



Govt. grants FCRA registration to A.R. Rahman's NGO
page 12



Don't use 'nationalism', it may connote Nazism for some, says Bhagwat
page 13



Michael Bloomberg comes under attack at Democratic debate
page 14

India takes on New Zealand in the first Test at Wellington from today
page 18



PRINTED AT · CHENNAI · COIMBATORE · BENGALURU · HYDERABAD · MADURAI · NOIDA · VISAKHAPATNAM · THIRUVANANTHAPURAM · KOCHI · VIJAYAWADA · MANGALURU · TIRUCHIRAPPALLI · KOLKATA · HUBBALLI · MOHALI · MALAPPURAM · MUMBAI · TIRUPATI · LUCKNOW · CUTTACK · PATNA



NEARBY

SC dismisses plea by Uphaar victims' kin
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court has dismissed a curative petition filed by the relatives of Uphaar theatre fire tragedy victims against Sushil and Gopal Ansal for negligence that led to the death of 59 people in 1997. A three-judge Bench found no merit in the curative plea filed by the Association of Victims of Uphaar Tragedy.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

Govt. to hold meet with experts on pollution: Rai
NEW DELHI
Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday said the government will hold a conference on February 27 with experts, activists and officials to reduce air pollution in the city. "After the conference, the government will also write letters to Environment Ministers of U.P., Haryana and Punjab for a meeting in March to find solutions," he said.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

DIVAKAR ACADEMY FOR CIVIL SERVICES
Chennai
Open Prelims Discussion on **PRELIMS-2020**
22nd February
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM
9890788111 | 534, 1st Floor, ORN, Delhi-60
9435800807 | info@divakaracademy.com

FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ PAGE 5

Nirbhaya case convict claims mental illness

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday sought a response from the Tihar jail authorities on a plea by one of the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case seeking better treatment for his claimed mental illness, schizophrenia and head and arm injuries.

Additional sessions judge Dharmender Rana asked the prison authorities to file their reply on Vinay Kumar Sharma's plea on Saturday. According to prison officials, Sharma injured himself by banging his head on the cell wall in Tihar jail. He sustained minor injuries and was treated, they said. During the hearing, the prosecution opposed the plea, saying it was not maintainable.

Counsel for Sharma told the court that he was refusing to recognise people, including his mother. He could not identify his counsel too, the petition said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

CAA will cause Muslims to face exclusion: U.S. panel

PM made it clear that country won't budge: official sources

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

Days before U.S. President Donald Trump is due in India, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released a fact sheet on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

"There are serious concerns that the CAA serves as a protective measure for non-Muslims in case of exclusion from a nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC)," the USCIRF says. "This purpose is evident from BJP politicians' rhetoric. With the CAA in place, Muslims would primarily bear the punitive consequences of exclusion from the NRC which could include 'statelessness, deportation, or prolonged detention,' according to three United Nations Special Rapporteurs."

However, official sources in New Delhi said the new citizenship law was an internal matter that would stay. "CAA is a done deal. It's not going to change. The Prime Minister has also made it clear that India will not budge an inch on this issue," said the source in response to USCIRF's comments on the CAA and the NRC.

On the possibilities that Mr. Trump might raise uncomfortable issues like me-



Dissent continues: An anti-CAA protester being detained near the U.P. Bhavan in New Delhi on Thursday. •BIBEK CHETTRI

Address terror threat from Pak., India tells UN chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres should spend more time addressing the threat of terrorism that emanates from Pakistan, MEA official spokesperson Ravesh Kumar said on Thursday. Referring to Mr. Guterres' comments in

Pakistan, Mr. Kumar said terrorism was a more pressing issue as it violated human rights. "He made a few comments on Kashmir and on some other aspects of India and on NRC as well. Our position has not changed," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

diation during visit, an official spokesperson said, "On all these issues our position is well known to the U.S. side. Time and again we have communicated with them – the State Department, the White House and the Congress – about our

sensitivities. Our position is well known and we hope that things will go on smoothly during the visit. And, we don't see any such problem."

(With inputs from Kallol Bhattacharjee)
CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

19 killed as container falls on Kerala-bound bus in Tiruppur

25 passengers injured; police say truck driver fell asleep at the wheel

R. AKILEISH
TIRUPPUR

Nineteen people on board a Kerala State Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus were killed when a 30-tonne truck hit the central median of the National Highway and the container it was carrying fell on the bus on the outskirts of Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu early on Thursday.

