



Chairperson of Delhi Women's Commission Suati Malwai end her indefinite fast after the Union Cabinet approved an ordinance to amend Protection of Child from Sexual Offences at Rajghat, in New Delhi.

Delhi govt issues guidelines for safety, security of children

NEW DELHI, APR 22 /-/ The Delhi government has issued guidelines for safety and security of children in the national capital. The women and child development department has issued an order on the guidelines and compliance of standard operating procedures, saying that all child care institutions must have adequate number of security officers, guards, CCTV cameras and fire extinguishers to ensure safety and security of the children in such institutions. According to department, there are 107 child care institutions including 14 government-run centres. "Adequate number of CCTV cameras must be installed at promi-

nent places of the child care institutions, specifically at the entry and exit gates, perimeter walls, staircase, playgrounds, dining room, entertainment room and administration block so that the activities of the children are monitored effectively," the order stated.

"The women and child development department said that the superintendents in-charge must prominently display important phone numbers of the nearest police stations, fire stations, CAPS control room, toll free child helpline number, doctor-on-call/nurse, juvenile justice board among others. The department said there should be an assembly point in every child care institutions

where all children and officers are required to gather in case of any emergency situation. "High-mast flood lights must be installed along/near the perimeter/boundary walls. Perimeter/boundary walls must also have barbed wire for the purpose of safety," the order stated. It also talked about steps to be taken in the case of fire or earthquake or other similar incident immediately.

"In case of such incidents, child care institutions must ensure evacuation of children from all rooms through all available exits to a safe location at a common point outside the building and keep children under vigil," an official of the department said.(PTI)

Delhi-NCR soaks in Bihu festivities

NEW DELHI, APR 22 /-/ Bihu functions are the flavour in the Delhi-NCR area which has hosted several such events in the past 10 days or so to celebrate the Rangali Bihu festival that heralds the Assamese new year and the onset of spring. If it was Gurgaon on April 14, the IGNCA grounds hosted a Bihu function the next day. Similar functions were held at Noida and Faridabad yesterday and one at Dwarka here today. The highlights of these functions were husoris (group dances that are an integral part of the Bihu celebrations), Bihu songs and dhol (drum) performances. Also popular artists from Assam like Zublee Baruah, Mousam

Gogoi, Nirmali Das and Neel Akash gave spirited performances belting out Bihu and other numbers. The Bihu at Gurgaon was a tribute to Assamese actor Biju Phukan and filmmaker Abdul Majid who passed away last year. At the Delhi Bihu function, there was a dance performance on popular songs from Phukan's films. "Assam Association Gurgaon (AAG) has been celebrating Rangali Bihu in Gurgaon since its inception in 2007. During its early years, it was an effort of few very highly motivated individuals to bring together the people who hail from Assam and live in Gurgaon to celebrate Bihu," says AAG general secretary

Prabhakar Dutta. "However, AAG grew in leaps and bounds in the subsequent years and today it has earned the reputation as an organisation to celebrate one of the most organised and colourful Bihu events in the entire NCR region," Dutta adds. "Such functions provide an opportunity for Assamese people living in the national capital and the satellite towns to meet and enjoy the evening," says Assam Association Delhi general secretary Dipak Saikia. The event at Noida was organised by the Assam People's Welfare Association, Trans Yamuna Delhi-NCR, and that in Faridabad by the Assam Association. (PTI)

Merchant navy officer arrested for stalking DU student

NEW DELHI, APR 22 /-/ A 25-year-old merchant navy officer was arrested for allegedly stalking and harassing a Delhi University student, the police said today. The

incident was reported from southeast Delhi's Amar Colony and the man was arrested on Friday, they said. The student claimed that the man met her at a park a few

months ago and had asked for her phone to make a call as his phone's battery was out of charge. He also convinced the girl to share her number and started messaging and

Women's safety: Little has changed in Delhi since 2012, say students, experts

NEW DELHI, APR 22 /-/ Debates over the safety of women have kicked up a dust, but done little to ensure their security, students and professionals say, stressing nothing has changed in the national capital after the 2012 brutal gangrape that briefly sparked some soul-searching and led to a new law. Delhi reported 15,319 cases of crimes against women in 2014, 17,222 in 2015 and 15,310 in 2016, data collected by the National Crime Records Bureau stated. It won the dubious sobriquet of the "national capital rape" when the city registered the maximum number of 1,996 rape cases in the country in 2016, up from 1,893 in 2015. But women stressed that little had changed since people came out to the streets in protest against the rape and death of a paramedical intern in 2012.

