

Sonia continues to be UPA chairperson as she can pull allies together: Moily

HYDERABAD, JAN 30/- Sonia Gandhi continues to be the UPA chairperson because of her ability to pull the allies together, Senior Congress leader M Veerappa Moily said today amid attempts at leading a united opposition to take on the BJP. There were speculations on whether Rahul Gandhi would step into the position after he recently became the Congress president, a post held by his mother Sonia Gandhi for 19 years. "Sonia Gandhi continues to be UPA chairperson... because she can pull the allies together. She has demonstrated (this) in 2004 and 2009," Moily told PTI. Asked if he was "surprised" by the "active interest" shown in recent times by NCP chief Sharad Pawar towards bringing opposition parties together, the Congress leader said he was not.

US national barred from entering India: HC seeks govt's reply

NEW DELHI, JAN 30/- The Delhi High Court has sought the Centre's response on a US national's plea against denial of entry to him in India despite holding a business visa valid till June 2022.

Justice Rajiv Shukhdekar issued notice to the ministries of External Affairs and Home Affairs and sought their response by March 19 on the petition of Jensen Christopher Martin, who was detained at the Kempegowda International Airport at Bengaluru on January 3 allegedly without being given any reason.

His wife and kids were, however, allowed to enter India. But he was forced to travel to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, the US national has said in his plea.

Martin, represented by advocates Robin R David and Dhairaj Philip, has also claimed that he was bought tickets to travel to London from Bengaluru, British Airways refused to let him board the plane. In Malaysia, Martin took responsibility for him if he was denied entry into the United Kingdom.

He was then forced to travel to Kuala Lumpur, his plea said and sought the reasons for the action taken against him by the Immigration authorities.

The US national has claimed he has been in India several times in his business and this time too, he was here to "promote and train social businesses in Bengaluru" on behalf of his company Global Entrepreneurs. He has claimed that no reasons were given while detaining him at the airport and deny him entry into the country despite a valid visa, and alleged that he was unlawfully separated from his family. Martin has been quashing or revoking of the orders, if any which barred him from entering India and also compensation for the financial loss incurred by him in purchasing the tickets for travel to Kuala Lumpur. In his plea, he said the US national has claimed that barring him from entering India has affected his professional career and denied his international travel prospects as the "deportation/refusal of entry is likely to be seen internationally as a black mark against him". (PTI)

Godhra train burning: Accused held after 16 years

AHMEDABAD, JAN 30/- On the run for the last 16 years, a man accused in the 2002 Godhra train carnage was today arrested by the Gujarat Police, an official said. Yakub Pataliya (63) was arrested from Godhra by a team of 29 Division police in the town after they received a tip-off that he was spotted in a locality this morning, the official said. "During patrolling, a team of Godhra B Division police received information about the presence of the accused. He was arrested soon after," the official said.

He will be handed over to the Special Investigation Team (SIT), which is investigating the case, the official said.

Pataliya is accused of being a part of the mob that torched the coaches of Sabarmati Express near Godhra railway station on February 27, 2002, killing 59 kar sevaks and triggering state-wide riots. An FIR was registered against him in September 2002 on the faces charges under sections 307 (attempt to murder), 143 and 149 (unlawful assembly), 147 and 148 (rioting armed with deadly weapons and ammunition), 302 (causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 153 A (causing enmity among members of different religious groups), among others as well as certain sections of the Railways Act. "He had been evading arrest ever since," police said. Pataliya's brother, Kadir Pataliya, was also arrested in 2015, and he died while being in jail while undergoing trial. His other brother, Ayub Pataliya, is serving life in prison in Vadodra Central Jail. In a judgement passed in October 2017, the Gujarat High Court has ordered the death sentence of 11 to imprisonment, while upholding the life sentence of 20 other convicts. A trial court had convicted 31 and acquitted 69 accused. The high court had upheld the acquittals. (PTI)

Some departments and ministries have responded but some, instead of providing a comprehensive report, have submitted the requisite information in piecemeal manner, it said.

Therefore, financial advisors and joint secretaries (administration) of all ministries/ departments are requested to identify the posts which are vacant for more than five years and submit a comprehensive report on abolition of such posts in main ministry and their respective subordinate organisations at the earliest, the office memorandum, dated January 16, 2018, said.

Following this, the Ministry of Home Affairs has directed all its additional secretaries, joint secretaries, chiefs of paramilitary forces and other attached organisations to submit comprehensive reports, a home ministry official told PTI.

