati's direct descendants including ex-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)-turned BJP



MNS supporters wave new saffron flag bearing Shivmudra on it at State conclave venue at NSE ground, Goregaon on Thursday. • THE HINDU



MNS president Raj Thackeray addressing party workers in Goregaon on Wednesday. • VIJAY BATE

leader Udayanraje Bhosale and urge them to pursue the case vigorously.

The famous first lines of the seal say, "Ever growing in splendour like the moon on the first day of the bright half of the month, and adored by the world, this seal of Shivaji, the son of Shahaji, shines

for the welfare of all."

Saying the Brigade strongly condemned the intentions of the MNS, Mr. Shinde said Mr. Thackeray's party, which had thus based its politics on regional chauvinism and social divisiveness, had no moral authority to use the seal.

"The MNS keeps changing its colours like a chameleon. When it failed to secure any votes on its earlier flag, it has now taken recourse to a new stratagem by incorporating Shivaji's seal for seeking votes...we strongly condemn Mr. Thackeray and his party and we will keep opposing them."

While his party did not contest, Mr. Thackeray's spirited campaigning for the Congress and the NCP in the general election last year had come a cropper, with the BJP-Sena candidates winning with huge margins in the very constituencies the MNS chief had held rallies.

In the Assembly polls held in October, Mr. Thackeray entered the poll arena and contested in 100 seats, winning only one (Kalyan Rural).

Uddhav tears into BJP, MNS, says he will stick by saffron

Sena has not abandoned Hindutva, says CM

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

"I have neither changed my colour, nor my soul. Our ally (the Bharatiya Janata Party) tried to prove me wrong; how could I face my people? That is why I joined hands with those who were in the opposition for decades to form a government," said Chief Minister and Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday.

Mr. Thackeray was taking potshots at former ally BJP and also the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, which got a new flag on Thursday. The CM was felicitated by his party for keeping his promise to late Sena founder Bal Thackeray on his birth anniversary.

The Shiv Sena founder was born on January 23, 1926, making Thursday his 94th birth anniversary. Politicians of all hue, Sainiks, and citizens thronged Bal Thackeray's memorial at Shivaji Park to pay their respects.

The BJP's Vinod Tawde was among those who visited the memorial. "I always come here to pay tribute to him; he was like a family leader for us. Devendraji also comes every year on the death anniversary. There is no political angle here."

Senior Sena leader Sanjay Raut called Balasaheb 'Hinduhridaysamrat' after Veer Savarkar. Asked about the MNS grabbing the Hindutva plank, he said, "Hindutva is not a subject of competition, nobody will challenge the Sena's Hindutva, we want Hindutva to spread."



Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray with his wife Rashmi, and son Aaditya being felicitated by Shiv Sena workers at an event to mark Balasaheb Thackeray's birth anniversary in Bandra on Thursday. • AADESH CHOUDHARI

The Shiv Sena had organised a grand event at Bandra Kurla Complex for the felicitation. It emphasised the colour saffron, with chairs draped in the colours, and the party's saffron flags spread across the ground. The CM also sported a saffron kurta and tilak. The event was marked with Maharashtra folk dances and cultural performances. The CM was felicitated by 11 senior citizen Shiv Sainiks and given the ceremonial sword on stage.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Thackeray said, referring to his audience, "Today I have been felicitated. I didn't accept any honours but today's honour is yours. This is not my fulfilled promise but the first step towards it." He took a dig at the BJP and MNS and said, "I took up this post because the then ally (BJP) broke its promise, the one they had given in Balasaheb's room.

They tried to prove me wrong, how would I face you? I can never lie to people, that's why I took a different route and allied with those who were our opposition for decades. I did it openly, but that doesn't mean our ideology has changed, that I have left Hindutva. Our colour and our soul are still the same, which is saffron."

In 2014, the CM said, "the BJP had broken alliance with us and formed a government with an invisible hand. Now, the BJP is talking about the Sena's real face but actually, they have been exposed. I never told Balasaheb that I will become CM but took it up for you... I dedicate this success to all Shiv Sainiks who worked for the party. Sainiks are my armour. We will never betray the trust you have shown," he said, without naming his cousin Raj Thackeray of the MNS or the BJP directly.

No effective steps taken to check industrial pollution in Malegaon: NGT

"There is no closure of operations... polluting activities are continuing"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal on Thursday said the Malegaon administration has failed to take effective steps for closure of polluting industries and sought a status report on the issue.

Irked over "unsatisfactory state of affairs", a bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the commissioner of Malegaon Municipal Corporation, District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, the member secretary of State pollution control board, and the managing director of Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd to appear in person on February 24.

"Though action has been taken, there was no effective closure of operations and the polluting activities were still continuing. There was need for coordination among departments," the Bench said.

The tribunal's observation came after perusing a report filed by a committee which

Compensation needs to be speedily assessed and recovered from the polluters

JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL
Chairperson, NGT

stated that though action has been taken, there was no effective closure and the polluting activities were still continuing.

According to the committee, 185 of 190 units having facilities for plastic-related activities and 70 out of 125 sizing units are located in residential area.

No action has been taken to check/prevent entry of vehicles carrying plastic waste into Malegaon city area and unloading of the same, the committee said.

"Remedial measures for identified traffic congestion hotspots are implemented immediately, and solid waste management and sewage management plan are implemented expeditiously as early as possible but not later than the target period of February 2021 and December 2021," the committee said.

Noting this, the tribunal said that time limit for solid waste and sewage management recommended by the committee is too long and needs to be advanced, in consistent with environment norms

"Compensation needs to be speedily assessed and recovered from the polluters, on 'Polluter Pays' principle, as already directed. The compensation should be adequate to meet the cost of restoration so that polluting activity is not profitable. We are of the view that it is necessary to interact with the key officers, after they fully acquaint themselves with the task to be performed," the Bench said.

The tribunal was hearing a plea by Mohammad Yusuf Abdullah Shaikh and others seeking action against air pollution due to melting of plastic in the process of manufacturing "gitti" (recycled plastic granules) for use of plastic pipes at Malegaon.

Practical maths



Early birds: Children of a Zila Parishad school sell vegetables in the school premises in Sindhudurg district on Thursday as part of a unique training programme to hone their maths and marketing skills. • RAJENDRA GAWANKAR

Sai Baba birthplace row: Pathri residents to move court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AURANGABAD

Residents of Pathri in Parbhani district on Thursday decided to approach court to get legal sanction to their claim that 19th Century saint Saibaba was born in their village.

Members of the Sai Janmabhoomi Pathri Sansathan said they would file a petition in the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court with evidence to prove that Sai Baba was born in Pathri.

A controversy has erupted over the purported birthplace of the revered saint, 102 years after he took 'samadhi' in Shirdi.

Some residents claimed that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had retracted his statement on Pathri being Sai Baba's birthplace under pressure from the Shirdi temple trust.

MLC and president of the action committee, Babajani Durrani, said Pathri residents will move court on the issue.

"Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Jadhav had met Mr. Thackeray to seek his appointment for meeting Pathri residents but it was denied and we were told to not take the controversy any further," said Mr. Durrani.

"We have decided to go for legal procedure to resolve this issue and won't be meeting Mr. Thackeray. A team of advocates will visit Pathri and we will file a petition in the court next week," he said.

"We won't mind if the government grant for Pathri doesn't come but we will never give up our claim that Pathri is the birthplace of Sai Baba," he said.

The Sena on Tuesday said Mr. Thackeray should not be blamed for the "uncalled for" controversy over the birthplace of Sai Baba as nobody can tell whether the 19th Century saint was actually born in Shirdi.

Collecting toll on Pune-Satara highway illegal, say activists

File complaint with CBI say six-laning of the road, which was to have finished by March 2013, has been delayed by more than nine years

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

With citizens, lawyers and even politicians joining the clamour for the closure of Khed-Sivapur toll plaza on the long-pending Pune-Satara national highway, a Thane-based lawyer-activist Praveen Wategaonkar, along with Sanjay Shirodkar, a Pune-based activist, have filed a complaint with the CBI against P.S. Toll Road Private Ltd - a special purpose vehicle promoted by Reliance Infrastructure.

The complainants have alleged that while the Pune-Satara highway, work on which commenced in 2010, is nowhere near completion, P.S. Toll Road has illegally collected toll revenue of nearly ₹1780 crore in the past



Incomplete: The toll naka at Khed-Sivapur on the Pune-Satara national highway. • DHANANJAY HELAWADE

tract, P.S. Toll Road was to complete the six-lane development of the 140 km Pune-Satara highway within 30 months beginning October 2010.

