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NEARBY
'Alternative routes to Shaheen Bagh shut'
 NEW DELHI
 Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Azad and India's first Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah have told the Supreme Court that alternative routes through Shaheen Bagh have been deliberately shut to disrupt traffic to and from Delhi, Noida and Faridabad. They argued that the Delhi police had blocked the alternative routes on the instructions of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 NEWS PAGE 12

Pak. jails Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed for terror financing

Found guilty of being part of a terrorist outfit and for possessing illegal property

MEHMAL SARFRAZ
 LAHORE
 Hafiz Saeed, the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks that killed 166 people and injured hundreds more, has been sentenced to jail in Pakistan for five-and-a-half years on terror finance charges.
 Saeed, a UN-designated terrorist and head of the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JUD), was found guilty of "being part of a banned terrorist outfit" and for "having illegal property" by an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore.
 The ATC sentenced him and his close aide Zafar Iqbal to five-and-a-half years each and imposed a fine of ₹15,000 in each case. A total of 11 years sentence will run concurrently.
 The FIR against Saeed and

Case files

This is the first time Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed has been charged and convicted in a terror case. However, he has been detained multiple times in the last 2 decades



Number of cases: 23 cases of terror financing were registered by Pakistan's Counter-Terrorism Department in July last year

support and meetings related to a banned outfit

Section 11-H to Section 11-K: Charges linked to fundraising for terrorism and money laundering

Earlier detentions
 December 2001-March 2002 | August 2006-October 2006

House arrests: December 2008-June 2009 | September 2009-October 2009 | January 2017-November 2017

his associates was registered last July on charges of terror financing at the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in Gujranwala.

Saeed, Abdul Ghaffar, Hafiz Masood, Ameer Hamza and Iqbal were indicted in December 2019. This is the first time that

Saeed, who has a \$10 million bounty on his head by the U.S. government, has been formally convicted of an offence.
 Legal experts say Saeed can appeal the verdict but he will be sent to jail immediately. He is currently lodged at Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail. The government prosecutor, Abdul Rauf Wattoo, confirmed the news of Saeed's conviction to the media.
 The sentencing comes days ahead of a crucial meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an inter-governmental organisation combating money laundering and terror financing, that has put Pakistan on its grey list.

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Kejriwal to take oath as CM on Sunday

'Party has decided to repeat Cabinet'

NIKHIL M BABU
 NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal will take oath for the third time as Delhi Chief Minister at Ramlila Maidan on Sunday, along with his Cabinet members, the party said on Wednesday.

Mr. Kejriwal was elected leader of the AAP Legislature Party on Wednesday, senior party leader Manish Sisodia said at a press conference.

Mr. Kejriwal called on Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal earlier in the day. The party also sent a letter to the L-G, staking claim to form the government, a party insider said. "The party has decided to repeat the Cabinet, as it considers the mandate as a vote for continuity," the party insider added.
 AAP won 62 of the 70 seats in Delhi Assembly. In 2015, it had won 67 seats.



Arvind Kejriwal

ty spokesperson Jasmine Shah said AAP had received five lakh missed calls on a number announced on Tuesday for the people to be a part of the party for "nation-building".

Next goal: civic polls
 He said the party's focus would now be on delivering on its promises to the people of Delhi, and the State municipal elections in 2022.
 Talking about the swearing-in ceremony, Mr. Sisodia said, "...I appeal to the people of Delhi to reach [the venue] in large numbers and give him [Kejriwal] your love and blessings. I want to appeal to people of Delhi to take a pledge, along with Arvind Kejriwal, that we will together take the city above politics of hatred and make it a model of development, where education, health, water and electricity will form the core of politics."

Eye on other States

"Now the party will focus on strengthening the organisation beyond Delhi, and the government will focus on governance in the city. A meeting of the party's national executive will be called within a month of the oath-taking ceremony to decide on plans for elections in other States," a senior leader said.
 He said a membership campaign would be conducted across the country.
 Addressing reporters, par-

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Puducherry House passes resolution against CAA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 PUDUCHERRY

After Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal, the Puducherry Assembly on Wednesday adopted a resolution urging the Centre to repeal the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

The ruling Congress went a step ahead, adopting another resolution condemning the "BJP government's attempts to destroy India's secular fabric".

