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Netanyahu leads in Israeli election, but still lacks majority  
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Mukesh rips through Karnataka, puts Bengal in Ranji final  
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## NEARBY



**In Nikhil Vihar, Muslims told to vacate homes**  
BAHADURGARH  
Around 50 men allegedly went around Nikhil Vihar, a locality spread across Haryana and Delhi, threatening two dozen Muslim families to vacate their homes before Holi. The Haryana police have deployed personnel there after receiving complaint.  
CITY ► PAGE 2

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# UN rights body to move SC on CAA

MEA says world body has no right to file petition on India's internal matter

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
KALLLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

In an unprecedented and rare move, the Geneva-based Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has announced that it plans to file an application in the Supreme Court, asking to be implemented in petitions challenging the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

Responding to the announcement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the United Nations body had no right to file a petition that will ask the court to appoint the Commissioner for Human Rights as an assistant or

*amicus curiae* in the case.

The OHCHR plan has been criticised by diplomatic and legal experts here, including one of the 22 petitioners in the case, as an "overreach".

"The High Commissioner [Michelle Bachelet] intends to submit an *amicus curiae* brief shortly on the Citizenship [Amendment] Act [CAA] in the Indian Supreme Court, in accordance with the Court's established procedures, and she has informed the Indian Permanent Mission in Geneva of her intention," Rupert Colville, OHCHR spokesperson based in Geneva, confirmed to *The Hindu*.

"The *amicus curiae* will



An OHCHR spokesperson said that High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet intends to submit a petition to be '*amicus curiae*', and provide the SC with an overview of relevant international human rights standards for its review of the CAA

No foreign party has any locus standi on issues pertaining to India's sovereignty  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

UN intervention to be decided by SC, doesn't change case against CAA  
DEB MUKHERJI, ANTI-CAA PETITIONER

Unprecedented in the diplomatic history of India  
NATWAR SINGH, FORMER EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

focus on providing an overview of relevant and applicable international human rights standards and norms to support the Court's deliberations in the context of its review of the CAA," the spokesperson said.

Last week, Ms. Bachelet informed the Human Rights Council that the UN body had "great concerns over the CAA". She had also met with MEA Secretary (West) Vikas Swarup, who had travelled to Geneva to represent India

at the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council last Thursday. On Monday, the Indian Mission in Geneva was formally informed of the OHCHR's plans to file the petition.

MEA spokesperson Raaveesh Kumar said on Tuesday, "The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is an internal matter of India and concerns the sovereign right of the Indian Parliament to make laws. We strongly believe that no foreign party has any *locus standi* on issues pertaining to India's sovereignty."

"We are confident that our sound and legally sustainable position would be vindicated by the Honourable Supreme Court," he added.

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# Envoy summoned after Iran slams Delhi riots

India protests Foreign Minister's tweet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif's comments on the riots in Delhi are not acceptable to India, an official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday.

The message was conveyed to the Iranian envoy to India, who was summoned to the Ministry hours after Mr. Zarif condemned the "violence against Muslims" and asked India to stop "thuggery" against the community.

MEA spokesperson Raaveesh Kumar said, "It was conveyed that his selective and tendentious characterisation of recent events in Delhi are not acceptable. We

do not expect such comments from a country like Iran." He confirmed that Iran's Ambassador Ali Chegeni was summoned to the Ministry to convey India's unhappiness about the Minister's comments.

In a social media post, Mr. Zarif had said, "Iran condemns the wave of organised violence against Indian Muslims. Path forward lies in peaceful dialogue and rule of law."

The comments from him came days after India fast-tracked work for the Chabahar project of Iran, even as both sides are struggling to exchange thousands of citizens stranded in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

# Teenager dies at GTB Hospital

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

Another death was reported from Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital here on Tuesday but hospital authorities said it is not related to the recent violence in north-east Delhi.

Eighteen-year-old Aqib died at the hospital on Monday. His body was handed over to the family on Tuesday. "He suffered a head injury in the violence when he went out to purchase clothes for his sister's wedding," said his older brother Wasim.

Health rights activists, meanwhile, said that GTB Hospital, which was the first hospital reached during the recent riots, "did not have a functional CT scan facility for the first two days of violence".