"Ask any girl, and she would tell you what happens with us daily in public spaces. People stare at our body, they wrongly brush past us, we are subjected to abuse and we get intimidated," said a 23-year-old MA student who did not wish to be identified. The violations occurred in places that ranged from Metro trains and DTC buses to

shopping malls and colleges, she said. And they regularly took place on social media sites. "I was even threatened on Facebook for not reporting to somebody's sexual advances," she said. "What business do people have in asking if I am a virgin or if my 'seal' is intact?" Her parents worried about her safety every time she went out of the house, she said, adding that venturing out after 8 pm for her was a strict "no." "But every other day we keep hearing news of rape or molestation that happens not only to young women but to children, too," she said. After the gangrape of the paramedical student on board a bus in Delhi on December 16, 2012, the Supreme Court had upheld death for the four accused in the case it described as the "most brutal and diabolical". In its wake, the government amended the criminal law in April 2013, bringing stricter punishment for crimes including rape, sexual harassment, voyeurism, stalking and acid attacks. "Even after the amendments, the ground level enforcement is really bad," said Anahita Bakshi, a public relations professional based out of South Delhi. The 25-year-old professional said most women would say

they felt unsafe if asked about the way the city treated them. Sharper laws have been brought in, but few believed they had made a difference. "Nothing has changed even six years after the Delhi gangrape case with respect to women's safety and the psychological fear that we have to deal with. The only change, perhaps, is that the situation has worsened," said the postgraduate student, advocating death penalty for rapists.

However, victims and experts believed the death penalty could not be a deterrent to rape and crime against women unless the political leadership showed a commitment. "The decision (by the Union Cabinet) is a mere 'lollipop' given to the people ahead of the general elections," said the father of the 2012 gangrape victim. He also stressed the death penalty would not deter people against such crimes, and added that the Union Cabinet's latest move was insensitive towards children above 12 years. "And what if the accused of a rape turns out to be a juvenile? Will he face the law," he asked. Supreme Court lawyer and rights activist Vrinda Grover also asserted that nothing had changed since 2012 in the lev-

els of violence, mindsets of people, the legal system or in the political class. "And the reason it hasn't changed is that the law requires a certain orientation for people to change the way they look at the law, look at women," she said.

One of the problems, she held, was that the political leadership was not committed to creating circumstances where women were equal citizens and could enjoy the freedom of liberty. Referring to the Kathua and Unnao cases, Grover said the response from the political leadership came only after society had expressed extreme anguish and anger. An eight-year-old girl was raped and killed in Kathua in Jammu, while a teenager in Unnao in Uttar Pradesh said she had been gang-raped. "Unless there is a commitment by political leadership there won't be any changes in the system," Grover added. The lawyer, who is opposed to the death penalty, said the country had "very low levels" of conviction because of the shortcomings in the legal system. "Death sentences are going to bring no change in our lives. These are gimmicks and we are fed up... they are playing politics over the bodies of women," she said.

Preparations started in JK for global skill competition

JAMMU, APR 22 (PTI) The Jammu and Kashmir Skill Development Mission (JKSDM) has started cluster-level skill competitions in the run-up to the World Skills Competition to be held in Russia next year. The idea is to provide opportunities to the local youths to showcase their talent and provide them much-needed exposure to exhibit their skills at different levels. JKSDM mission director Peer G N Suhail said. He said the JKSDM has received over 70 applications in 12 different categories. Over 50 candidates participated in bakery, cooking, patisserie and confectionery skill competitions at Institute of Hotel Management, Srinagar and the Jammu office of the JKSDM yesterday, he said.

Cluster-level competitions for the rest of the skill categories would be held on April 24 and 25 in Jammu and Srinagar. Considered as the Skills Olympics, the World Skills Competition once in two years in different countries. At the World Skills Competition in Abu Dhabi last year, there were competitions in 51 skill areas with close to 1,300 youngsters taking part in it. India bagged one silver and a bronze medal, along with 11 medals of excellence, in the competition.



CPIM(M) activists and delegates performing the drummers on a rally at RTC Katayana Mandapam on the concluding day of the CPIM(M)'s All India Conference in Hyderabad on Sunday

