



IN BRIEF
Navy rescues dhow with Indian crew
NEW DELHI
A Navy ship, INS Sumedha, deployed on anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf of Aden, rescued a Sri Lankan-flagged dhow, Al-Hamid, with 13 Indian crew members that was stranded and was drifting towards the Somalian coast. The dhow was then towed to safety, the Navy stated.

DMK MP Kanimozhi meets JNU students
CHENNAI
DMK MP K. Kanimozhi met with a section of students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, including JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, who were injured in the attack on the campus on Sunday. Ms. Kanimozhi questioned why the police did not act for nearly three hours when violence was unleashed.

Centre tells youth to stay away from e-cigarettes
NEW DELHI
Citing the U.S.'s 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey, which recorded a high increase in the use of e-cigarettes among children, the Centre has asked youth to "stay away" from the product. "What government and experts are worried about is the highly addictive nature of nicotine," said a Health Ministry official.

'We are against NEET to this day'
CHENNAI
Tamil Nadu Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar said in the State Assembly on Wednesday that the AIADMK government was still strong in its stand against implementing the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical admissions in Tamil Nadu.

HC questions CBI on probe in Asthana case

CBI Director asked to be present in court if agency fails to complete investigation

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the CBI Director to be present before the court on February 10, if the agency fails to complete investigation into the bribery case involving its former special director

Rakesh Asthana. Justice Vibhu Bakhru questioned the agency for repeatedly seeking extension of time to complete the probe. The CBI had asked the court for extension of time last month. The FIR was registered on October 15, 2018 against Mr. Asthana and others on a complaint by Satish Babu Sana, alleging extortion and harrasment in connection with investigation of a case related to meat exporter Moin Akhtar Qureshi.

CRPF DIG throws hot water at jawan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
A CRPF officer, Deputy Inspector-General D.K. Tripathi, allegedly threw hot water on the face of constable Amol Kharat, after the former got enraged at having burnt his mouth upon drinking the water served by Mr. Kharat. The force has ordered an inquiry into the incident, officials said on Wednesday. The incident took place on Tuesday at the CRPF recruit training centre in Bihar's Rajgir district.

SHORTLISTS FOR THE HINDU PRIZE 2019

The much-awaited shortlists for The Hindu Prize 2019 Fiction and Non Fiction are out. Two independent panels of distinguished judges have selected five books in each category. The winners in two categories will be announced at the awards ceremony in Chennai in April 2020

Grid of book covers and titles for Fiction and Non Fiction categories, including 'The Assassination of Indira Gandhi', 'Tell Her Everything', 'The Queen of Jasmine Country', 'Early Indians', 'Polio: The Odyssey of Eradication', 'The Transformative Constitution', 'Latitudes of Longing', 'Heat', 'India, Empire, and First World War Culture', and 'The Anatomy of Hate'.

Indian diplomat and author Navtej Sarna, Chairperson of the Fiction Prize Jury, said the process of arriving at the shortlist of books for the Fiction prize had been an enjoyable one spread over several months. "The five judges have had a good chance to review the more than 80 submissions this year. After an initial face-to-face meeting (in person and over Skype) the judges have remained in interactive contact throughout. This enabled extensive exchange of views on several titles and highlighted particular recommendations for the attention of all. Last month, each of the judges sent in their preferred shortlists. The Chair then made a matrix of these shortlists and proposed a final unranked shortlist based on the votes received by various titles. All the judges then gave their specific assent to this shortlist," he said.

The other members of the jury are Pradeep Sebastian, novelist and book critic; Nilanjana S. Roy, journalist, literary critic and author; J. Devika, social critic and faculty at the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram; and Rajeswari Soundararajan, Global Distinguished Professor in the Department of English, New York University.

Re-grassing is mandatory after mining, rules SC

Govt. told to file report in three weeks

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered that mining lease holders should be held responsible for re-grassing mined areas, so that biodiversity gets a second chance in these scarred landscapes.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde ordered the government to include re-grassing of mined areas as a mandatory condition in every mining lease, environmental clearance and mining plan across the country. Environmental issues caused by mining include erosion, formation of sinkholes, loss of biodiversity, and contamination of soil, groundwater and surface water by chemicals from mining processes, and the effects persist for years, the court was told.

'Impose condition'
"The see no reason why the area which has been mined should not be restored so that grass and other vegetation, including trees, can grow in the mining area for the benefits of animals. We are of the view that this can be achieved by directing the Union of India to impose a condition in the mining lease and a similar condition in the environmental clearance and the mining plan to the effect that the mining lease holders shall, after ceasing mining operations, undertake re-grassing the mining area and any other area which may have been disturbed due to their mining



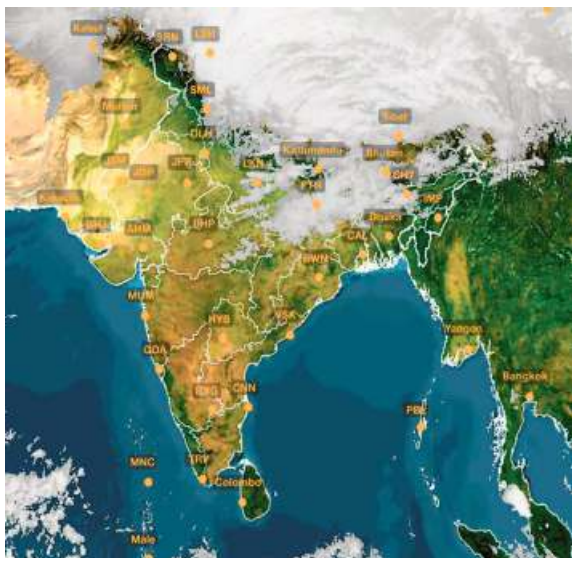
The cost of re-grassing the area would be borne entirely by the licence holder.

activities and restore the land to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc." the Supreme Court held in a four-page order.

'Ensure compliance'
The government was ordered to file an action taken report in three weeks. The Bench also directed the government to devise methods to ensure compliance by mining lease holders. The cost of re-grassing the mined area and whe-rever damage was caused, would be entirely borne by the licence holder.

The mandatory re-grassing would be in addition to the other conditions imposed on the licence holder in the mine closure plan, to restore biodiversity. "An area which is mined results in complete elimination of grass, which in turn denies fodder to the herbivores. The only solution can be re-grassing of such mined areas. It is not in dispute that re-grassing technology is available in this country," Chief Justice Bobde said.

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)
Forecast for Thursday: Thunderstorm accompanied with hail & lightning likely at isolated places over Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, Meghalaya, Odisha. Dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Uttarakhand, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and north Rajasthan.

Table with 3 columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Lists weather data for various Indian cities like Agartala, Ahmedabad, Aizawl, etc.

Table with 3 columns: CITIES, SO2, NO2, CO, PM2.5, PM10, CODE. Lists air quality data for various Indian cities like Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, etc.

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

Plea in SC on minority institutions' appointments

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde on Wednesday agreed to examine next week a plea to stay a January 6 judgment by the Supreme Court, which declared that the State is well within its rights to regulate the appointment of teachers to minority-run institutions in the "national interest". The judgment, delivered by a Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and U.U. Lalit in S.K. Mohd Raffique versus Managing Committee, Contai Rehmania High Madrasah and Others, gave the State an absolute right to impose regulations on minority established and administered institutions in the appointment of teachers, saying the step was necessary to achieve excellence in education in these institutions.