"The six-laning of the highway was to have finished

by March 31, 2013. Yet, it has dragged on for nine years," said Mr. Wategaonkar.

The complaint says that on December 16, 2013, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued amended rules pertaining to the le-

vy of toll on national highways which prohibited collection of toll where six-laning process had been delayed beyond scheduled completion dates.

"P.S. Toll Road had no authority to collect toll since 2014 without completing the six-laning process. So, the extensions granted by the NHAI to the construction schedule are in violation of bidding terms," Mr. Wategaonkar said.

The abysmal condition of the Pune-Satara road with its incomplete bridges, pot holes and congestion points have left users harried, often doubling their commute time.

An online petition which began late last year has had little, if any, effect on the

NHAI. Political parties like the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), with its agitation against illicit toll collection, too have stepped into the fray while Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP Supriya Sule has demanded action. Earlier this month, the Pune District Collector had written to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), urging the stoppage of toll collection at the Khed-Sivapur toll plaza.

RTI activist Vijay Kumbhar said that this particular toll plaza was a classic case of holding passengers 'captive' by deliberately delaying completion of the project.

"This [Pune-Satara toll] case is a peculiarity in Maharashtra where toll is being

collected despite the non-completion of a service road. Given the amount of money involved, any immediate crackdown on this staggering corruption appears unlikely," Mr. Kumbhar said.

Activist Vivek Velankar of the Sajag Nagrik Manch alleged that the NHAI had no control whatsoever over road contractors, resulting in commuters being the ultimate sufferers.

"It appears that the incomplete Pune-Satara highway stretch is being funded by the illicit funds garnered by levying toll from hapless travellers. Why else has the six-laning been delayed by nearly seven years when it ought to have been completed by 2013?" Mr. Velankar asked.

IN BRIEF



After release, Hardik Patel held in 2017 case

AHMEDABAD Congress leader Hardik Patel, who walked out of the Sabarmati Central Jail here on Thursday a day after he was granted bail in a sedition case, was immediately arrested by Gandhinagar district police in a 2017 case for addressing a rally without police permission, an official said. PTI

One injured as powerful bomb explodes in Imphal

IMPHAL Notwithstanding the security measures taken up by the State and Central forces ahead of the Republic Day function, a powerful bomb was detonated in Imphal at 4.45 a.m. on Thursday. A 10-year-old girl was injured by the flying glass shards. Hospital sources said that she was out of danger.

CBI books man for killing Indian in UAE

NEW DELHI The Central Bureau of Investigation, on a reference from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorities, has booked a person for allegedly killing an Indian national in Abu Dhabi in August 2008. In 2009, Inderjeet Singh was convicted by an Abu Dhabi court and sentenced "in absentia" to death for killing Rama Lengaw Natesan.

Ex-IOB official appointed CVC panel member

NEW DELHI The Central Vigilance Commission has appointed A.D.M. Chavali, retired executive director of Indian Overseas Bank, as a member in the Advisory Board for Banking & Financial Frauds. The board is headed by T.M. Bhasin, ex-Vigilance Commissioner and former chairman-cum-managing director of Indian Bank.

Three arrested in Kolkata with tiger skin

KOLKATA Three persons were arrested in Kolkata on Thursday for possessing the skin of a tiger. A raid carried out jointly by the Eastern Region office of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the Wildlife Crime Control Unit of the West Bengal Forest Directorate resulted in the seizure.

Homage to fallen soldiers on Republic Day

Ceremony to be held at National War Memorial

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

In a first, homage will be paid to the fallen soldiers during the Republic Day parade this year at the National War Memorial. The ceremony had so far been conducted at India Gate.

A major attraction at the parade will be the anti-satellite missile tested under Mission Shakti by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The Army will showcase the recently inducted 155-mm Dhanush towed howitzer. Before the parade starts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the nation in paying homage to the fallen soldiers, laying a wreath at the National War Memorial, the flame of the immortal warrior, at India Gate, a release from the Army said on



Best foot forward: An Army contingent marching at Rajpath during a dress rehearsal for the upcoming Republic Day Parade in New Delhi on Thursday. ■PTI

Thursday.

The National War Memorial is located at the 'C' Hexagon near India Gate. It was built in memory of 22,500 Indian soldiers who had laid down their lives for the country after Independence. A new Amar Jawan Jyoti was also established there.

Since its inauguration in February last year, the Na-

tional War Memorial has been the venue for the guard of honour at all national events. The Amar Jawan Jyoti will be used for regimental events.

There are 16 marching contingents this year, including six from the Army and 22 tableaux from various States and departments, Maj. Gen. Alok Kacker, Chief of Staff,

Delhi Area, said. The Army would be represented by a mounted column of 61 cavalry, eight mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a fly-past by the Rudra and Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters of Army Aviation. The Army's Signal Corps contingent would be led by Captain Tanya Shergill.

Ex-SC employee who complained against former CJI reinstated

The Supreme Court staffer stands vindicated: Vrinda Grover

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A former woman employee of the Supreme Court who lodged a sexual harassment complaint against then sitting Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has been reinstated.

The woman was earlier terminated from service on grounds including taking unauthorised leave. She had contested her dismissal.

Senior lawyer Vrinda Grover, who had legally aid-

ed the complainant, reacted to the development in a written statement that the Supreme Court staffer stands vindicated. "Her reinstatement with full back wages is an acknowledgement of the truth of her affidavit complaining of sexual harassment and the systematic victimisation suffered by her and her family," she stated.

The lawyer added that "the unfinished business of justice and accountability, however, remains. At an in-

'Abide with me' back on Beating Retreat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The traditional Christian hymn *Abide with me*, believed to have been a favourite of Mahatma Gandhi, is back on the list of tunes for this year's Beating Retreat ceremony.

"Yes, the tune will be played this year," a Defence official said on Thursday. Additionally, the national song *Vande Mataram* will be played for the first time at the Beating Retreat this year. Two weeks back, the Defence Ministry had dropped it from the tunes to be played this year, which officials said was part of an "annual review to introduce new tunes." The move drew criticism from various quarters.

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 Friday: Dense fog very likely in isolated parts over Odisha.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	25.5	8.5	Kozhikode	—	35.8	24.4
Ahmedabad	—	26.1	14.0	Kurnool	—	30.4	19.7
Aizawl	—	—	7.6	Lucknow	—	00.0	00.0
Allahabad	—	22.6	9.4	Madurai	—	21.4	8.6
Bengaluru	—	30.4	17.9	Mangaluru	—	38.7	21.8
Bhopal	—	—	—	Mumbai	—	—	21.4
Bhubaneswar	—	31.4	18.5	Mysuru	—	30.3	19.8
Chandigarh	—	17.8	6.7	New Delhi	—	20.2	9.0
Chennai	—	31.1	22.2	Patna	—	23.0	8.6
Coimbatore	—	31.4	20.3	Port Blair	—	30.8	25.3
Dehradun	—	21.3	6.0	Puducherry	—	31.2	20.8
Gangtok	0.5	—	—	Pune	—	30.9	15.7
Goa	—	35.0	22.1	Raipur	—	27.8	19.1
Guwahati	—	24.0	8.9	Ranchi	—	26.4	13.5
Hubballi	—	31.0	19.0	Shillong	—	15.6	5.0
Hyderabad	—	29.9	17.0	Shimla	—	10.6	1.2
Imphal	—	22.5	3.5	Srinagar	—	—	—
Jaipur	—	21.2	7.4	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.7	25.7
Kochi	—	35.2	25.0	Tiruchi	—	32.2	22.8
Kohima	—	16.9	6.0	Vijayawada	—	31.2	21.6
Kolkata	—	24.7	16.0	Visakhapatnam	—	29.3	21.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing						Yesterday
CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	—	—	25	—	—	—
Bengaluru	—	—	47	72	—	92
Chennai	47	32	68	163	—	—
Delhi	05	36	24	263	191	—
Hyderabad	21	61	24	136	—	—
Kolkata	12	107	46	311	212	—
Lucknow	08	50	32	289	—	—
Mumbai	19	50	35	231	151	—
Pune	79	19	96	169	122	—
Visakhapatnam	08	47	54	152	146	—

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Indian nurse tests positive for coronavirus; not Wuhan strain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

An Indian nurse working in Saudi Arabia has tested positive for coronavirus, but with a different strain from the one that has claimed 18 lives in China, the Indian Consulate in Jeddah said on Thursday.

Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Foreign

Affairs V. Muralleedharan said an Indian nurse working at the Al-Hayat hospital in Saudi Arabia was tested positive for coronavirus.