Cong may move court if impeachment notice rejected, say party leaders

NEW DELHI, APR 22 /-/ As the Congress awaits the decision of Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on an impeachment notice moved by it and other parties against Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, it is considering moving the Supreme Court if the petition is rejected, party leaders said. They said if the Upper House chairman did not find merit in the notice for the impeachment, the decision could call for a judicial review. "The chairman's decision is open to being challenged. It is bound to go for a judicial review," said a Congress leader. The Congress was also trying to build up "moral pressure" on the Chief Justice of India in the hope that he would step aside from judicial duty if an impeachment motion was moved

against him. Judges who faced impeachment had earlier stepped aside from judicial work and the Chief Justice should do the same, a party leader said. "It is only a convention, though there is no legal or constitutional bar (on this)," the leader said. The Congress also hoped that the decision on the motion would be taken soon. "He (the RS Chairman) cannot sit on it indefinitely, though there is no deadline laid out in the Constitution," a legal expert said, citing the case of an anti-defection law where the court had said it should be decided within a "reasonable" time-frame. Meanwhile, an official in Parliament stressed that making public the contents of a notice filed in the House violated Parliamentary rules. This assumes sig-

nificance in the wake of the seven opposition parties, led by the Congress, initiating an unprecedented step last week for the impeachment of CJI Misra by moving a notice levelling several charges against him. According to the provisions in the handbook for Rajya Sabha members, no advance publicity should be given to any notice to be taken up in the House till it is admitted by the chairman. "A notice for raising a matter in the House should not be given publicly by any member or other person until it has been admitted by the Chairman and circulated by members. A member should not raise the issue of a notice given by him and pending consideration of the Chairman," according to Rule 22 of Parliamentary Customs and Conventions in the

handbook. Retired Lok Sabha official said the same rule also applied to the Lower House as it was listed under rule 334A of the procedure and conduct of its business. The notice has been referred by Naidu to Rajya Sabha Secretariat officials, who are preparing the file and identified this violation, the official said. According to the senior official in Parliament, a bulletin issued by the Rajya Sabha on December 8, 2017, reiterates the rule under parliamentary customs and conventions. Leaders of the opposition parties had met Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, who is also the chairman of the Rajya Sabha, and handed over the notice of impeachment bearing the signatures of 64 MPs and seven former members, who had recently retired.(PTI)

Signs visible for joining hands with BJP, says AIADMK

CHENNAI, APR 22 /-/ In politically significant remarks, the ruling AIADMK today said that signs of its working together with BJP like a "double-barrelled gun" in the political arena were visible and "no one can sever ties" between the two parties. Coming out strongly against the principal opposition DMK-led persistent protests over the Cauvery imbroglio, the AIADMK said "whatever be the number of protests and demonstrations, no one can sever the ties between the AIADMK and the BJP." No one can weaken the bond between "the Central and the State governments" either, the AIADMK said in its Tamil mouthpiece "Nadamhu Puratchi Thalavi Amma." The state's ruling party said the protests by the DMK, its allies and friendly parties were only aimed at spoiling the warmth between it and the BJP. "The signs are (in-

creasingly) becoming visible for the AIADMK and the BJP to work like a double-barrelled gun in Indian politics. The pathway is clear," the daily said, while emphasising upon the need for the leadership of the two parties to chart out a roadmap for the purpose. "A roadmap for it should be thrashed out by the high commands of both the parties. That is the need of the hour," the AIADMK mouthpiece added. "The state and the Central regimes led by the AIADMK and the BJP respectively are working responsibly and are headed towards a final resolution of the issue," the daily said, referring to the Cauvery issue. Under such circumstances, the AIADMK said, the main opposition DMK was holding "unnecessary protests" as it was "apprehensive" that the State and the Central governments, working in cohesion, would succeed in resolving the Cauvery issue. Mocking

the DMK for holding protests which did not enjoy the "people's support," the AIADMK hit out at its arch rival for trying to get an appointment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi now on the issue after attempting to show black flags to him recently. Asking if it was an act of "political civility," the AIADMK mouthpiece said no other party could indulge in such politics burying its self-respect. The AIADMK said its government allowed protests like black flag demonstrations keeping democratic ethos in mind. "The daily, however, asked if the protesters succeeded in showing even a single black flag to Prime Minister Modi. It may be recalled that the AIADMK top leadership has been maintaining that a friendly relationship with the Centre was imperative for the progress of the state through proper financial sanctions and support. The DMK, how-

ever, has been unrelenting in its attack saying the ruling party was "subservient" to the Centre. Notably, the AIADMK's assertion comes days after asking the Centre to change its mindset over the Cauvery issue. On April 13, the party's mouthpiece had said, "Without waiting anymore, it will be good if the Central government changed its mindset and avoided partiality." If this was not done, "it will lead to cracks in the unity and integration" (of the nation), it had cautioned. The AIADMK's assertion assumes significance amid the persistent protests over the issue. The DMK-led Opposition and the pro-Tamil outfits have been holding back-to-back protests including the recent IPL stir on the river water issue and a massive human chain demonstration (by DMK and its allies) has been announced across the state tomorrow.(PTI)



Home Minister Rajnath Singh along with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi after inauguration of 6th battalion headquarters building of ITBP (Indo Tibetan Border Police) built in Jalalpur block in Chapra.