



Every penny is reaching beneficiaries, PM Modi says in Bundelkhand
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Muhyiddin Yassin to be Malaysia's Prime Minister
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Radha, Shafali star in India's thumping win over Sri Lanka
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Jamieson's five-for has India on the mat in Christchurch Test
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NEARBY

Two Nirbhaya case convicts move court

NEW DELHI
Two of the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case, Akshay Thakur and Pawan Kumar Gupta, on Saturday moved a Delhi court seeking stay on the execution of their death warrants, scheduled for March 3. Additional sessions judge Dharmender Rana issued notice to the Tihar Jail authorities on the pleas directing the officials to file their response by March 2.

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U.S. strikes a deal with Taliban to end 18-year-long Afghan war

A good step but the road ahead will not be easy: Defense Secretary Mark Esper

REUTERS
KABUL/DOHA
The U.S. signed a deal with the Taliban on Saturday that gradually pave the way for a full withdrawal of foreign soldiers from Afghanistan over the next 14 months and represents a step towards ending the 18-year-war in the nation.

While the agreement creates a path for the U.S. to gradually pull out of its longest war, many feel that the talks, scheduled to take place between the Afghan sides, could be much more complicated.

The deal was signed in the Qatari capital Doha by U.S. Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar.

U.S. Secretary of State



On the same page: U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, left, and Taliban political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in Doha. AP

Mike Pompeo was present. American Defense Secretary Mark Esper called the accord a good step but just the beginning.

'Patience, compromise'
"The road ahead will not be easy. Achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan will require patience and compromise

among all parties," said Mr. Esper, who met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul, where they announced a joint declaration in parallel to the accord.

The U.S. said it is committed to reducing the number of its troops to 8,600 from the current 13,000 within 135 days of signing the deal.

It also said it is working with allies to proportionally reduce the number of coalition forces in Afghanistan, if the Taliban were to adhere to its commitments. A full withdrawal of all foreign forces would occur within 14 months of the deal getting signed if the Taliban holds up its end of the deal, the joint statement said.

Hours before the deal, the Taliban ordered its fighters "to refrain from any kind of attack... for the happiness of the nation".

"The biggest thing is that we hope the U.S. remains committed to their promises during the negotiation and peace deal," said Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the hardline Islamist group.

MORE REPORTS ON PAGE 12

Kejriwal urges riot-affected families to return home

Two NHRC teams set up to probe Delhi violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Incendiary slogans of "shoot the traitors" – raised by BJP leaders during the recent election campaign – were shouted at one of the busiest stations on the Delhi Metro network and during a peace march in the centre of the city on Saturday, as Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal issued an appeal to displaced residents of riot-hit northeast Delhi to return to their homes.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) deputed two fact-finding teams to investigate cases of communal violence in the national capital, where at least 42 people were killed and more than 200 injured.

Though no violence was reported in the riot-affected northeast district, residents of the affected areas were hesitant to resume work. Though many shops reopened, shopkeepers said their employees were scared to return.

Assuming charge as acting Commissioner of Police, S.N. Srivastava said his first priority was to bring back peace and communal harmony to the city. He also said the police were register-



No consolation: The kin of Mohammed Aamir and Hashim breaking down during their funeral procession. PTI

Cong.: appoint amicus curiae

The Congress accused the police of "one-sided" investigation into the incidents of violence in Delhi and demanded that the SC appoint an amicus curiae to look into the cases. Party spokesperson Anand Sharma said an "environment of fear" had gripped the city. PAGE 11

BSF to repair jawan's home

The BSF said it would repair the house of its constable burnt down by a mob in Delhi. Constable Mohammad Anees, 29, posted in Malkangiri in Odisha, is to get married in May. Senior officers spoke to Mr. Anees and a DIG-rank officer visited his family on Saturday. PAGE 11

Charges false, Kanhaiya will come out unscathed: CPI

AAP government bowed to political pressure and granted permission to prosecute him, says Raja

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after the AAP government in Delhi sanctioned the prosecution of former JNU Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar and nine others in a sedition case, the Communist Party of India

(CPI) said it would fight the case legally and politically.

In a statement, CPI general secretary D. Raja said the party was confident that Mr. Kumar, a member of its national executive, would come out unscathed as the charges were false and polit-

ically motivated.

"It is unfortunate that the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government has succumbed to political pressure and granted permission to prosecute Kanhaiya. It may be recalled here that the CM himself has in the beginning said that

there is no case of sedition against Kanhaiya and videos were doctored. We are yet to ascertain why this sudden change of heart has happened," Mr. Raja said.

Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram said on Twitter that the Kejriwal govern-

ment was "no less ill-informed than the Centre" in its understanding of the sedition law. "I strongly disapprove of the sanction granted to prosecute Mr. Kanhaiya Kumar and others for alleged offences under sections 124A and 120B of IPC," he said.



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