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## Reaching out



Helping hand: Riot-affected people receiving relief kits at Mustafabad in north-east Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

# NIA arrests man, daughter in Pulwama attack case

Duo accused of providing shelter to the suicide bomber

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

A man and his daughter were arrested on Tuesday from Pulwama's Hakripora village for allegedly sheltering the local suicide bomber who attacked a CRPF convoy last year in Pulwama that left 40 jawans dead.

Their house was allegedly used to shoot the bomber's last video by the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM).

They were identified as Tariq Ahmed Shah, 50, a driver by profession, and Insha Jan, 23.

'Provided logistics'  
"Ms. Jan facilitated the terrorists at their home and provided food and other logistics on more than 15 occasions during 2018 and 2019. She was in constant touch with Muhammad



When terror struck: A file photo of security personnel inspecting the blast site in Pulwama district. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Umar Farooq, a Pakistani improvised explosive device (IED) maker, over telephone and other social media applications," an NIA spokesman said.

During the initial interrogation, Shah disclosed that the suicide bomber, Adil Ahmed Dar, and his Pakistani associates stayed in the

house, the NIA said. "Besides sheltering the terrorists, the house was used for planning the heinous attack on the CRPF convoy. It was also used for preparing and recording a video of Dar, which was released by JeM soon after the attack."

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# Italian tourist tests positive for COVID-19

6th case confirmed; PM chairs review meeting; visas to Italy, Iran suspended

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday chaired a review meeting on the preparedness to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, with the number of confirmed cases rising to six in the country.

"Apart from the three positive cases from Kerala, who have recovered, three more cases have been confirmed positive for COVID-19 and six have heavy viral load and are awaiting confirmation. All are in isolation and are stable," said a senior Health Ministry official.

"Also, 24 persons, including 21 Italian tourists and three Indians (bus driver, conductor and tourist guide), who had contact with the Italian national confirmed as COVID-19 positive in Jaipur, have been shifted

## Preventive measures

The World Health Organisation has announced some basic protective measures against COVID-19

- Thoroughly wash hands with soap, or use alcohol-based hand rub
- Maintain at least 3 feet distance with anyone who is coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching eyes, nose & mouth
- Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing
- Stay at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose. Seek medical advice if conditions worsen

to the ITBP facility for testing. Depending on the result, action will be taken," added the official.

"On Tuesday, an Italian tourist in Jaipur tested positive, taking the total number of confirmed cases in India to six so far," a Ministry re-

lease said. Delhi and Telangana had reported one case each on Monday. While the Delhi patient has a travel history to Italy, the patient from Telangana had travelled to Dubai, the release added.

Contact tracing of the people who may have interact-

ed with the six confirmed cases is being carried out through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network, the Ministry added.

The Health Ministry has suspended all regular visas/e-visas granted on or before March 3 to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea and Japan, who have not yet entered India, in view of the emerging global scenarios regarding COVID-19. Visa on arrival (VoA) issued on or before March 3 to Japanese and South Korean nationals, who have not yet entered India, have also been suspended.

(With PTI inputs)

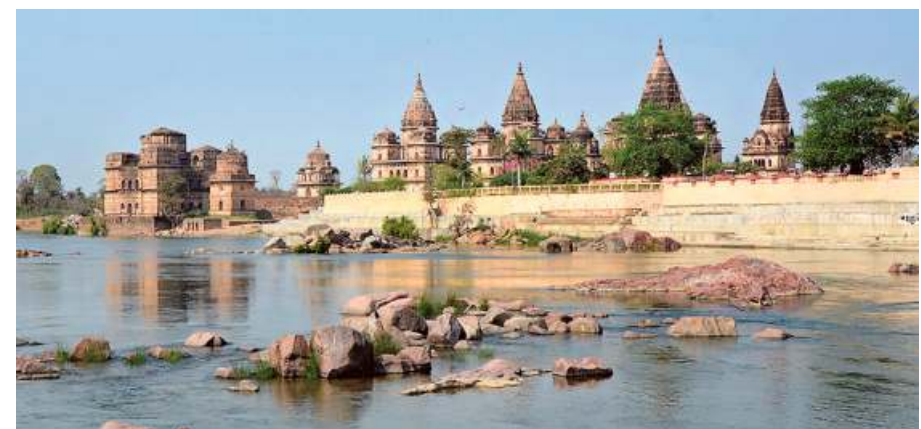
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WE ARE IN UNCHARTED TERRITORY, SAYS WHO ► PAGE 16