At a special session, Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy moved the resolutions and said the CAA, along with the plan to prepare a pan-India National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR), would destroy India's unity and secular character.

'Dividing people'

Termining the CAA "discriminatory and unconstitutional", the Chief Minister said that by excluding Muslims from the purview of the Act, the Centre was preparing the ground for a "Hindu Rashtra", as envisaged by the RSS. The aim was to whip up communal passions and divide people on religious lines to reap political dividends, he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

25 Ambassadors reach Srinagar on two-day visit

They meet locals, traders and politicians, seek inputs on measures required to move ahead

PEERZADA ASHIQ
 SRINAGAR

Twenty-five foreign Ambassadors arrived here on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir to assess the situation after the Centre's August 5 decision to revoke the erstwhile State's special status.
 They sought inputs from

locals, including select politicians, elected grass-roots representatives, editors, traders and members of the civil society, on the measures required to move ahead.
 Around 100 local delegates formed separate groups and met the envoys, including 10 from the Euro-

pean Union (EU). They were the same who met the Members of the European Parliament in October last and 17 foreign envoys in January this year.
 No politician from the regional parties, such as the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic

Party (PDP), figured on the list of delegates drafted by the administration.

Significance of visit

The visit assumes significance because of U.S. President Donald Trump's upcoming visit to India, and the EU's plan to discuss the Citi-

zenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and reading down of Article 370 in the European Parliament in March.
 Because of the inclement weather, the delegation cancelled its visit to Baramulla in north Kashmir.

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Runaway couple to reunite on V-Day eve

HC allows man to meet wife, newborn child lodged at shelter home since last year

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
 NEW DELHI

On Valentine's Day eve, a runaway couple, who were separated following a complaint by girl's father, will be reunited for the first time since May last year when the man was arrested. His wife, in the meantime, gave birth to their daughter at a women's shelter home here.



who represented Mr. Kumar, submitted before the court that to date his client "has not even seen his child, forget about caressing her". Mr. Anand urged the "kind indulgence" of the High Court in reuniting the small family.
 He said that Mr. Kumar and his wife had known each other for the past few years as they were residing in the same area. Over a period of time they became very close and fell in love.

Fled after marriage
 When the girl turned 18, Mr. Kumar and she secretly solemnised their marriage at Birla Mandir here on February 18 last year. A week later, fearing that her father had come to know about their marriage, the girl ran away with Mr. Kumar, said the advocate. The couple rented a flat in Noida and started living there as husband and wife.

The girl's father lodged a police complaint saying his daughter was less than 18 years old and had been kidnapped. Based on the FIR, Mr. Kumar was arrested and his wife was sent to the shelter home.
 After about seven months of legal proceedings, Mr. Kumar was acquitted of all charges by a local court here. Immediately after the release he tried to speak to his wife, but was denied permission.
 Mr. Anand said the mother-daughter are not allowed to go outside the shelter home and she cannot even make any calls.
 Mr. Kumar wrote to the CWC and also to Nirmal Chhaya seeking the release of his wife and daughter in December last year. When his plea remained unanswered for about two months, he moved the High Court.

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday allowed 27-year-old Ankit Kumar to meet his wife and four-month-old daughter during "reasonable hours" at Nirmal Chhaya home for women here.

A Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and I.S. Mehta also asked the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) to decide on the plea made by Mr. Kumar seeking the release of his wife and daughter within five working days.
 "In the meantime, Superintendent, Nirmal Chhaya Complex, where the moth-

er-daughter are currently lodged, is directed to permit the petitioner, Ankit Kumar, to interact with them at all reasonable hours, in accordance with law and the rules," the Bench said.
 Mr. Kumar, a Delhi resident, had moved a habeas corpus petition before the High Court urging that his wife and daughter be produced before the court and seeking permission to take them home.
 Advocate Amresh Anand,

Awareness drill



Ready to protect: NDRF personnel conducting a drill near a replica of Sun temple near the Ramchandi beach in Konark, Odisha, on Wednesday as part of the BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise. Representatives from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal and India are taking part in the three-day event aimed at safety of heritage sites at the time of disasters. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

Kerala imposes ₹13 price cap on bottled water

Government views current prices as exploitation of consumers, makes it an essential commodity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Bottled drinking water has come under a price cap in Kerala, with the State making it an essential commodity and fixing a ceiling of ₹13 per litre. The current retail price is ₹20.

The State government on Wednesday announced the price reduction after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan signed the Food Department proposal.
 Including bottled water in the list of essential commodities enables price control. Food Minister P. Thilothaman told *The Hindu* that the notification on the new price would be issued soon. He said the government had also

decided to make BIS standards mandatory for all brands of bottled water. This would force unauthorised manufacturers to shut shop.
 In 2018, the government convened a meeting of bottled water manufacturers at which it was decided to bring down the price to ₹12. But the decision was not implemented in the face of opposition from traders and some manufacturers.



Cool price: Bottled water, seen here on sale near Palakkad, will also have to meet BIS standards. • K.K. MUSTAFAH

Eminently feasible
 The Minister said some companies had insisted on a minimum price of ₹15. "We understood that manufacturers could afford to sell bottled water at much less. Traders were also fleecing buyers, extracting a

huge margin. The government cannot close its eyes to such exploitation," he said.
 The Kerala Bottled Water Manufacturers' Association welcomed the decision to reduce the price. Its

president, M. E. Mohamed, said the Association had taken the initiative to cut the retail price after multinational brands hiked their price to ₹20 a litre in 2012. There was, however, some opposition from

industry players, over commercial concerns.
 The State government sells a litre of bottled water at ₹10, through a subsidiary of the Kerala Water Authority, he said. The move by the State government would help the industry in the long run. The public felt that bottled water manufacturers were fleecing customers.
 There are around 200 bottled water manufacturers in Kerala, as per a rough estimate. But the Association has less than a hundred members. Most manufacturers sell around 300 to 500 cases of bottled water a day, a case consisting of 12 one-litre bottles.

Rohingya can't be kept in jail after serving term: HC

'They have to be taken to a safe place'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 KOLKATA

Once Rohingya refugees complete their jail term after being caught as illegal immigrants, they cannot be kept in prison, the Calcutta High Court has said.
 The refugees will have to be taken to a safe place, said the lawyer of four Rohingya petitioners who completed their jail term in 2018.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice T.B. Radhakrishnan and Justice Arijit Bandopadhyay said that once the jail term of a convicted person was over, he could not be kept in prison.
Continued monitoring
 The government could shift them to a safe place and

continue to monitor them, but jail was not the place to lodge them, Sudip Ghosh Chowdhury, counsel for the Rohingya refugees, said quoting from the court's observation.
 Mr. Ghosh Chowdhury had moved the court on behalf of an organisation that filed a habeas corpus petition to produce the arrested Rohingya refugees.
 The petition said the refugees, who were arrested in 2016, completed their jail term in the summer of 2018. However, even nearly two years after the completion of their term, the four refugees were still lodged in the Dum Dum Correctional Home which was unacceptable, the court said.

Family of five found dead at Delhi home

SAURABH TRIVEDI
 NEW DELHI

Decomposed bodies of an e-rickshaw driver, his wife and three children were found inside their house in north-east Delhi's Bhajanpura area under mysterious circumstances on Wednesday, police said.

The deceased have been identified as Shambhu Chaudhary (43), Sunita (37), Shivam (17), Sachin (14) and Komal (12).
 DCP (North East) Ved Prakash Surya said the bodies have decomposed so badly that injuries, if any, are not visible. "We have registered an FIR under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC," he said.

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