"Update from @CGIJeddah: About 100 Indian nurses, mostly from Kerala, working at Al-Hayat hospital have been tested and none except one nurse was found infected by coronavirus. Af-

fected nurse is being treated at Aseer National Hospital and is recovering well," the Minister said in a tweet.

Responding to Mr. Muralleedharan's tweet, the Indian Consulate in Jeddah clarified that the nurse found positive for coronavirus was suffering for MERS-CoV and not 2019-NCoV (Wuhan).

12,828 from 60 flights screened, no case found

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A total of 12,828 passengers from 60 flights have been screened for Novel Coronavirus and no one with its

symptoms had been detected so far. However, the preparedness status were being regularly reviewed, Health Secretary Preeti Sudan said on Thursday.

Former IPS officer bags disaster mitigation award

330 nominations received this year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre in Uttarakhand and former IPS officer K.M. Singh have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their contribution in the field of disaster management, the Home Ministry announced on Thursday.

While the Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre in Uttarakhand, an organisation working in the field of natural calamity re-

lief, has been selected in the institution category and will be given a certificate and a cash prize of ₹51 lakh, Mr. Singh, who has been working in the same area, has been selected for the individual category and will be given ₹5 lakh along with a certificate.

The award is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. As many as 330 nominations were received this year and the final decision was taken by the Prime Minister.

New snake eel species discovered in Odisha

It's named *Ophichthus kailashchandrai*

SIB KUMAR DAS BERHAMPUR

A new snake eel species residing in the Bay of Bengal has been discovered and documented this month (January) by the Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) at Gopalpur-on-sea in Odisha. This new marine species has been named *Ophichthus kailashchandrai* to honour the vast contributions of Dr. Kailash Chandra, Director of ZSI, to Indian animal taxonomy.

Ophichthus kailashchandrai is the eighth species of the *Ophichthus* genus found on the Indian coast. It is the



The newly found snake eel.

fifth new species discovered by the Gopalpur ZSI in the last two years.

New species

In 2019, two new species of marine eel, *Gymnothorax andamanensis* and *Gymnothorax smithi* were been discovered by this ZSI centre.



Needless impatience

Nothing will be lost if death row convicts are allowed to exhaust all remedies

The Centre’s application in the Supreme Court for additional guidelines regarding the execution of condemned prisoners betrays a needless impatience to hang the four convicts facing the gallows for the rape and murder of ‘Nirbhaya’ in 2012. The Ministry of Home Affairs essentially seeks the incorporation of measures aimed at reducing the scope for death row convicts to adopt dilatory tactics. Even though there may be some evidence to believe that convicts tend to file review petitions, mercy petitions and curative petitions in such a way that their execution is indefinitely delayed, it is difficult to attribute their conduct to the supposedly “accused-centric” nature of the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in *Shatrughan Chauhan* (2014). These guidelines were undoubtedly aimed at protecting the constitutional rights of prisoners in the context of a sound body of jurisprudence that maintains that such rights extend right up to the moment of their execution. The court was anxious about enforcing their right to be informed about the scope for filing petitions for clemency, for being given legal assistance in drafting them, and for exploring judicial remedies even after their appeals for mercy are rejected. Further, the 14-day time lag between the closure of the clemency route and their hanging is aimed at preventing secret executions. The court was concerned about the right of the convicts’ family members to be informed, as well as the time needed by the prisoners for settling their affairs and preparing themselves mentally.

It is strange that the government wants the Supreme Court to frame a rule imposing a seven-day limit on the time that convicts have to file a mercy petition after a death warrant is issued. And that courts, governments and prison authorities should all be mandated to issue death warrants within seven days of the rejection of mercy petitions and to carry out the sentence within seven days thereafter. To believe that these are matters that contribute to substantive delay in carrying out death sentences is misconceived. Nothing prevents the government from introducing rules to address such situations. On the need for a time limit for filing curative petitions, the government is right in believing that the absence of such a stipulation gives scope for convicts in the same case to take turns to file such petitions. However, there is no sign that the apex court delays disposal of curative petitions. If and when one is filed, it results in no more than a few days’ delay. In a country that unfortunately retains the death penalty, there is no excuse for delaying the disposal of any petition, either in court, or before constitutional functionaries. Nor is there any need to expedite executions by revisiting sound guidelines. As the death penalty is limited to the “rarest of rare” cases, nothing is lost if those facing execution are allowed to exhaust all possible remedies.

Unprecedented step

Shutdowns can limit the spread of the coronavirus outside affected cities, not within

In a bid to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus that emerged in the city of Wuhan in Hubei province in early December last year, China took a drastic and unprecedented step this week to shut down the city, thus preventing its 11 million inhabitants from leaving. All modes of transport have been suspended to prevent residents from exiting the city. Authorities also planned to suspend public transport services in Huanggang, a city of seven million; shut rail stations in Ezhou; and impose travel restrictions in Chibi. These moves come in the wake of an increasing number of people getting infected and even dying. As on January 23, the number of infected people in China stood at 571 and deaths at 17. Wuhan, the hotspot of the disease outbreak, has reported nearly 80% of all cases and all the 17 deaths. Further, the virus has spread to 24 provinces within the country and outside as well – cases have been reported in Thailand and Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, U.S., Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, and Singapore. That the virus has already acquired the ability to spread from one person to another has been confirmed by the World Health Organization. Apart from people in close contact with affected individuals, 16 health-care workers have been infected. The WHO now sees possible evidence of sustained transmission – the ability of the virus to spread beyond just clusters of patients.

The decision to enforce shutdowns came on a day when WHO’s Emergency Committee was deliberating on whether the coronavirus outbreak should be declared a “public health emergency of international concern”. With a split verdict and not enough information available to make a decision on Wednesday, the emergency committee reconvened on Thursday. The WHO Director-General took note of China’s decision and said that the travel ban is a reflection of the significant measures taken by China to minimise the spread of the virus. Even the chair of the committee said the travel ban is an “important information and will certainly be useful for the reflection of the members of the committee”. These observations run counter to the stand the WHO has always taken even when it announces public health emergency. While declaring the Ebola virus disease outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a public health emergency last year, the WHO had stated unequivocally that it is “essential to avoid the punitive economic consequences of travel and trade restrictions on affected communities”. That said, even if it limits the spread outside these cities, shutdowns cannot prevent human-to-human transmission within the cities. Shutting down entire cities go beyond the normal practice of quarantining infected people and might backfire.

Budgeting for jobs, skilling and economic revival

The Budget needs to provide direction to India’s tottering economy and a boost to aggregate demand and investment



RAM SINGH

The forthcoming Union Budget will determine whether India’s economic engine gets the steam needed for a rebound, or the current economic situation becomes even worse. Not just the future of the economy, the future of the country’s youth depends on the Budget.

The unemployment rate at 6.1% (Financial Year 2017-2018) is the highest in 45 years. The rate for urban youth in the 15-29 years category is alarmingly high at 22.5%. These figures, however, are just one of the many problems, as pointed out by the Periodic Labour Force Survey. The Labour Force Participation Rate has come down to 46.5% for the ‘15 years and above’ age category. It is down to 37.7% for the urban youth. Even among those employed, a large fraction get low wages and are stuck with ‘employment poverty’.

Structural factors

The prolonged, and ongoing, slow-down, is the main reason behind the depressing employment scenario, though several structural factors have also contributed to the situation. The GDP growth for the second quarter of Financial Year 2019-2020 is 4.5%, the lowest in the last six years, for which a decline in private consumption and investment are the factors primarily responsible. The aggregate investment stands at less than 30% of the GDP, a rate much lower than the 15-year average of 35%. The capacity utilisation in the private sector is down to 70%-75%.

While the structural factors need addressing, in the interim,

the Budget should also focus on reviving demand to promote growth and employment. Schemes like PM-KISAN and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) are good instruments to boost rural demand. It is really unfortunate that in the current fiscal year, a significant proportion of the budgetary allocation for PM-KISAN will go unutilised. Farmers and landless labourers spend most of their income. This means that income transfers to such groups will immediately increase demand. Further, rural India consumes a wide range of goods and services; so, if allocation and disbursement is raised significantly, most sectors of the economy will benefit. And, the payoff will be immediate.

Besides, rural unemployment can be reduced by raising budgetary allocation for irrigation projects and rural infrastructure like roads, cold storage and logistical chains. These facilities, along with a comprehensive crop insurance scheme, can drastically increase agricultural productivity and farmers’ income. Moreover, by integrating farms with mandis, such investments will reduce wastage of fruits and vegetables, thereby leading to a decrease in the frequency of inflationary shocks and their impact.

