

Mamata urges people to change Govt at Centre in 2019

JAMURIA, NOV 29 /-/- West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday called for bringing a change in the government at the Centre in the Lok Sabha polls and alleged that the BJP dispensation has caused hardships to the people of the country.

Mamata said her party will contest elections in states neighbouring West Bengal such as Jharkhand and Assam to protect the people from alleged attacks by the BJP. The TMC supremo, who is organising a mega rally of opposition parties at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata on January 19, urged the people to change the government in Delhi in the general elections. "We gave the slogan for defeating the BJP in the Lok Sabha poll. You should also raise the slogan 'badal do' (change it)", the chief minister said.

She claimed that the Modi government has failed to solve the unemployment problem and the common people are not getting loan from banks. "The people are fed up with the Modi government. They are saying enough is enough", Mamata said. The chief minister had stated on Wednesday that the TMC will play an "important role" in the next Lok Sabha elections. Several opposition parties have confirmed their participation in the mega rally in Kolkata, she had said.

"Leaders such as Chandrababu Naidu,



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee blessing a child during a rally at Jamuria in Asansol -Shyamala Maitra

Hardik Patel, Tejaswi Yadav, Akhilesh Yadav, M.K Stalin, Feroz Khan Khan and Arvind Kejriwal have confirmed their participation at the rally," the chief minister had said.

Accusing the saffron party of attempting to divide the nation on religious line, Banerjee urged the people not to fall prey to any provocation. "Our party (Trinamool Congress) will

contest elections in the neighbouring states to protect people from saffron attacks," Mamata said while addressing a public meeting here in the state's coal belt in West Bardhaman district. (PTI)

Cong terms revision of GDP data a 'bad joke', targets Modi govt, Niti Aayog

NEW DELHI, NOV 29 /-/- Slamming the revision of GDP data under the UPA as a "bad joke", the Congress today alleged that the Niti Aayog has done disservice to the nation with its "hatchet job" at the behest of the Narendra Modi-led Union Government and demanded that the body be disbanded.

The principal Opposition party also hit out at Union finance minister Arun Jaitley for defending the exercise, which it termed as a "brazen assault on the very sanctity of Indian statistics." "Niti Aayog's revised GDP numbers are a joke. They are a bad joke. Actually they are worse than a bad joke. The numbers are the result of a hatchet job. Now that Niti Aayog has done the hatchet job, it is time to wind up the utterly worthless body," Congress leader and former finance minister P Chidambaram said. Senior party leader and former Union Minister Anand Sharma also lashed out at the planning body saying, "by fudging the GDP data to massage the ego of Prime Minister Modi and hide the miserable performance and mismanagement of the Indian economy, the Ministry of Statistics and Niti Aayog have done a disservice to the nation."

Sharma said the integrity of Indian data has become suspect internationally and in one blow the credibility of Indian statistical institutions and experts who prepared the earlier GDP data has been severely damaged. "Pathetic to see the finance minister defending the brazen assault on the very sanctity of Indian statistics" Sharma said. Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said: "The venerable Central Statistics Organisation (CSO) has now been converted into a NAMO (Numbers, Adjustment and Manipulation Organisation)", adding "Mahalanobis must be fuming". He was referring to P C Mahalanobis, revered as the father of Indian statistical research.

Chidambaram said that the earlier numbers were calculated by the National Statistical Commission and asked whether the Commission has been disbanded. Agreeing to former chief statistician Pranab Sen, he said Niti Aayog has nothing to do with tabulation of data. "I wonder if Niti Aayog vice-chairman Rajiv Kumar will agree to a debate on the data than telling journalists that their questions are 'undeserving of an answer,'" said Chidambaram. (PTI)

Ready for talks with PM Modi: Imran

ISLAMABAD, NOV 29 /-/- Making peace overtures, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan today said he was ready to hold talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi as he conceded that it was not in Islamabad's interest to allow use of its territory for terror activities outside the country.

Khan was apparently referring to India's stance that terrorism and talks cannot go together and Pakistan must take effective and credible action to stop providing shelter and support to cross border terrorism from territories under its control. "It is not in our interest to allow use of Pakistan's territory for terror outside," Khan said during an interaction with a group of Indian journalists here. He said that people in Pakistan want peace with India and he will be happy to meet Indian Prime Minister Modi and talk to him. "The mindset of people

here has changed," Prime Minister of the neighbouring country said.

