



Alliance Air flights to Batticaloa likely to be announced on Feb. 7

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Surrogate mother need not be a 'close relative', says Rajya Sabha panel

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More Chinese cities shut down as virus death toll rises

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Taylor's knock trumps Shreyas' effort as NZ wins first ODI

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NEARBY



Roll back CAA, M.P. Cabinet tells Centre

BHOPAL
 The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet on Wednesday passed a resolution against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, calling upon the Centre to abrogate it as it purportedly violates the basic tenets of the Constitution and the fundamental Right to Equality.

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Five-year-old raped in Chanakyapuri

NEW DELHI
 A five-year-old girl was raped, allegedly by her neighbour, in the quarters of an embassy in Chanakyapuri, the police said on Wednesday. The 25-year-old accused has been arrested, they added. The incident took place on February 1 and a complaint was lodged by the girl's family members on Sunday, the police said, adding that the child was admitted in a hospital and is currently stable and out of danger.

CITY PAGE 4

Trust formed for Ram temple construction: PM

It will have 15 trustees, including one Dalit, says Home Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI
 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday told the Lok Sabha that the Cabinet had approved a scheme for the construction of a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya by setting up an autonomous trust, the Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, to take forward the process as per the Supreme Court's orders.

The Supreme Court mandated three-month deadline to set up a trust was to end on February 9, a day after Delhi votes.

The Union Home Ministry notified the Trust and Home Minister Amit Shah said in a tweet that there would be 15 trustees, out of which one would always be from the Dalit society.

As soon as the Lok Sabha convened at 11 a.m., Mr. Modi said he wanted to share information on a "very important and historical subject". He said, "This topic is close to my heart like millions of countrymen and I consider it my great fortune to talk about it."

Mr. Modi announced that the government had decided to transfer the entire 67.703 acres to the trust. "This trust will be fully autonomous to

Track to the temple

A look at the key points of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement regarding the construction of a Ram temple at Ayodhya

- Mr. Modi announced the formation of a 15-member Trust named 'Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra', to oversee the construction of the temple

- This Trust will be empowered to take independent decisions on the construction of the temple and other related subjects, Mr. Modi said

- He said the government will transfer the whole of the approx 67.703 acres acquired

land to the new Trust

- Its members include Jagadguru Shankaracharya, Jyotishpeethadheeshwar Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj, Jagadguru Madhavacharya Swami Vishva Prasannatheerth Ji Maharaj, Yugpurush Paramanand Ji Maharaj, Swami Govinddev Giri Ji Maharaj, Vimlendra Mohan Pratap Mishra, Anil Mishra, Kameshwar Chaupal and Mahant Dinendra Das

- Two prominent practising Hindus will be nominated by the board of trustees. Two Hindu IAS officials below the rank of Joint Secretary to the govt. will be appointed by the Centre and the U.P. govt. Ayodhya District Collector will be the ex-officio trustee



The Trust will be headed by former Attorney General and Supreme Court lawyer K. Parasaran

The trust will comprise 15 members, including one individual from the Dalit community

take any decision regarding the construction of temple."

The Prime Minister complimented the citizens for showing maturity in accepting the court verdict of November 9 last. "People of the country have shown great restraint and maturity in accepting the court order and this is indeed praiseworthy. I salute them for this maturity," he said.

The Uttar Pradesh government had approved the Supreme Court's direction to grant 5 acres to the Sunni Central Wakf Board, he said. Against the backdrop of

the ongoing protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens, Mr. Modi used the opportunity to reach out to different sections. "We believe in the philosophy that the world is one family [vasudhaiva kutumbakam] and everyone should be happy [sukhino bahavonto]. People professing every sect and every religion, be they Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains and Parsis, they are all part of the larger Indian family. That's why my government has followed the principle of

Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas," he said.

"Join me in support of the construction of a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya on this historic occasion and let us all speak in one voice," he addressed the members, especially those on the Opposition benches by repeating the words, 'aayeaye, aayeaye' (come, come).