Boosting urban employment

In urban areas, construction and related activities are a source of employment for more than five crore people; across the country, the sector’s employment figures are second only to those of the agriculture sector. These projects, along with infrastructure, support 200-odd sectors, including core sectors like cement and steel.

However, due to the crisis in the real-estate and infrastructure sectors, construction activities have come to a grinding halt. At pre-



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sent, many real-estate projects are caught up in legal disputes – between home-buyers and developers; between lenders and developers; and between developers and law enforcement agencies like the Enforcement Directorate. The sector has an unsold inventory of homes, worth several lakh crores.

Even worse, multiple authorities – the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA); the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT); and the many consumer courts – have jurisdiction over disputes. Consequently, restructuring and liquidation of bad projects is very difficult, and in turn, is a main source of the problem of Non-Performing Assets faced by the Non-Banking Financial Companies.

To revive demand for housing, the Budget can raise the limit for availing tax exemption on home loans. The ₹25,000-crore fund set up by the centre to bailout 1,600 housing projects should be put to use immediately. The funds should be used to salvage all projects that are 80% complete and not under liquidation process under the NCLT. Several additional measures can also help. For example, there should be a single adjudication authority.

The multiplier effects of spending on infrastructure and housing

in terms of higher growth and employment are large and extensive. Therefore, the ₹102-lakh-crore National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) programme is a welcome step. If implemented successfully, it will boost the infrastructure investment over the next five years by 2%-2.5% of the GDP annually.

Private sector’s risk appetite

Here, the problem is that more than 60% of the planned investment is expected from the private sector and the States. The government does not seem to realise that for private investment, regulatory certainty is as important as the cost of capital. Many infrastructure projects are languishing due to regulatory hurdles and contractual disputes between construction companies and government departments. As a result, infrastructure investment has come to be perceived as very risky. This is the major reason behind non-availability of private capital for infrastructure.

In this scenario, where the private sector has very little appetite for risky investments and State finances are shaky due to low GST collection, the onus is on the Centre to ensure that the programme does not come a cropper. The budgetary support to infrastructure will have to be much more than the NIP projection at 1.1% of the GDP.

Bidding and contracting for new roads, highways, railway tracks and urban development projects is a lengthy process. This is also the reason why several infrastructure-linked Ministries like those for civil aviation and roads have not been able to spend money allocated to them in the current fiscal year. Therefore, rather than earmarking budgetary support for new projects, the focus should be on projects that are currently under implementation so as

to complete them as soon as possible. That is, funding should be front-loaded. In addition to creating employment, a timely completion of infrastructure projects will help increase competitiveness of the economy.

The distress among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is another area of concern. For many products produced by these enterprises, the GST rates are higher for inputs than the final goods. Due to this anomaly, around ₹20,000 crore gets stuck with the government annually in the form of input tax credits. This has increased cost of doing business for SMEs, which employ over 11 crore people.

Next, according to some estimates, there are more than 22 lakh vacancies in various government departments. Such dereliction is baffling when the unemployment among youth is very high.

Job openings that arise in the private sector put a premium on practical skills and work experience. Here, popular perception is that a good job requires a college or university degree. This misperception is the result of failure of the governments to provide affordable and good quality vocational training programmes.

To stop the demographic dividend from becoming a national burden, there is a need to invest heavily in skilling of the youth. Besides, the Budget should give tax incentives to companies and industrial units to encourage them to provide internships and on-site vocational training opportunities. This work experience can be supplemented with teaching of relevant theories, at educational centres set up at district levels. Distance education mode can also be used for the purpose.

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As India prepares to honour Bolsonaro

Modi can justify his invitation to the controversial Brazilian President by focussing on intra-BRICS partnership and trade



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi often does the unexpected, the surprise sometimes being agreeable, at other times the reverse. His invitation to leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at his inauguration in 2014 and hosting all the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders at the Republic Day in 2019 were in the first category; the demonetisation in the second. He has now produced another surprise by inviting Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to be his guest of honour for Republic Day 2020.

Mr. Bolsonaro, a pro-gun lobby, homophobic, far-right religious former Army Captain, came to power in 2018. The defining aspects of his administration have been a strong inclination towards the U.S. and damaging policies affecting the Amazon rainforest. In foreign policy, his affiliation with the U.S. is driven by admiration for President Donald Trump. Brazil has been designated a ‘major non-NATO ally’, a status held by close U.S. allies like Japan, Israel and South Korea. Mr. Bolsonaro has al-

so followed Washington by relocating its Israel Embassy in Jerusalem, a city contested by Palestinians. On the Amazon delta, his policy has been to withdraw regulation and enforcement, facilitating the utilisation of the indigenous people’s land for the purposes of agri-business, mining and cattle-ranching. He has belittled climate activists like Leonardo DiCaprio and Greta Thunberg and compared indigenous communities living in previously protected areas to animals in zoos. Under his presidency, the number of black and indigenous people murdered has increased. His domestic approval rating stands at only 30%.

Imbalance within the bloc

Apart from Mr. Bolsonaro’s woeful record as President, a larger question pertains to the future of BRICS, the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This was set up as a move towards greater multi-polarity; hence the spread across three continents and both hemispheres. The BRICS combination accounts for about one-third of global output, but a glance at the GDP table and growth rates will show the infirmities of the group: in terms of GDP, China occupies the second position; India the fifth; Brazil the ninth; Russia the 11th; and South Africa the 35th. In terms of growth rates, China grew at 6%; India at



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

4.5%, Russia 1.7%, Brazil 1.2% and South Africa 0.1%. Both politically and economically, Brazil and South Africa have been the laggards in recent years.

But, the leaders of the five nations still see purchase in keeping this group together. Each country has different economic and political leverage, and its own burden of domestic and external issues. But they all share the benefits of autonomous decision making and non-affiliation with any binding alliances and the group’s informal structure is an advantage for coordination among the most influential non-Western countries.

The BRICS summit in Brasilia last November was an exercise in diplomatic tightrope walking. Despite having made disparaging remarks about China in the past, Mr. Bolsonaro was aware that sharing a platform with the heads of Chi-

na, Russia and India magnified his own significance both within and outside his country.

The BRICS group can survive only if its members maximise their congruences to the extent possible, despite the growing intensity of Sino-Russian ties; the pro-American leanings in Brazil; the socio-economic difficulties of South Africa after nine years under the controversial Jacob Zuma; and India’s many difficulties with China, including its abstention from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Achievements of the grouping

The main achievement of BRICS is the New Development Bank, with each country contributing equally to its equity. The bank has so far financed over 40 projects at a cost of \$12 billion. The BRICS countries are also developing a joint payments mechanism to reduce foreign trade settlements in U.S. dollars. An offshoot of the group, dealing with climate change, is BASIC (BRICS without Russia), which met at the Spain conference last month and reiterated its support to the Paris Agreement.

The closing statement of the last BRICS summit deftly steered clear of the pitfalls of clashing ideologies and interests, while containing many formulations of self-congratulation that officials in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs

can produce in their sleep. It enumerated 30 statements and communicates as a result of two summit meetings, 16 ministers meetings, and others at various levels totaling 116 gatherings. Under the forthcoming Russian chairmanship, this number could exceed 150. India is taking the lead role in digital health, digital forensics, film technology, traditional medicine, sustainable water management, internships and fellowships.

Mr. Modi is evidently not concerned about Mr. Bolsonaro’s status as Washington’s most loyal follower in Latin America, and could justify his invitation to Mr. Bolsonaro with references to the enduring quality of BRICS, Brazil’s agreement to waive visa requirements for Indian citizens, and the potential for Brazilian investments in the sectors of space and defence, agricultural equipment, animal husbandry, post-harvest technologies, and bio-fuels. But the total two-way trade is at a paltry \$8 billion, and the prospect of closer economic ties, however desirable, would require considerable optimism. Mr. Trump will be pleased by the Indian honour for his Brazilian alter ego; perhaps this was what mainly motivated Mr. Modi’s invitation.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary

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.

Azadi from CAA

This refers to the article “Raising azadi slogans amounts to sedition, says Adityanath (Jan. 23). It looked like the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister was threatening the anti-CAA protesters, rather than addressing a rally of CAA supporters. The term *azadi* has been defined by the protesters several times. They want freedom from the flawed CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC); freedom from discrimination; freedom from unemployment and other issues affecting the society. The Chief Minister seems to have ignored these comments. Further, it is unfortunate that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders are adamant in

their statements that it is the Opposition that is spearheading these protests. Do they really think that citizens don’t have our own mind and reasoning?