When asked whether it is possible to resolve the Kashmir issue, Khan said:

"We are willing to wait for a military solution for Kashmir," he said. He, however, said the gesture for peace cannot be one-sided. "We are willing to wait for (general) elections to get over in India for a gesture from New Delhi," Khan said. The Pakistan Prime

Minister today also said he was sure majority of the people in India would appreciate the steps taken by the two countries in building the Kartarpur

Sahib corridor, a long-pending demand of the Sikh community. The foundation stone of the much-awaited corridor was laid by Khan on Wednesday at Kartarpur in Pakistan in a grand ceremony. "The India I know - majority must be appreciating it (Kartarpur corridor)," Khan told newsmen here.

It derives mention here that the Pakistani media today commented that the move to build the Kartarpur Corridor has the potential to undo the "freeze" in ties between India and Pakistan and push the two sides to engage in a positive and purposeful manner. It took more than 70 years for Pakistan and India to bridge a distance roughly seven kilometres on the east side of their border, the Express Tribune said in its editorial, a day after Prime Minister Imran Khan laid the foundation stone of the corridor on the Pakistani side. The initiative to build a corridor connecting two Sikh holy sites Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan and Dera Baba Nanak in India came from the Pakistan side, it claimed. "The Kartarpur development comes at a time of no dialogue and little contact between Pakistan and India," the daily said. (PTI)

SC finds 'nothing secret' about vision document on Taj Mahal, says it should be made public

NEW DELHI, NOV 29 /-/- The Supreme Court told the Uttar Pradesh government today that the vision document on protecting Taj Mahal, being prepared by School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), Delhi, should be made public once finalised as there is "nothing secret" about it.

A bench of Justices Madan B Lokur, S Abdul Nazeer and Deepak Gupta was told by SPA that the process of preparing vision document would be completed within a "few days" and as per terms of reference they would submit it to the UP government. "It (vision document) should be made public. It is a vision document. There is nothing secret about it. You place it on record also," the bench told the counsel representing Uttar Pradesh. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) A N S Nadkarni, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that the draft of the heritage plan for Taj Mahal, which is to be submitted to

UNESCO, was ready and it would be finalised within eight weeks. He said that once the heritage plan is finalised, it will be sent to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) along with vision document.

The bench also dealt with the issue of declaring Agra as a heritage city and the Centre told the court that they had written to the UP government about it. Advocate Aishwarya Bhati, representing Uttar Pradesh, told the bench that they have sought assistance of Ahmedabad-based Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology, which would conduct a study on this. When Bhati said it would take around 24 months to carry out the study, the bench asked, "Why 24 months?" She said in Ahmedabad, the entire city was not declared as heritage, and it took around eight to nine years to complete the process. Professor Meenakshi Dhote, the project coordinator of vision

document on Taj, told the court that they had received several feedbacks on vision document and her team would finish the work within the next few days.

The bench also dealt with several pending applications, including those which have raised the issues of expansion of industries in Agra in contravention of the top court's order and construction activities and traffic congestion there. The court told the applicant, who has raised the issue of expansion of industries, to approach the principal secretary of department of industries of Uttar Pradesh with his grievance. The bench has posted the matter for further hearing in November of February. On September 25, the top court had extended till November 15 the time for Uttar Pradesh government to come out with vision document on protecting and preserving the 17th century monument and asked it to consider declaring a portion of the area surrounding it 'heritage'. (PTI)

No ideological differences with Cong: Chandrababu

HYDERABAD, NOV 29 /-/- Justifying the move to join hands with the Congress, Andhra Pradesh chief minister and Telugu Desam Party president N Chandrababu Naidu today said they had no ideological differences with the Rahul Gandhi-led party.

Naidu, who shared the dais with Gandhi in a couple of meetings Wednesday as part of a poll campaign for People's Front candidates in the state, said there was a democratic compulsion for non-BJP parties to come on a single platform.