Responding to Mr. Modi's call, several ruling MPs chanted 'Jai Shri Ram' amid thumping of desks.

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MORE REPORTS ON PAGE 12

Centre moves SC in Nirbhaya case

Its plea to separately execute death sentences was rejected by Delhi HC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday appealed to the Supreme Court within hours of the Delhi High Court's rejection of its plea to separately execute the death sentence of the Nirbhaya gang-rape convicts.

The Centre had challenged a January 31, 2020 decision of the sessions court to postpone the issuance of fresh death warrants against the four convicts, especially Mukesh Kumar Singh, whose mercy petition had already been declined by the President on January 17.

The government has argued in the Supreme Court that under the Delhi Prison Rules of 2018 the pendency of legal remedies or mercy petitions of other co-convicts would have no bearing on the fate of a convict whose plea for mercy has already been rejected.

'Miscarriage of justice'
 The government has argued that the 2018 Rules does not prohibit the execution of death sentence of co-convicts, one by one, on the rejection of their respective mercy petitions. Deferring the execution of



Nirbhaya's mother outside the Delhi High Court on Wednesday. ■PTI

death sentence of all the four convicts, specifically when Mukesh's mercy plea has already been dismissed by the President, has led to "gross

miscarriage of justice" to the victim's family as well as the society as a whole, the government contended. The convicts, the Centre said, were taking the judicial process for a ride.

The High Court judgment, however, held that the 2018 Rules observe that pendency of any application filed by one convict would necessarily require the postponement of the death sentence of all his co-convicts, even those whose mercy plea had been rejected.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Odisha notifies house listing, silent on NPR

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Wednesday issued notification for carrying out house-listing operations as part of the Census between April and September 2020 while there was no word on conducting the National Population Register survey during the same period. House listing and NPR are usually conducted simultaneously. "We cannot comment on NPR at this stage," said a government senior official.

DETAILS ON PAGE 12

Shaheen Bagh polling stations 'critical'

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh on Wednesday said that all five polling stations in Shaheen Bagh, comprising 40 polling booths, have been put under the "critical" category and web-

casting will be done on polling day as part of increased surveillance.

Stating that "confidence building" mechanisms were also under way in the constituency, Mr. Singh said that paramilitary forces will also be present in the area along

with local police personnel, according to norms meant for constituencies categorised as critical. A total of 516 locations, including 3,704 polling booths, have been identified as critical, the Delhi poll office said.

DETAILS ON PAGE 3

Electric vehicles, SUVs energise Auto Show

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA GREATER NOIDA

Electric vehicles and new models of conventional SUVs are in the spotlight at this year's Auto Expo, being held here under the shadow of a prolonged demand slowdown that has hit the industry.

Billboards greeting car buffs and industry professionals to the various pavilions feature the gleaming new motors, making it clear that these are the machines the big marques are placing their bets on. Industry data point to electric becoming the new buzzword, and SUVs, the major vehicle segment in top gear when it comes to sales.

The biggest biennial automotive extravaganza is evidently feeling the ripple effects of the demand slowdown, with the majority of two-wheeler makers and many car makers skipping the event. These include market leader Hero Moto-Corp, Honda Motorcycles, TVS Motors, Royal Enfield, BMW, Audi, Toyota Kirloskar Motors, Honda Cars, Ford and Fiat.

Suzuki Motorcycle looked like a lone-warrior for the



Great Wall Motors showcasing its electric vehicle at the Auto Expo 2020 on Wednesday. ■KAMAL NARANG

two-wheeler on day one of the expo, launching the BS6 versions of the Access 125, Gixxer series, Burgman Street and Intruder.

The mood is also dampened by the global coronavirus outbreak, with the top leadership of all Chinese participants staying away. Industry executives believe that this is likely to adversely affect the attendance at Auto Expo 2020, which will open for the public from February 7, until February 12.

The event was kick-started by the country's largest car maker, Maruti Suzuki, globally premiering its Futuro-e concept - an electric SUV with nuances of a coupe and flexible swivel travel seats.

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SHUBHRA RANJAN

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