RANJIT NIMBALKAR,
Pune, Maharashtra

Neutrality in Speakers

Since 2014, the BJP has crafted a majority in many States through horse-trading, giving a short shrift to anti-defection law; this was made possible due to manoeuvring by Speakers (Editorial, “Ending inaction,” Jan. 23). In the case of a hung verdict, the neutrality of the Speaker is compromised. The situation definitely warrants an alternative system. It is time the Tenth

Schedule of the Constitution is amended to make all kinds of defections illegal, including ‘two-thirds mergers’.

S.S. PAUL,
Chakdah, Nadia, West Bengal

Supreme Court on CAA

The Supreme Court’s refusal to stay the Constitution (Amendment) Act came as a surprise. It was even more baffling that the apex court gave the Central government four weeks to give its reply. One is at a loss to understand why the court took this long a time to hear the petitions if it only had to consider referring the issue to a larger Bench. With the people of the country, particularly the Muslims, still reeling from the shock

of the court’s Ayodhya verdict, its refusal to stay the CAA even temporarily has added insult to injury. It is alleged that some BJP-ruled States like Uttar Pradesh have already started acting on the CAA. Giving a verdict after all the damage has been done will not be of much use.

THARCIOUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

Ties with Myanmar

The ‘Go East’ policy has not brought the expected gains for India. On the other hand, the ‘Go South’ policy of China is paying rich dividends and Beijing is consolidating through its ‘String of pearls’ approach from Myanmar to Maldives. China is active in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka,

Myanmar, and Maldives, besides being a key participant in Pakistan. Beijing has always been interested in a cross-Himalayan trade and connectivity network and Nepal is now a another key link. Its participation in multiple infrastructure projects in Myanmar or, for that matter, Pakistan, has caused considerable

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: >>>In the Editorial titled “Ending inaction” (Jan. 23, 2020), the time-limit given by the court to the Manipur Assembly Speaker to decide an MLA’s disqualification issue should have been “four weeks” and not “three months” as published. The “three-month” time-frame is a general norm given by the court as the outer limit for Speakers or Upper House Chairmen to dispose of defection complaints. >>>In the story titled “HC informed of decision to delete objectionable sentence from textbooks” (some editions, Jan. 23, 2020), all references to the Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation (TNTESC) have to be changed to State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT).

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To read more letters online, scan the QR code

concern in India. India’s relationship with Myanmar goes back in time due to the spread of Buddhism. Myanmar is a resource-rich neighbour and India can significantly benefit by partnering with it more closely.

H.N. RAMAKRISHNA,
Bengaluru

Will the Budget suspend the FRBM’s fiscal deficit goals?

PARLEY Any fiscal review needs to ideally redirect spending priorities to capital from consumption



N.R. Bhanumurthy is Professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi



Ajit Ranade is a Mumbai-based economist



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

With revenue receipts lagging behind budget estimates and economic growth slowing sharply, there is a real risk of the Centre missing its fiscal deficit target this year. In a discussion moderated by Suresh Seshadri, N.R. Bhanumurthy and Ajit Ranade look at how the Union Budget may approach the fiscal balancing act in the face of a need for a stimulus and the government’s stated commitment to adhere to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM). Edited excerpts:

How realistic does the FRBM’s goal of reducing the fiscal deficit to 3% of GDP by March 2021 appear now?

N.R. Bhanumurthy: First of all, I would like to say that the FRBM amendments that were part of the Finance Bill 2018 are very different from the original FRBM Act of 2003. The original FRBM Act had said that you have to bring down the fiscal deficit to 3% and the revenue deficit to 0%. The 2018 Finance Bill actually did away with the revenue deficit target. So, there is no revenue deficit target any more. Rather, we have the target of bringing down the fiscal deficit to 3% and at the same time, we expect that that will bring down the public debt to 40% at the Central level.

In my view this is a very flawed kind of FRBM roadmap that the Central government has adopted. To that extent I am not really concerned about bringing down the fiscal deficit to 3% because if you look at the last two years, the fiscal deficit has been brought down to 3.3% and the revenue deficit is actually increasing; that itself violates the original FRBM Act.

In principle, the FRBM is basically an expenditure switching mechanism, where you try to switch the expenditure from consumption to capital. That would lead to higher GDP growth and then lead to reduction in the public debt-to-GDP ratio. What we are seeing is not expenditure switching from consumption to capital, but we are actually seeing a switch from capital to consumption. And that would be growth retarding, in my view.

What is likely to be the impact from a markets, ratings and investment perspective if the Budget does end up signalling at least a temporary suspension of the fiscal deficit goals?

Ajit Ranade: Since the last quarter of calendar 2018 and the subsequent three quarters, we have seen declining GDP growth to the extent that nominal GDP growth [estimated at 7.5% for the full fiscal year] will be the lowest in the last 42 years. This is an alarming number. Even real GDP growth is very low, below 5%. So, clearly this is evidence of lack of demand – whether it is for consumption, investment or exports – and it requires a growth impetus. In the short run, the biggest impetus comes from fiscal stimulus. Now the thing about the fiscal responsibility act, the fiscal discipline Act, is that it tends to be what is called ‘pro-cyclical’. If you are going to focus on just a number, discrete 3% of GDP, so when the GDP itself is small now, the growth is slower, the 3% is going to be more. And when the GDP is rising fast the 3% is not so bad. You want a higher deficit spending to boost growth if you believe that the government spending is going to help. So, for fiscal policy to be effective, it has to be counter-cyclical. But the way the fiscal responsibility act has been framed, if you are only focussing on a number from year to year, it ends up being pro-cyclical. So, actually the spirit of the fiscal responsibility act should have been over a business cycle. So over a multi-year horizon it should be declining. That is the sign of fiscal discipline. But there should be room for governments to spend extra when needed. That is an important point to note. Also, there is nothing in theory which says 3% is ideal and 2.8% is not and 3.5% is not ideal, there is no basis for saying it.

I believe that in the Indian context, because of our young demography, our dependency ratio is low. This means there are more taxpayers than retired people. And this is going to remain like this for the next couple of decades, which means that if we have higher deficit spending today to induce growth – what Professor Bhanumurthy said



N.R. BHANUMURTHY

about capital spending – tomorrow’s generation will have to pay it back in the form of taxes. But per capita tax burden on future generations is going to be relatively low or modest because we have the young demography advantage. So I think the bottom line is that there is an expectation that the Budget will do something about providing a fiscal stimulus but there will also be a challenge of remaining within the legislative remit. Also, the legislation itself gives the government some leeway of overshooting by 0.5% in times of rapid fall in GDP growth rate, which is what we are seeing.

Is there a downside to all this?

AR: The downside is that first of all we need to worry about sustainability... when you go into deficit spending, whether the debt that you take on additionally is sustainable. The young demography and medium-term growth prospects make it reasonably sustainable. And you also need to worry about whether international ratings agencies would react negatively to an extraordinary fiscal stimulus. That’s the balancing you would need to do. On that count I believe India’s ratings have improved, at least the outlook, and I don’t think it’s going to become negative simply because of a higher fiscal

Revisit the FRBM Act, revert to the original FRBM, try to focus more on the revenue deficit and at the same time try to increase capital expenditure.

N.R. BHANUMURTHY

cal deficit this year. In any case you know the world today is awash with so much funds and negative interest rates in most of the developed world, so I don’t think the adverse impact of a rating action, which I think is very unlikely, and higher interest rates for India, including corporates, is a big risk.

Is it time to trigger the FRBM’s ‘escape clause’? And if so, what is the roadmap when the escape clause gets triggered?

NRB: I think in terms of the escape clause, my guess is that we are actually ‘escaping’ every year. The way we are amending the FRBM Act regularly shows that we seem to have the escape clause within the mandate. The initial FRBM said you need to achieve 3% by 2018; now we are in 2020. That itself shows that the Act has some kind of flexibility. Now we don’t know what the 15th Finance Commission is going to recommend; they’re also supposed to

come out with their own FRBM roadmap. I think when the Action Taken Report is placed in Parliament, we will know what the 15th Finance Commission is recommending. But in terms of this analytical issue, the 3% fiscal deficit target, what we are looking at is a general government fiscal deficit of 5.6-6% and that actually came from some of the studies done by Dr. Rangarajan as part of the 12th Finance Commission. And later for the 13th and 14th Finance Commission, we have done some work, where it is clearly evident that if you can bring down the revenue deficit to zero, that means if you are not borrowing for consumption purposes, that itself will bring down the general fiscal deficit to close to 6%. That is how this whole 3 plus 3 has been worked out.

