



**'Nellai' Kannan in judicial custody till January 13**  
TIRUNELVELI  
Tamil orator 'Nellai' Kannan, who was arrested on Monday for his alleged 'hate speech' against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah in a public meeting, was remanded in judicial custody till Jan. 13.

**AIIMS professor appointed head of NMC**  
AHMEDABAD  
The Centre on Thursday appointed Suresh Chandra Sharma, head of the ENT department at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), as Chairman of the National Medical Commission (NMC). His tenure is for three years.

**U.P. policemen asked to deposit salary as fine**  
SONBHADRA  
Almost six months after 11 tribals were killed in a clash over a land dispute, the Uttar Pradesh police held five policemen responsible for laxity and asked them to deposit their 30 days' salary as a fine.

**CBI files case against Navin Kumar Tayal**  
NEW DELHI  
The CBI has booked businessman Navin Kumar Tayal and directors of his company Krishna Knitwear Technology Limited, in connection with an alleged bank fraud of ₹104 crore. The agency had registered another case against the company last year for an alleged fraud involving over ₹27 crore of the Canara Bank.

**MEA nod sought to prosecute Medha Patkar**  
NEW DELHI  
The Mumbai Regional Passport Office has sought the External Affairs Ministry's nod to prosecute Narmada Bachao Andolan activist Medha Patkar for not disclosing criminal cases against her in her passport application.

# India records less than 100 tiger deaths for the first time in three years

84 cases of deaths and 11 cases of seizures were recorded in 2019

SHIV SAHAY SINGH KOLKATA  
For the first time in the past three years, the number of tiger deaths in a year in the country has been less than 100. According to data from the Ministry of Forest Environment and Climate Change (MoEFCC), there were 84 cases of tiger deaths in the country and 11 cases of seizures (in which a tiger is presumed dead on the basis of body parts seized by authorities). Both put together, the number of tiger deaths in 2019 was 95.

In 2018, the number of tig-

er deaths recorded was 100 (93 mortalities and seven seizures). The number was 115 (98 mortalities and 17 seizures) in 2017, and 122 (101 mortalities and 21 seizures) in 2016.

**Growing numbers**  
Speaking to *The Hindu*, Anup Nayak, Member Secretary of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), said that these figures should be seen in the context that tiger numbers in the country were growing.

The last tiger census re-

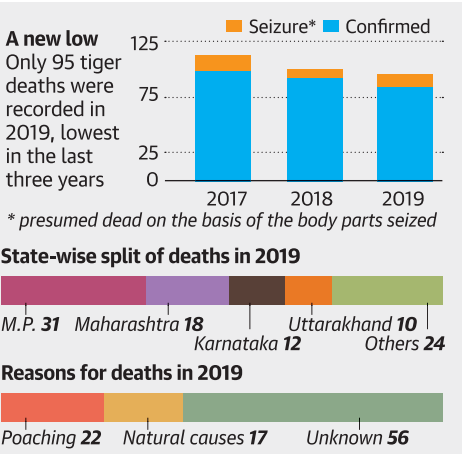


Tiger cubs at the Tadoba Andhari Reserve near Nagpur. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

port, released in July 2019, had placed the number of tigers in India at 2,967, up by a third when compared with

## The lost big cats

Madhya Pradesh recorded 31 tiger deaths in 2019 — the highest in the country, data from the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change shows. A look at the year-wise trend, location and reason for the deaths



the numbers reported in 2014. “This is encouraging to us. The reduced numbers of

tiger mortalities are because of surveillance, good management of Tiger Reserves and a lot of awareness and

# Science Congress takes ‘extra care’ to avoid pseudo science

107<sup>th</sup> edition to commence today in Bengaluru

JACOB KOSHY NEW DELHI  
On the eve of the 107<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress (ISC), set to commence in Bengaluru, organisers said they had taken “special care” to ensure that ‘pseudo-scientific’ articles or talks did not creep in.

At last year’s ISC at Lovely University, Jalandhar, G. Nageswara Rao, the then vice-chancellor of Andhra University, asserted that the *Kauravas* of the *Mahabharata* were born of the stem-cell technology and test-tube baby science, and that Rama and Ravana had fought with ‘guided missiles.’

While pseudo-scientific remarks at the congress are not unprecedented — in 2015, at the event in Mumbai, there was an entire session dedicated to ‘aircraft



**Preparations on:** The GKKV campus in Bengaluru, where the Indian Science Congress will be held. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from the Vedic age’ — Mr. Rao’s remarks stood out, as it was the first time a senior scientist from a well-regarded institution had made such comments.

“Only those who have sent their entire papers will have a chance to speak, irrespective of the seniority of the speaker,” Anoop Kumar Jain, General Secretary (Scientific Activities), Indian Science Congress Associa-

tion (ISCA), told *The Hindu*. As part of the standard process, the ISCA constitutes sectional committees — 14 this year — to evaluate the scientific merit of papers submitted by its members. The solicitations for papers, which span across fields like agricultural sciences to archaeology, are sent to prominent colleges, universities and research institutes.

The Kolkata-based ISCA

has been the organiser of the congress since 1914, and is funded by the Union Department of Science and Technology.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is slated to inaugurate the congress, which is scheduled to take place between January 3-7, at the Gandhi Krishi Vignana Kendra (University of Agricultural Sciences) in Bengaluru on Friday.

The theme for the congress this year is ‘science and technology: rural development’. To emphasise it, the function, which draws young scholars in droves, will include a Farmer’s Science Congress, providing a platform for innovative farmers.

The farmer’s congress will also discuss agrarian distress and strategies to mitigate and navigate the impact of climate change on agriculture, among other pressing issues.