The accident occurred near Avinashi on NH 544 connecting Salem and Kochi. Police said the bus was plying from Bengaluru to Ernakulam. Around 3.15 a.m., the truck carrying imported tiles from the Kochi port hit the central median, which was about a foot high, on the six-lane highway and entered the opposite lane.

The sudden jerk caused the detachment of the heavy container, which fell on the bus that was passing by, crushing one side of the passenger vehicle, according to the police.

Driver arrested

The Tiruppur city police nabbed truck driver A. Hemaraj, 38, who fled the accident spot, near Perundurai in Erode district.

"He fell asleep while driving the truck," Tiruppur Police Commissioner Sanjay Kumar told *The Hindu*.

The bus had a seating ca-



Early morning shock: The mangled remains of the bus that met with an accident near Tiruppur city near Coimbatore early on Thursday. •M. PERIASAMY

capacity of 48 passengers and two crew members, of whom 19, including driver Gireesh died, and 25 were injured. Among the 50 people (as per the KSRTC list), 46 have been accounted for and the status of four is yet to be confirmed, according to the police. They are trying to ascertain if the four had boarded the vehicle or had left the accident spot on their own having possibly sustained only minor injuries.

Tiruppur Collector K. Vijayarathikyan, the Police Commissioner and other district officials visited the acci-

dent site around 7 a.m. Mr. Vijayarathikyan told *The Hindu* that 25 injured passengers had been shifted to multiple hospitals, including private hospitals in Tiruppur and Coimbatore. One injured passenger was referred to the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital. The bodies of all the victims were shifted to the Tiruppur Government Hospital.

Case registered

The Thirumuranpoondi police registered a case against the arrested truck driver. He fled the accident

spot and told an acquaintance to pick him up at a spot in Perundurai, which is when the police nabbed him around 12.30 p.m.

He was booked under Sections 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way), 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code. He is expected to be remanded in judicial custody.

SURVIVORS IN SHOCK ▶ PAGE 8

DRIVER AND CONDUCTOR HAD GOOD TRACK RECORD ▶ PAGE 8

Shooter kills nine in German bar, cafe

Officials see 'xenophobic' motive



Nation jolted: Police personnel cordon off the site of attack in central Hanau, near Frankfurt, on Thursday. •AP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HANAU

A shooter with suspected far-right beliefs killed nine people at a shisha bar and a cafe in the German city of Hanau, the police said on Thursday, before apparently killing himself and his mother. Federal counter-terror prosecutors said they were investigating the case, which showed "signs of a xenophobic motive".

The gunman was identified as 43-year-old German Tobias R. Around 10 p.m. on Wednesday, he rang the

doorbell at the shisha bar and shot at people in the smoking section, killing five, mass-market daily *Bild* said.

He then fled by car before opening fire at the Arena Bar & Cafe, killing three people outside. One of the injured persons died later.

The gunman left behind online material that suggested a terror attack motivated by "a hostile attitude to foreigners", said Peter Beuth, the Interior Minister of the state of Hesse.

'RACISM IS A POISON' ▶ PAGE 14

SC interlocutors examine alternative routes

On second day of dialogue, Shaheen Bagh protesters propose traffic solutions

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court-appointed interlocutors on Thursday examined alternative routes that could be opened to get around the traffic blockade due to the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests at Shaheen Bagh in the Capital. On the second day of dialogue, senior lawyers Sanjay Hegde and Sadhana Ramachandran also requested demonstrators to meet them in smaller groups.

The interlocutors sought to make a distinction between the protesters' objections to the CAA and the roadblock caused by the sit-in. While multiple protesters questioned why the Supreme Court hadn't heard the challenge to the CAA yet and pronounced its verdict on the Act's constitutionality, Mr. Hegde and Ms. Ramachandran assured them that all their arguments would be placed during the hearing in court.

Speaking to thousands of people gathered here from the makeshift stage at the protest site, Ms. Ramachandran explained that the



Interlocutors Sanjay Hegde and Sadhana Ramachandran talk to protesters at Shaheen Bagh on Thursday. •PTI

court had also upheld their right to protest. "Sanjay and I don't want you to get up from Shaheen Bagh. Shaheen Bagh will remain intact. But can we together come up with a solution so that demonstrations continue here in the same space but the public may also use the road, if that is possible?" she said.