Would a targeted TARP-like programme, which tries to give fiscal support to just the financial services sector, because it is such a key sector in terms of its multiplier impact, work?

AR: I absolutely feel that is so. It is true in general that capital spending is seen as more productive and better quality spending than consumer spending. But this year is so unusual that we also need to give a consumption stimulus, including in the form of PM-Kisan, enhanced spending for the MGNREGA, and so on. Growth today is constrained due to a collapse in credit. Bank credit growth has fallen steeply and ironically there is so much excess liquidity... in fact, on a daily basis the Reserve Bank of India finds that there is more than 3 lakh crore of excess liquidity. The reasons for the credit collapse is because of the NPA [non-performing assets] situation. NPAs are actually incrementally rising. Plus the lingering effects of the NBFC [Non-Banking Financial Company] crisis and the still relatively high real interest rates. So, I believe it is going to help if some kind of a credit enhancer, or anything that can release the credit flow which is required for growth, is done. There is some discussion about gathering all the NPAs... the toxic ones and into a bad bank. I am not sure a bad bank is appropriate but something like that needs to be done.

We need to give high priority for

recapitalisation wherever necessary, identifying or isolating bad assets and let credit grow. For GDP to grow at 7-8%, we need credit to grow at 15-20% and that includes bank credit, NBFCs, ECBs [external commercial borrowings], everything.

Where would you suggest the whole thrust of the Budget’s emphasis on the FRBM and the fiscal deficit should be?

NRB: Revisit the FRBM Act, revert to the original FRBM, try to focus more on the revenue deficit and at the same time try to increase capital expenditure. That alone will bring you more growth and fiscal discipline. I’ve been arguing that when you’re going to revise the FRBM Act, please come out with some kind of range target. Not just point targets of 3% you know you’re going to violate.

AR: I agree with Professor Bhanumurthy that we should not ignore the quality of spending and cost savings or cost efficiency wherever possible before we embark on fiscal stimulus in terms of increased spending. Secondly, remember fiscal deficit is equal to expenditure minus revenue. It’s got two aspects: expenditure and revenue. So let’s not forget the revenue sources for spending as well. For example, I would not let go of the capital gains tax. And the fact that the stock markets are at an all-time high I think negates the argument that LTCG [long-term capital gains] would be detrimental to the stock market. So, don’t let go of revenue sources you have.

The government has to acknowledge that this is a year when aggregate demand has really fallen and while we wait for consumption, investment spending from the private sector to come up, to revive, it falls on the government to stimulate. And I would say not just capital spending but you might have to look at providing a consumption stimulus especially to the lower incomes. Also, look at avenues to revive financial savings. This is a year where they have very little choice but to provide fiscal impetus and that means we will have to exceed the target and perhaps take refuge in some of the escape clauses. And also wait for the growth revival next year.

The origin of the Constitution

The history of the Constitution stretches to over 40 years before its enactment

UDAY BALAKRISHNAN

The world marvels at how well the Indian Constitution has kept a diverse country together for more than 70 years. It’s robustness and durability rest on its many built-in safeguards securing citizens’ rights to freedom and justice and fair play which no government, however powerful, can hope to effectively recast within the space of a single or even multiple tenures in office.

A long history

Mistakenly, however, this lengthy founding document of the Indian Republic is believed to have been completed solely by the Constituent Assembly, working flat out in just two years, eleven months and 17 days. In fact, the Constitution’s long history stretches to over 40 years before its enactment, going all the way back to the Indian Councils Act of 1909. This law, for the first time, brought Indians into governance at central and provincial levels, albeit in a very limited way, through a highly restricted and unrepresentative electorate split on communal lines.

The Government of India Act, 1919 was a vast improvement on the Indian Councils Act but remained unrepresentative. It also persisted with communal representation, which had earlier been endorsed by the Congress and the Muslim League through the Lucknow Pact of 1916.

In its report submitted in 1930, the Simon Commission, constituted to evaluate the Government of India Act of 1919, recommended much greater Indian involvement in the governance of the country. What followed its report were three extraordinary roundtable conferences – in 1930, 1931 and 1932 – all held in London to see how best Indians could administer their country.

Deliberations in these conferences brought out the concerns of different communities, especially the Depressed Classes of which Ambedkar was the de facto leader, and the Muslims led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Except the second conference, which Gandhi attended, the other two were boycotted by the Congress.

These conferences gave voice to other interest groups too – those re-

presenting women and Anglo-Indians, for instance – and led to the passage of the Government of India Act of 1935, much of which found its way into the Constitution.

As even a cursory perusal of their proceedings will bring out, the roundtable conferences were no sham. They were remarkable for discussing, debating and comprehensively documenting a range of issues – federalism, civil services, regional representation, fundamental rights and universal adult franchise. Even the idea of linguistic states and reservation emerged from the discussions at the three roundtable conferences.

It is stunning to see how closely and logically the Constituent Assembly deliberations were an extension of the discussions in the three roundtable conferences. Ambedkar’s brilliant interventions in the Constituent Assembly discussions, for example, were the outcome of the understanding he had developed of many issues discussed in the Simon Commission proceedings and the three roundtable conferences which he attended.

A distinct departure

The roundtable conferences represent a distinct departure in British approaches to India. There was a clear recognition that the subcontinent was becoming increasingly difficult to manage and unless some sort of autonomy was given while leaders like M.K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, who believed in peaceful protest, were influential, an armed struggle would follow, possibly under a leader like Subas Chandra Bose.

Seventy years on, we can be more honest about the Constitution’s very real underpinnings. Sadly, this fact has been excised from our collective memory. It is almost as if we are ashamed to disclose the colonial origins of our Constitution. On the other hand, we must be proud that the Constituent Assembly were willing to incorporate the best from anywhere – whether they were ideas from our former colonialists or, as in the case of the Directive Principles of State Policy, borrowed from the Irish Constitution.

Uday Balakrishnan teaches at IISc Bengaluru



NOTEBOOK

A former Princess talks to a Prince

How a reporter was swept into the story and made the frontispiece

PRINCE FREDERICK

There are princes who give up their royal titles – that is Prince Harry for you. There are also “princes” who find themselves divested of a crown they never wore – that is Prince Frederick for you.

This bizarre event happened in 2004. It illustrates how the reporting field can unexpectedly turn the humble reporter into the main character of his own story, and this may sometimes mean being trussed up in ill-fitting royal robes. This was not immersion journalism, where the reporter consciously integrates himself into a situation from the beginning to present it effectively to the reader. In such stories, there is usually meticulous planning before the reporter throws himself into the deep end to experience the unknown. This was a case of the reporter simply being swept into the story and

made the frontispiece.

It was a regular assignment. I had to do an interview with a businesswoman from the U.S. reportedly at the helm of half-a-dozen enterprises. She was married to Paul Kangas, an accomplished presenter of business news who was known for his long association with Public Broadcasting Service’s ‘Nightly Business Report’. She also happened to be a former princess of Bulgaria, having been de-crowned when Communism was on the ascendancy in the Balkan state.

Peni Kangas (nee Ange-loff), the businesswoman-princess, was launching a line of food products at a store in Chennai. The brief handed to me by my editor was that I write a short profile, keeping the focus on Kangas the person, as it was meant for a lifestyle supplement of *The Hindu*. The event organiser had



S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

barely introduced me to the former princess when I found myself at the listening end of some very kindly advice.

With an air of commiseration, she proceeded straightaway to comfort me for the loss of my royal title. The crux of her message was that titles meant little, and if we focussed on developing our indestructible inner essence, we would be well on the way to having the best the world has to offer.

Cottoning on to what was happening, the organiser placed the facts on the table. He told her that there had never been anything

“princely” about me. To my credit, I said the same thing as quickly as I could.

But she persisted with offering me sincere life lessons, even after realising that I was a commoner from the cradle. The interaction proved that titles after all did not mean anything to her.

I made this exchange the central point of the profile. After that interaction, our paths never crossed again. However, many years later, I was glad I presented the human side of this businesswoman, because her commiserating nature seemed to have largely defined her for the people who had known her well.

In 2010, her obituary that I found online made a clear and pointed reference to it. Obituaries are usually kind. But I have reason to believe this one presented the facts as they were, thanks to that interaction at the store in 2004.

