



The United Nations special envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths (C) speaks at a press conference in Hodeidah, Yemen. Martin Griffiths arrived on Friday in Yemen's embattled port city of Hodeidah, amid efforts to halt hostilities between warring forces ahead of peace talks, local officials said.

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AT A GLANCE

Mary Kom bags gold in World Championships

NEW DELHI: M C Mary Kom Saturday became the most successful boxer in the history of Women's World Championships by winning her sixth gold medal with a



unanimous 5-0 result over Ukraine's Hanna Okhota here. The 35-year-old Mary Kom met her opponent in the 48kg category without breaking a sweat. She now has an incredible six gold and one silver in the tournament.

EC sends notice to CP Joshi

JAIPUR: The Election Commission (EC) today sent a notice to senior Congress leader CP Joshi over his controversial remarks that only Brahmins know and can talk about Hinduism. Nathdwara returning officer sought his reply by 11 pm on Sunday. The Congress leader, who later apologised for his casteist comment, is contesting in the upcoming Rajasthan Assembly elections from Nathdwara constituency. A video of Joshi surfaced on Thursday in which he was heard saying that only pandits and brahmins knew about Hinduism and were learned enough to speak about it. "Does anyone know what is the caste of Uma Bharti? What is the caste of Sadhvi Ritambhara? In this country, if anyone knows about religion, it is the pandits and the Brahmins," he said.

Four Naxals held in Dantewada

RAIPUR: Four Naxals, including two women, were Saturday arrested from different places in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, police said. While three cadres were apprehended from the forest under Bhanoli police station limits, another was held from Harsoor area. Dantewada superintendent of police Abhishek Pallava told news agency. Those arrested in Bhanoli area were identified as Meena Telam (22), who was active as in charge of 'area supply team' of the Maoists, Manglo Telam (25) - a member of Mirtur LOS (local organisation squad) and Dhima Kanjam (26) - a member of the Dandikaranya Adivasi Kisan Majdoor Sangathan (a front outfit of Maoists), Pallava said.

Prez Kovind's visit to Australia added momentum to bilateral ties: MEA

MELBOURNE, NOV 24 /- / President Ram Nath Kovind's just concluded visit to Australia, the first by an Indian head of state, has added momentum to the bilateral ties and enhanced the strategic cooperation, officials said today. Kovind arrived in Sydney on Wednesday on the second leg of his two-nation trip after concluding his trip to Vietnam. During his four-day visit, the President engaged with the leadership of Australia at federal and provincial levels, business community, students and academics and Indian diaspora, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said in a statement. "The first Presidential visit from India to Australia has added momentum to the ongoing growth in our bilateral engagements which in recent years has not only increased in regularity but has also intensified in all areas of our strategic cooperation," it said. The Australian leadership expressed an exceptional warmth and

Ayodhya turns into fortress on eve of VHP's Dharam Sabha

Army should be brought if required, says Akhilesh

AYODHYA, NOV 24 /- / A day before the Dharam Sabha called by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Ayodhya was virtually turned into fortress with multiple layers of security and deployment of drones to keep an eye on possible mischief-mongers. A UP police spokesperson said one additional DGP, one deputy inspector general (DIG), three senior superintendents of police (SPs), 10 additional SPs, 21 deputy SPs, 100 inspectors, 700 constables, 42 companies of PAC, five companies of RAF, ATS commandos and drones were deployed here. When contacted, Ayodhya mayor Rishikesh Upadhyay told news agency PTI that adequate security arrangements were made by the police and district administration in the town, located 120 km from state capital, Lucknow. "As many as 13 parking slots have been provided for the event. No permission was given to the Shiv Sena by the government to hold a rally," the mayor said. Despite a slight chill in the air, the temple town seems to be reeling under the political heat generated by the 'Dharam Sabha',