## West Bengal's tableau out of R-Day parade

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

For the second time in a row, the tableau of the West Bengal government has not been shortlisted for the Republic Day Parade in New Delhi, triggering a political slugfest, with the Trinamool Congress accusing the Centre of being “vindictive” towards the State for organising protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

“Since the West Bengal government is opposing the anti-people policies of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) government, a step-motherly treatment is meted out to the State,” said Tapas Roy, West Bengal Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs.

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said the Centre was “following a laid down procedure where a committee takes a final decision on whether a tableau will make it to the Republic Day Parade or not.”

## Police file chargesheet in Unnao rape case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA UNNAO

The Uttar Pradesh police on Wednesday submitted a chargesheet in a court here in connection with the death of the 23-year-old Unnao rape victim, who was allegedly set ablaze by five men.

Additional Superintendent of Police Vinod Kumar Pandey, who is heading a Special Investigation Team in the case, said: “There is ample proof against the five accused persons, and the chargesheet was prepared based on those evidences.”

The woman was airlifted to Delhi and admitted to Safdarjung Hospital with 90% burns, where she succumbed to her injuries on December 6, 2019.

The woman was set afire by five men, including two of her alleged rapists, on December 5, when she was going to Rae Bareilly to attend a court hearing in the rape case filed by her.

She had named Harishankar Trivedi, Ram Kishore Trivedi, Umesh Bajpai, Shivam Trivedi and Shubham Trivedi as the persons who set her on fire.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



**Forecast for Friday:** Cold day conditions likely in isolated pockets over Uttarakhand. Thunderstorm accompanied with hail & lightning likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Coastal Andhra Pradesh.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	.....	26.0	15.0	Kozhikode	.....	34.0	25.0
Ahmedabad	.....	26.0	15.0	Kurnool	.....	31.0	20.0
Aizawl	.....	00.0	00.0	Lucknow	.....	23.0	8.0
Allahabad	.....	24.0	11.0	Madurai	.....	33.0	23.0
Bengaluru	.....	26.0	18.0	Mangaluru	.....	35.0	22.0
Bhopal	.....	20.0	13.0	Mumbai	.....	30.0	16.0
Bhubaneswar	.....	25.0	16.0	Mysuru	.....	30.0	19.0
Chandigarh	.....	17.0	8.0	New Delhi	.....	23.0	5.0
Chennai	28.3	31.0	23.0	Patna	.....	21.0	11.0
Coimbatore	.....	31.0	23.0	Port Blair	.....	31.0	26.0
Dehradun	.....	18.0	7.0	Puducherry	9.6	32.0	21.0
Gangtok	.....	13.0	6.0	Pune	.....	31.0	13.0
Goa	.....	31.0	20.0	Raipur	.....	25.0	15.0
Guwahati	.....	00.0	00.0	Ranchi	.....	1.8	19.0
Hubballi	.....	29.0	18.0	Shillong	.....	.....	.....
Hyderabad	.....	27.0	19.0	Shimla	.....	10.0	1.0
Imphal	.....	.....	.....	Srinagar	.....	.....	.....
Jaipur	.....	19.0	10.0	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	33.0	24.0
Kochi	.....	32.0	25.0	Tiruchi	.....	31.0	23.0
Kohima	.....	.....	.....	Vijayawada	.....	29.0	21.0
Kolkata	.....	25.0	15.0	Visakhapatnam	.....	27.0	21.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing							Yesterday
CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	
Ahmedabad	26	16	37	142	119	■	
Bengaluru	13	50	98	—	87	■	
Chennai	7	36	88	54	—	■	
Delhi	48	81	76	452	—	■	
Hyderabad	2	54	41	83	77	■	
Kolkata	16	90	46	314	236	■	
Lucknow	65	33	94	418	—	■	
Mumbai	10	77	53	282	194	■	
Pune	86	34	76	114	95	■	
Visakhapatnam	12	32	57	84	86	■	

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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.

**NO<sub>2</sub>:** 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

# Architects question land use change for Central Vista revamp

Reduction in recreational, public spaces and lack of scientific study flagged

DAMINI NATH NEW DELHI

Several architects have raised concerns over the Centre’s proposed change of land-use of plots in the heart of Lutyens’ Delhi to make way for a new Parliament House, residences and office buildings, flagging the potential reduction in land for general public use as well as the lack of a scientific study to justify the amendment of the Master Plan for Delhi-2021 (MPD).

As part of the project, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on December 21, 2019 issued a notification inviting suggestions and objections to its proposed land-



**Big changes:** Over 115 people have sent in their objections to the proposed changes in land use for the project. ■FILE PHOTO

use change in the Master Plan. A 9.5-acre-plot opposite the existing Parliament House, currently earmarked for recreational use, was proposed to be changed to “Parliament House”, and a

15-acre plot near South Block to “residential”. Comments were invited for a period of 30 days.

Earlier this week, a citizens’ and architects’ collective, Let India Breathe, start-

ed a campaign to encourage people to send in their objections to the DDA, said Yash Marwah, founder of the collective.

By Thursday evening, over 115 people, including architects, designers and citizens, had sent in their objections, which say: “there is a loss of at least 80 acres of land currently earmarked...directly or indirectly for the general public.”

Madhav Raman, one of the architects, said the DDA was proposing to amend the zonal development plan of the area without specifying how it would compensate for the loss of land for public use.

## Vacancy date no ground for seniority: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Seniority of an employee in public service is not to be calculated from the date when vacancy arose, but from the date of actual appointment, the Supreme Court held.

A three-judge Bench led by Justice R. Banumathi reiterated the law in a case of inter-se seniority dispute in the Manipur police service. “A person is disentitled to claim seniority from a date he was not borne in service,” the court said.

“A person cannot be said to have been recruited to the service only on the basis of initiation of the process of recruitment, but he is borne in the post only when formal appointment order is issued,” the court said.