The ~~Hindu~~ Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 24, 1970

Equal status for Tamil in Ceylon

The All Ceylon Tamil Congress while pledging itself “unequivocally” to “a united Ceylon with a unitary form of Government” has demanded equal official status to the Tamil language and equality of opportunity to the minority Tamils throughout the island. A resolution, adopted at the 25th annual session of the Congress at Chavakachcheri near Tamil-dominated Jaffna in the north last night [Jan. 22], called for an early solution to the language problem “on the democratic basis that what Sinhala is to the Sinhalese Tamil shall be to the Tamil-speaking people wherever they may reside in this country. All racial, linguistic and religious communities can and must live together with self-respect and dignity as equals and co-operate in the common heritage with equality of status and of opportunity through the length and breadth of Ceylon,” the resolution declared. The Tamil Congress, which had a political setback after bulk of its members broke away in the late fifties to form the Federal Party with its cry for federal set up and a militant line to back it up expressed its disenchantment with the working of the present Soul-bury Constitution by the successive Governments since independence and called for incorporation in the Constitution of a chapter on fundamental rights.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JAN. 24, 1920.

Aeroplane Service.

Karachi, January 23. - Punctually at 2 o'clock to-day two aeroplanes carrying the first postal mail from Karachi to Bombay started from Mugger Pir aerodrome, a mild south-western wind blowing. But the planes after manoeuvring appeared to enter a calm zone at about 10,000 feet. Great interest was taken in the event in the locality and the citizens representing all races and classes drove out in vehicles. The flight according to the planned air route covers 700 miles. Before the start the Hon'ble Mr. P.R. Cadell, H.M. Commissioner in Sind, who accompanied by his Private Secretary wished the airmen bon voyage, and among the passengers was Mr. Lupton, C.B.E., Editor of the “Daily Gazette” Karachi who on the invitation of His Excellency the Governor of Bombay was making the flight. The mail was carried in twelve cases and took the place of bombs carried on war service. The machines as they moved across the ground were “farewelled” by visitors from Karachi and by the detachment of the 97th R.A.F. Squadron.

FROM PAGE ONE

Death-row convicts can't fight endlessly, says CJI

If a mercy plea had been rejected, the death warrant should be issued within the next seven days and the execution carried out a week thereafter. The pendency of review or curative petitions of co-convicts would be of no consequence for a man whose mercy plea had been rejected.

This application was filed after the four Nirbhaya case convicts separately and repeatedly approached courts for one relief or the other. Their execution dates have already been extended from January 22 to February 1.

Mr. Mehta blamed the Chauhan judgment for being "convict-centric". The 2014 guidelines should be tweaked to make them victim- and society-centric, he argued.

The remarks and discussion on Thursday were part of a hearing of the review petitions filed by Shabnam and her partner, Salim, both of whom have been condemned to death for the murder of seven members of her family, including an infant.

Senior advocate Mee-nakshi Arora, for the couple, said they were both first-time criminals. She argued that crimes, however heinous, should be seen separately from the criminals who committed them. There were many facets to a criminal. Ms. Arora argued that the couple have reformed in their years spent in prison after the death sentence. The court reserved the review petitions for judgment.

China locks down Wuhan to curb virus outbreak

Highways were closed in neighbouring Xiantao, while public transport will be suspended from midnight in nearby Chibi. The two cities have a combined population of two million people.

As efforts to contain the virus spread, Beijing can-

celled massive gatherings that usually attract throng at temples during the New Year holiday, while the historic Forbidden City will close from Saturday.

More than 570 people have been infected with the virus across China.

India slips two places on corruption index

The 2019 CPI draws on 13 surveys and expert assessments to measure public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories, giving each a score from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

In the Asia Pacific region, the average score is 45, after many consecutive years of an average score of 44, which "illustrates general stagnation" in the region.

China has improved its position from 87 to 80 with a score of 41 out of 100, a two-point jump.

"Despite the presence of high performers like New Zealand (87), Singapore (85), Australia (77), Hong Kong (76) and Japan (73), the Asia Pacific region hasn't witnessed substantial progress in anti-corruption efforts or results. In addition, low performers like Afghanistan (16), North Korea (17) and Cambodia (20) continue to highlight serious challenges in the region," the report said.

According to Transparency International, while often seen as an engine of the global economy, in terms of political integrity and governance, the region performs only marginally better than the global average. "Many countries see economic openness as a way forward, however, governments across the region, from China to Cambodia to Vietnam, continue to restrict participation in public affairs, silence dissenting voices and keep decision-making out of public scrutiny," it said.

Given these issues, it comes as no surprise that vibrant economic powers like China (41), Indonesia (40), Vietnam (37), the Philippines (34) and others continue to struggle to tackle corruption, according to the report. The top ranked countries are New Zealand and Denmark, with scores of 87 each, followed by Finland (86), Singapore (85), Sweden (85) and Switzerland (85).

Dalit youth's death sparks political row in M.P.

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress exchanged barbs on Thursday over the death of a Dalit youth undergoing treatment for burns in New Delhi, after neighbours set him ablaze in Sagar following a dispute on January 14.

While the BJP alleged the government's negligence had caused the death and it was followed by the police's complacency, the Congress said the BJP was spreading lies.

"We are awaiting the post-mortem report to ascertain the cause of death. After sustaining burns, he was having breathing issues

here itself," Amit Sanghi, Superintendent of Police, said.

Dhanprasad Ahirwar, 24, of the Motinagar area in Sagar, suffered 70% burns and underwent treatment locally for three days until January 17, when he was shifted to Bhopal, and later airlifted to New Delhi.

'Petty dispute'

"It was a petty dispute between neighbours," said Mr. Sanghi. "There is no Hindu-Muslim or caste conflict angle to the case."

Three accused were arrested on January 15, and the remaining two accused were arrested a day later, he added.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Two days after party leader Pawan Varma sent him a stinging two-page letter asking for his "ideological clarity on the electoral tie-up with the BJP for the coming Delhi elections", JD(U) president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thurs-

day broke his silence to say, "if he [Mr Varma] wants to go to some other party, he has my wishes".

Mr. Varma later said he would continue to speak what he "believes good of the country and for the party".

On December 21, Mr. Varma, said in his letter that he

Ministers hold 'darbars' in J&K

Ravi Shankar Prasad and Shripad Naik interact with people in Srinagar, Baramulla

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

In once separatist and militancy hubs, Union Ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad and Shripad Naik presided over 'darbars' (open interactions) in Srinagar and Baramulla on Thursday and distributed cash and baby kits and announced medical tourism schemes.

Wearing a *pheran*, a long traditional robe worn in winter, and a *karakul*, traditional cap, Mr. Prasad said he felt happy after meeting people in Baramulla, where three militants were killed in two separate encounters since August 5. He toured the part of the town considered sensitive by the security agencies, and sipped tea at Love-ly Restaurant and met 18 delegations of local people.

"I was happy to see a smile on the faces of children. Students in Baramulla have talent enough to compete at the national level," Mr. Prasad said, inaugurating an indoor stadium built at a cost of ₹7 crore. To con-



Technology boost: Ravi Shankar Prasad launching facilities at the National Institute of Electronics and IT, Srinagar. •PTI

nect with local students and women, the Minister distributed six laptops among those girl students who recently topped Class 10 and 12 examinations from the district. Cheques for ₹40,000 each were presented to beneficiaries under the Marriage Assistance Scheme and baby kits to mothers under the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* programme.

During meetings with delegations, the people demanded the establishment of a software technology park, introduction of law studies, establishment of mobile mini towers in border areas, construction of additional bunkers, and creation of WiFi zones at tourist and educational centres. Promising to make Baramulla a model district, Mr.

ITAT Bench camps soon

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) will set up Bench camps in Jammu and Srinagar for easy accessibility and speedy disposal of cases from the Union Territory.

Presently, litigants from the region have to approach its Amritsar Bench. In all, 235 cases from the region are pending disposal.

Prasad unveiled the district logo, inaugurated a district web portal and e-inaugurated the Bharatnet facility for 38 panchayat halqas.

In Srinagar, Mr. Shripad Naik met hundreds of people at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre on the Dal lake. He announced the setting up of a 50-bed hospital at a cost of ₹12 crore in every district.

'J&K's sovereignty was only temporary'

Government urges Supreme Court to not entertain any 'separatist' arguments

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government urged the Supreme Court on Thursday not to entertain any "separatist" arguments in the Constitution Bench hearing challenges against the validity of the President's order abrogating the special rights of Kashmiri people under Article 370.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, however, countered that the court should indeed enquire into the "Hand of God" that took away the "custodianship" of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019.

The five-judge Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana reserved for passing orders on



the preliminary plea that the issue should be referred to a larger Bench.

In the day-long hearing, the government side strongly argued that the accession of J&K was irrevocable. J&K was part of history of integration of States. Its sovereignty was only temporary.

"We are a Union of States," Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal submitted.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said political arguments should not be made in court by petitioners.