TOKYO OLYMPICS ON TRACK, SAYS IOC ► PAGE 22

# Centre working on exclusive body for river-linking projects

National Interlinking of Rivers Authority will also generate funds



Water management: A file photo of the Betwa river in Madhya Pradesh which is to be linked to the Ken river.

T. RAMAKRISHNAN  
CHENNAI

The Central government is working on the establishment of an exclusive body to implement projects for linking rivers.

To be called the National Interlinking of Rivers Authority (NIRA), the proposed body is expected to take up both inter-State and intra-State projects. It will also make arrangements for generating funds, internally and externally.

An official of the National Water Development Agency (NWDA), which is responsible for the formulation of proposals of the linking of rivers, said an updated draft Cabinet note has been circulated to other Ministries in the Central government. On

receipt of comments, the note will be finalised by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and sent to the Union Cabinet for approval.

'No specific timeline'

The proposal for an apex body on river linking has been under discussion for the past 18 months. However, the official said that as of now, no specific timeline has been determined for the constitution of the Authority. Also, the earlier idea of framing a Bill, envisaging the creation of the NIRA, is not being pursued now.

The subject of establishment of the Authority was discussed at the last meeting of the Special Committee on Inter-Linking of Rivers (ILR) last week in New Delhi.

Headed by Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the panel includes Irrigation or Water Resources Ministers and Secretaries of States. Since its formation, the Committee has held 17 meetings.

It is being assisted by a Task Force for ILR, which is a committee of experts essentially drawn from the Jal Shakti Ministry, Central Water Commission and the NWDA.

A Tamil Nadu government official said the Centre has not yet shared with States details regarding the new body though it has conveyed to them that it is planning to have an implementation agency for ILR projects.

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# No one will lose citizenship, asserts Mamata

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Asserting that there is no need for residents to apply for citizenship again, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday that she will not allow even one person to be driven out of the State. "None of the refugees living in the State will lose their citizenship," she said.

Addressing a rally at Kaliaganj in Uttar Dinajpur district, Ms. Banerjee said Indians hailing from Bangladesh who have voted in elections here are citizens of the country and don't need to apply afresh for citizenship. "Those who have come to India from Bangladesh are all Indian citizens, they have citizenship. What is the need to give citizenship anew? They have been voting in one election after another, electing Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers, and then it is said that they are not citizens," Ms. Banerjee said.

The Chief Minister and her party, Trinamool Congress, have been opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act with the slogan 'Amra Sobai Nagarik' (we are all citizens).

Referring to the Delhi violence, she said, "So many people have been killed... I will never allow a repeat of the Delhi happenings in Bengal. One should not forget that this is Bengal, not Delhi."

# Centre in talks with States wary of NPR

Minister tells Lok Sabha no document would be collected during the exercise

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday said it was in discussion with States that had expressed concerns over the updation of the National Population Register (NPR) from April 1 to September 30.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai told the Lok Sabha that no document would be collected during the exercise, which would be

carried out along with the house-listing phase of Census 2021.

"The government is in discussion with the States having concerns in regard to the preparation of NPR," Mr. Rai said. "The demographic and other particulars of each family and individual are to be updated/collected during the updation of NPR. No document is to be collected during this exercise," he said.

Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh are some of the non-BJP-ruled States that have expressed apprehensions about the proposed new format of the NPR and are critical of the exercise. The Union Cabinet has approved an outlay of ₹3,941.35 crore for the exercise.

The "pretest" or the trial NPR form collected details from 30 lakh respondents

last year on 21 parameters, including "place of birth of father and mother, last place of residence" along with other information like Aadhaar particulars (optional), voter ID card, mobile phone and driving licence number. The new NPR, for the first time, is also expected to collect information on a respondent's "mother tongue". In 2010 and 2015, the NPR collected details on 14 parameters.