According to a preliminary estimate, there are several thousand central government posts which are lying vacant for five or more years, the official said. (PTI)

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47 m children in India reside in most polluted areas: Report

NEW DELHI, JAN 30/- Around 47 million children in India under five years of age reside in areas where particulate matter levels exceed the prescribed limits, with 17 million among them inhabiting places where the pollution levels are more than twice the limits, says a recent report.

"Airpollution-II, a Greenpeace India report, said children are worst affected in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra and Delhi respectively. It said Delhi remained the worst impacted city with annual PM10 levels exceeding approximately five times the national ambient air quality standards.

According to the report, a massive part of the population i.e. 580 million or 47 per cent are living in areas where "no air quality data is available". It claimed that out of 630 million, close to 550 million people live in areas exceeding national standards for PM10, including 180 million living in areas where air pollution levels are "more than twice the stipulated limit of 60µg/m³ which has been set by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)". As many as 47 million

children under the age of five years are residing in areas where PM10 levels exceeded CPCB annual limits, including 17 million children under the age of five who are in the areas where pollution levels are more than twice the limits," the report claimed. Ranking of cities based on annual average of PM10 levels reveals that Delhi is the worst polluted city with 290 µg/m³ followed by Faridabad, Bhiwadi, Patna with annual average ranging from 272 µg/m³, 262 µg/m³ & 261 µg/m³, respectively, it said.

It said Dehradun in Uttarakhand, once thought to be a 'salubrious preserve of retiring elite', also made it to the top 10 list of worst-polluted cities with 238 µg/m³ annual average of PM10. The report added that the most-polluted cities are spread across the Indo-Gangetic basin with the southern cities being slightly better off than their northern counterparts.

However, cities in south also need focused and time-bound action plan to bring the air quality to achieve the WHO standards, thus showing a pathway for other cities across India, it said. (PTI)

MP by-polls: Cong nominees to file papers today

***BJP shortlists candidates**

BHOPAL, JAN 30/- The ruling BJP in Madhya Pradesh has finalised its candidates for the February 24 bypolls in two Assembly constituencies.

Bai Sahab Yadav and Devendra Jain have been selected to contest from bypoll-bound Mungaoli and Kolaras Assembly seats, respectively, but their candidatures are awaiting final approval from the party said. Their names have been sent to the BJP Parliamentary Board for clearance, state BJP chief Nandkumar Singh Chauhan told reporters today here. The Congress, which currently holds both the seats, has fielded Brajendra Singh Yadav from the Mungaoli (Ashoknagar district) and Mahendra Singh Yadav from Kolaras (Shivpur district). They will file their nominations tomorrow. "We decided our candidates two days back and

they are going to file their nomination papers to the election commission tomorrow," said state Congress spokesman Pankaj Chaturvedi.

The Congress and the BJP have already started campaigning for the bypolls, which are expected to test their popularity ahead of the Assembly elections slated by end-2018. While the Congress is aiming to retain both the seats, the saffron party is trying hard to wrest them.

Both the Assembly segments fall under the Guna Lok Sabha constituency, the pocket borough of Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia. Scindia, the party's chief whip in the Lok Sabha, is being pushed as the chief ministerial face by a section in the Congress, which is out of power in Madhya Pradesh since 2003. Aware of the high stakes involved in the

Govt plans to abolish posts vacant for 5 years

NEW DELHI, JAN 30/- The government is planning to abolish all posts which have been vacant for more than five years, and has directed all ministries and departments to submit a comprehensive report on the matter.

The office memorandum, from the Finance Ministry said it had asked all ministries and departments to submit an action-taken report regarding abolition of posts vacant for more than five years.

Some departments and ministries have responded but some, instead of providing a comprehensive report, have submitted the requisite information in piecemeal manner, it said.

Therefore, financial advisors and joint secretaries (administration) of all ministries/ departments are requested to identify the posts which are vacant for more than five years and submit a comprehensive report on abolition of such posts in main ministry and their respective subordinate organisations at the earliest, the office memorandum, dated January 16, 2018, said.

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President Ram Nath Kovind paying tribute to Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on Martyrs Day at Rajghat, New Delhi

Govt of INDIA State Lotteries Result Sheet (2017/18)	Govt of MIZORAM State Lotteries Result Sheet (2017/18)	Govt of WEST BENGAL State Lotteries Result Sheet (2017/18)	Govt of BIHAR State Lotteries Result Sheet (2017/18)
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