'A State dismembered'

Mr. Dhavan, however, contended that August 5 saw a State dismembered. A State was devoured by the power of the Union. If the procedure for abrogation was not followed, the action of the Union government was susceptible to judicial review. The State government's concurrence was not taken for the modification made in the fundamental nature and governance of J&K.

On Wednesday, senior advocate Sanjay Parikh argued that the Centre could not have on August 5 unilaterally notified a Presidential Order under Article 370 of the Constitution to alter the governance and identity of J&K. Mr. Parekh, for the PUCL, also argued that the Constitution of J&K was adopted on November 17, 1956. The J&K Constituent Assembly was dissolved after that on January 26, 1957. The very purpose of a temporary provision of Article 370 had ended in 1957. The future governance of J&K was entrusted to the erstwhile State's Constitution. Hence, a Presidential Order under Article 370 had no relevance.

Cong. slams govt. for 'erosion of democracy'

'The real *tukde tukde* gang is in power'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday targeted the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre for bringing India 10 places down in the global Democracy Index, with the former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram stating that "democracy has eroded and those in power are the real *tukde tukde* gang".



P. Chidambaram

was started by the research wing of *The Economist* magazine in 2006.

He said whether it was action against students by the Union government or imposition of Section 144 to prevent any assembly of people or insistence on uniformity of culture and language, everything had diminished democracy.

Mr. Singhi said an atmosphere of fear and distrust now prevailed and it had been accentuated with the new Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR).

"There is a cocktail of suspicion and distrust against the government. When the atmosphere is of fear, trust deficit is humongous and when you have such rules then fear increases ten times," he said.

Congress to create a 'National Register of the Unemployed'

Youth wing launches toll-free number to collect data

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The youth wing of the Congress on Thursday launched a nationwide campaign to prepare a National Register of Unemployed (NRU) to highlight rising unemployment and demand answers from the government about the steps it was taking to address the issue.

The campaign was launched at the Congress headquarters in the national capital by Youth Congress president Srinivas B.V. and the party in-charge for the youth wing, Krishna Allavaru.

"The YC will reach out to every unemployed person. To prepare the database, a phone number (8151994411) has been circulated on which one can give a missed call," Mr. Allavaru said.

With a slogan that said '*45 saalon main pehli baar, desh main sabse zyada be-rozgaar*' (A first in past 45 years, the largest number unemployed youth), the YC also prepared short video clips that would be launched on various social media platforms.

Congress leaders said the NRU was also an attempt to



Jobs in focus: Youth Congress members at the launch of a drive against unemployment in New Delhi on Thursday. •PTI

keep the focus on "real issues" and not allow the BJP to change the narrative into a polarising one.

"We do not want to hear about the CAA [Citizenship Amendment Act] or the NRC [National Register of Citizens]. We want to hear from you [the government] what you are doing to increase employment in the country," Mr. Allavaru said.

The Congress cited the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report that 36 youth committed suicide every day because of unemployment and the problem is at an all-time high.

He said the root cause of recession in India is "Modi-made" due to wrong policies

Naqvi pens tale of love across barriers

Minister's debut novel set for release

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who this week became the first Minister in the Modi government to visit the Kashmir Valley since the August 5 decision to revoke Article 370 and undertake an impromptu walkabout at Lal Chowk in Srinagar, will soon release his Hindi novel *Balwa* (Diamond Books), a fictional capture of love across the religious divide in the communally contested politics of the 1990s.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Naqvi, who has screenwriter credits for Madhur Bhandarkar's films *Corporate* and *Traffic Signal*, said the novel was drawn from his own experiences of how vested interests created communal strife and how common people were reeled in.

"This book has been with me for some time; I took the time to complete it lately. The main characters in this book include religious leaders Maulana Mushtaq and Sankata Prasad and how a set of youngsters first get embroiled in their political games and then see through it all to strike a blow for love," he said.

The plot includes descriptions of the administration and police and how they handle communally sensitive situations. Coming from the Minority Affairs Minister, the novel is interesting in the way that it frames communal conflict and the reasons for it.

Kashmir interaction

Mr. Naqvi, just back from Kashmir valley, said that he had broken with protocol and his fixed itinerary to do a walkabout at Lal Chowk to the consternation of officials, but was heartened by the response he got from the people.

"I decided to stop my car and just walk around the



The cover of *Balwa* by Abbas Naqvi. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

market, and it took a while for people to realise that I was a Minister in the Government of India. The interaction was warm, and I saw a different atmosphere than what people think in Delhi," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brief to all touring Ministers was to hold dialogue with as many delegations and people as possible.

"He told us to listen carefully to the people, especially if they are talking about long-standing demands for schools, hospitals, roads, etc. Railway connectivity was one of the big asks from the delegations that I met, and also boosting of tourism," Mr. Naqvi said.

Asked if anyone spoke of the lack of Internet connectivity in the Valley, Mr. Naqvi said the Internet was available for essential services, but added that the local administration had to take its own call keeping the security situation in mind.

The novel *Balwa* is only the first of a three-novel series that Mr. Naqvi is looking to release this year; the other two are *Raj Leela* and *Cyber Supari*.

The first in the series will be an interesting read for novel buffs and those looking for a peek into the mind of the Minority Affairs Minister in the time of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

IN BRIEF



Raj Thackeray unveils new flag for MNS

MUMBAI

Twelve years after the party was formed, Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena on Thursday changed its flag from tricolour saffron, blue and green to saffron with Shivmudra printed on it. Shivmudra is the royal seal of Maharashtra's warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The new flag was unveiled at the party's conference being held at Goregaon in suburban Mumbai. The conference will also chalk out the party's future course of action.

Davinder Singh sent to 15-day NIA custody

NEW DELHI

J&K police officer Davinder Singh who was arrested with two wanted Hizbul Mujahideen militants on January 11 was sent to 15-day custody of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday. The accused was syeded with three others — Syed Naveed Mushtaq alias Babu, Rafi Rafter and an advocate Irfan Shafi in a Jammu court on Thursday. The accused will be in the NIA's custody till February 6, an NIA spokesperson said. Singh had been under surveillance for two months.

Pawan Varma is free to join any other party, says Nitish Kumar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Two days after party leader Pawan Varma sent him a stinging two-page letter asking for his "ideological clarity on the electoral tie-up with the BJP for the coming Delhi elections", JD(U) president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thurs-

day broke his silence to say, "if he [Mr Varma] wants to go to some other party, he has my wishes".

Mr. Varma later said he would continue to speak what he "believes good of the country and for the party".

On December 21, Mr. Varma, said in his letter that he

was "deeply perplexed" over the development of ties with the BJP beyond Bihar. He 'reminded' Mr. Kumar of his confession to him about his "grave apprehensions" of the BJP-RSS combine.

"He [Mr. Varma] is a learned man for whom I've a lot of respect, even if he may not have the same for me.

But this is not the way to share such things in public... it is surprising...he says I've told him certain things in private...what if I should tell you what he had told me?", Mr. Kumar told journalists. "If he wants to go to some other party which is his decision... he has my wishes," Mr. Kumar said, while leav-

ing a function organised at Patna's Gandhi Maidan on the occasion of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary.

Mr. Kumar said, "If he has any confusion, he should have put it before me or at the party forum but there should not be any confusion in anyone's mind about how

the JD(U) as a party runs".

A JD(U) source told *The Hindu* that Mr. Kumar may take action against Mr. Varma and Prashant Kishor — who have of late been bombarding him with tweets and letters — on January 27, when he would meet party leaders at his official residence, 1 Anne Marg.



APPEAL

Name of Patient: Marimuthu, 25 years.
Hospital Name: Christian Medical College,
Diagnosis: Rheumatic Heart Disease Severe Calcific Mitral Stenosis, Tricus Mitral Regurgitation, LA&CLOT, Trace Aortic Regurgitation, Moderate Tricuspid Regurgitation and Normal LV Function. He has been advised to undergo high risk Mitral Valve replacement + TAP + LA Clot Removal at the earliest.
We request Kind Hearted Philanthropists to save him. Kindly send donation by Cheque/D.D/M.O. favouring Save Poor Lives and on the back of Cheque write A/c Marimuthu S/B IFSC CODE: SBIN0001855, which is exempted under 80G of IT Act.
Contact: SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST, (ADMIN DIVISION) Flat No. A1, Ceebros Garden, Ground Floor, Old No.76, Kamarajar Salai, Raja Annamalaiapuram, Chennai - 600 028. Ph: 044-42044165, Mobile: 9884607377, Email: 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/-