"Politically, we (TDP and Congress) are different. The Telugu Desam Party from the beginning has been fighting against the Congress and that is a reality. Ideologically we do not have any differences. Ideologically, we have

differences with the BJP," the Andhra Pradesh chief minister told newsmen here. "But today there is a democratic compulsion. That's why there is a necessity to fight against the BJP to save the Constitution and also save institutions," he said when asked about the decades-old differences with Congress.

The Congress had roped in the TDP, CPI and M Kodandaram-led Telangana Jana Samithi to form the People's Front to take on the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi in the December 7 Assembly polls. He said the BJP had no chance of winning any of the five states which were under various stages of the election process. According to him, the BJP could manage to win only four or five Lok Sabha bypolls in the last 20-odd ones. (PTI)

Toll in Nadia hooch tragedy rises to 12

KOLKATA, NOV 29 /-/- The toll in the hooch tragedy in Nadia district rose to 12 with five more people dying here, district magistrate Sumit Gupta said today.

Of the 12 deceased persons, one was a woman, he added. "The death toll is 12 now. The condition of the 25 people, who are undergoing treatment at the Shantipur State General Hospital, is quite serious. Depending on the nature of their treatment, we will think of shifting them to hospitals in Kolkata," Gupta told news agency PTI. The state CID, which has taken over the case, has so far arrested four people in connection with their involvement in selling spurious liquor in Shantipur area, a senior officer of the agency said.

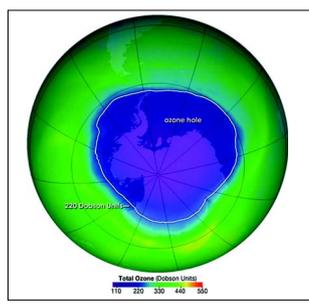
"All the four people were produced before a court which has ordered police remand for all of them," he said. Asked whether the liquor was brought from outside the state, the officer said: "So far, the arrested people have not told us anything of such sort. We are conducting tests of the liquor and trying to find out whether they were mixed with any chemical from outside." (PTI)

Antarctic ozone holes healing, confirms IIT KGP study

EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, NOV 29 /-/- While the world is debating on climate change and global warming, researchers at IIT Kharagpur have given the environmental evangelists a reason to rejoice. A research team from the Center of Oceans, Rivers, Atmosphere and Land Science (CORAL) at IIT Kharagpur have come up with new data confirming that the Antarctic Ozone Hole is on a healing path. The researchers have collected data from 1979 to 2017, which shows though there was a loss in saturation of Ozone since 1987 over the Antarctic; the saturation of loss at 12-21 km has significantly reduced over the period 2001-2017. This is the first

of its kind research providing detailed long-term (four decades) analysis of Antarctic ozone loss saturation in terms of its first occurrence, timing, spatial differences, vertical spread, inter-annual changes and temporal evolution using high resolution ozonesondes and satellite measurements inside the vortex for the said period. "We have observed over the past four decades the Ozone layer depletion peaked during winter each year except the warm winters of 1988 and 2002. However, our analysis shows a clear reduction in the frequency of occurrence of ozone loss saturation over the period 2001-2017 consistently throughout various datasets.



This reveals the emergence of an important milestone in ozone recovery," confirmed Prof. Jayanarayana Kuttippurath from IIT KGP who along with Pankaj Kumar, Pritijtha J. Nair and

P. C. Pandey from the IIT KGP Coral team conducted the study which has recently been reported in the prestigious journal NPJ Climate and Atmospheric Science published by Nature. Data were collected for various altitudes from Autumn to Spring, over the decades, for ozonesondes across Antarctica, including measurements from the Indian station Maitri. The reduction of ozone loss saturation in the recent years ranged from 20% to 60% across the data spread. This is going to affect the existing protocols and regulations for industry emissions of ozone depleting substances?" Prof. J. Kuttippurath believes that the recovery indicated in the loss saturation layer, robustly

suggests that the Montreal Protocol has definitely saved the ozone layer and climate of the southern hemisphere. Since there are already significant changes in the southern hemispheric climate owing to the Antarctic ozone loss, the recovery from loss saturation is very likely to affect that.

However, the emergence of ozone recovery is very clear even at the altitudes where the near-complete ozone loss occurs," adds Prof P. C Pandey of CORAL, who is also the founder director of the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research.