The crowd voiced scepticism. "We are being heard

Mr. Hegde acknowledged the fact but cautioned that if something bad were to happen, it could affect other ongoing protests nationwide. The interlocutors also argued that had the Supreme Court so desired, it could have directed the government to clear the road; instead it chose to reach out through the mediators.

The commotion during the discussions prompted Ms. Ramachandran to propose that groups of 10-20 women meet the mediators one after another for a more meaningful dialogue, but several protesters didn't warm up to the idea.

90-minute interaction

On the protesters' suggestion, the mediators, following the 90-minute interaction, decided to examine alternative routes near Kalindi Kunj and Faridabad that could be opened in order to reduce traffic congestion. Two volunteers from the site accompanied Mr. Hegde and Ms. Ramachandran to show them the options. The duo is expected to return on Friday to continue talks.

28 anti-CAA protesters issued recovery notices of ₹64 lakh

They include Darapuri and Sadaf who intend to move court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Twenty-eight persons in Lucknow have been asked to pay around ₹64 lakh as recovery for damage to private and public property during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act at the Parivartan Chowk on December 19.

Several vehicles, including a State bus and police motorcycles, were damaged in the arson and vandalism. Those served notices include retired IPS officer S.R. Dara-

puri, lawyer and activist Mohammad Shoaib, Congress member Sadaf Jafar, teacher Robin Verma and cultural activist Deepak Kabir.

The order issued by K.P. Singh, Additional District Magistrate (East), earlier this week asks the 28 persons to pay the amount within 30 days or face confiscation of their properties. The ADM found them responsible for illegal assembly and fixed the damages under "joint and several liability". The accused are out on

bail in the arson and vandalism case slapped against them. Mr. Darapuri and Ms. Jafar said on Thursday that they intend to move court against the recovery notices. They stated they have not yet received any official communication. "I am hearing news that I've been issued recovery notices by the district administration, though I have not received any such notice till now. I will challenge it in the High Court if I get any," said the retired IPS officer. (With inputs from PTI)

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Two Dalits tortured in Rajasthan, seven arrested

Several videos of the assault and torture went viral on social media, leading to reactions and protests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Two Dalit youth were beaten up, stripped and tortured in Rajasthan's Nagaur district on the suspicion of stealing money from the cash box of an automobile service agency. The police on Thursday arrested seven persons accused of committing the crime after several videos of the assault went viral on social media, leading to protests in the State Assembly and strong reactions from political leaders.

The videos of the assault showed a group of men thrashing the two youth,

who are cousins, with rubber belts. They later allegedly dipped a piece of cloth wrapped on a screwdriver in petrol and inserted it in the private parts of one of them.

The incident at Nagaur district's Karnu village reportedly took place on February 16. The victims, Bisa Ram, 24, and Panna Ram, 20, could be heard screaming and pleading in the video footage.

The youths lodged a complaint at Panchodi police station, after which a case under Sections 342 (wrongful confinement), 323 (causing hurt) and 143 (unlawful as-

sembly) of the Indian Penal Code as well as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was registered.

Heinous crime unit

Director General of Police Bhopendra Singh said the heinous crime monitoring unit would monitor the case and it would be taken up under the case officer scheme for speedy investigation. In addition to the seven accused arrested by the police, seven other were detained and their alleged role in the crime was being looked into. Three legislators of the

Opposition Rashtriya Loktantrik Party tried to disturb the Assembly proceedings when Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot was about to start reading out his budget speech. As they entered the well of the House to protest against the incident, Speaker C.P. Joshi asked them to go back to their seats.

The three MLAs later staged a dharna on the stairs at the Assembly's entrance gate. They were carrying placards condemning the incident and demanding removal of the Nagaur Superintendent of Police. Mr. Gehlot said immediate

and effective action had been taken in the horrific incident and nobody would be spared.

Earlier in the day, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi reacted sharply to the incident and said the video of the two victims being tortured was "horrific and sickening". He asked the State government to take immediate action to bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice.

BSP chief Mayawati said the incident in the Congress-ruled State was a "painful reminder" of the 2016 Una flogging incident.