A Sadhu shouts slogans at the venue of Sunday's 'Dharam Sabha' or a religious congregation being organised by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Ayodhya. -REUTERS

being held to call for the construction of a grand temple for Lord Ram here. A pamphlet recently released by the VHP raises the pitch for its construction. It reads "Saugandh Ram ki khaate hai, hum mandir bhavya banayenge (We pledge in the name of Lord Ram that we will build a grand temple for him)" and urges devotees to be a part of the movement. The VHP was founded on August 29, 1964 on the auspicious day of Shri Krishna Janmashthami. Its objective is to organise, consolidate the Hindu society and serve, protect the Hindu Dharma. The organisers of the Dharam Sabha claim the more than 3 lakh devotees of Lord Ram were likely to arrive for the programme this Sunday. VHP media in-charge Ambuj Ojha said: "After staying in a 'taat' (tent), Lord Ram is expecting a revival of bravado among his devotees. The moment has come. The temple must be built where Ram Lalla is currently seated. Also, there should not be any mosque in the cultural boundary of Ayodhya."

and the construction of the temple will commence," he said. The Supreme Court on November 12 had declined early hearing of petitions in the Ram Jannabhoome-Babri Masjid title dispute case. A bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice S K Kaul had said it already listed the appeals before the appropriate bench in January. Earlier, a three-judge bench, by a 2:1 majority, refused to refer to a five-judge constitution bench the issue of reconsideration of the observations in its 1994 judgement of the Allahabad High Court that a mosque was not integral to Islam.

The matter had arisen during the hearing of the Ayodhya land dispute. Ahead of the event to push for the construction of a Ram temple, Samajwadi Party chief and former UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav has said if required the Army should be deployed in the town. Thousands of people have started gathering in the town ahead of the Vishva Hindu Parishad event. Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray has also arrived here today for a separate programme. Talking to newspersons,

Akhilesh said: "The Supreme Court should take notice of the situation in Uttar Pradesh. It should seriously consider the matter and bring in the Army, if required... as the BJP and its allies can go to any extent," he told newspersons. Uttar Pradesh deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya dismissed his claims, saying his remarks simply showed his frustration as it was a Dharam Sabha and the Army was not needed for it. When asked that a significant section of the Muslim community was feeling apprehensive about the event, he tried to allay the fears. "No one needs to fear (anything) as there is peace in Uttar Pradesh. The government has made elaborate security arrangements to ensure that no untoward incident takes place," Maurya told news agency PTI. Referring to the firing on unarmed newsmen in 1990, Maurya said: "If Akhilesh Yadav is thinking that a 1990-like situation will prevail, then this will not happen under the government headed by Yogi Adityanath. We will provide adequate security to all and take all necessary action." (PTI)

PDP demands immediate roll-back of Guv's decision to treat J-K Bank as PSU

An attempt to fiddle with state's special status, says Mehbooba

SRINAGAR, NOV 24 /- / Former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti today criticised the decision to treat Jammu and Kashmir Bank as a public sector undertaking (PSU), saying it "smacks of attempts to fiddle with the basic character of the state's special status". The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president called for immediate rollback of the decision taken by Governor S P Malik-led state administrative council (SAC). She alleged that assaults on multiple fronts were being launched against Jammu and Kashmir's special status and the administration is taking away autonomy of institutions that the state enjoyed. The J-K Bank is part of this game plan and this was the reason PDP came together with the National Conference and the Congress to form a government and prevent such interventions, she said in a statement. "The Governor administration is taking such decisions which smack of attempts to fiddle with the basic character of the state's special status," she said.



Such actions raise apprehensions among the people of the state, the PDP chief. She alleged that attempts by her party at government formation were "undermined" foiled by the Governor, and asked him to review his decisions and roll them back at an earliest.

deceptions, the PDP president said. Her reaction came after the SAC, which met on Thursday evening under the chairmanship of Governor Satya Pal Malik, approved the proposal for treating the J&K Bank Limited as a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU).

"The bank has been brought under the purview of the Right to Information (RTI) act, the Chief Vigilance Commissioner (CVC) guidelines and the State Legislature, an official had said Friday. Established in 1938, the J&K Bank Ltd is the only state government promoted bank in the country, with the Jammu and Kashmir government currently holding 99.3 per cent of the shares. Being the major shareholder, the government felt that the bank should have a character of a PSU which is subject to general supervision and access for enhanced transparency in the transaction of its business to promote public trust, the official had said.

The purpose of the SAC's decision was not to question the day-to-day activities of the bank management but a step towards strengthening corporate governance, he had said.

PM attacks Cong for comparing sliding rupee with his mother

Rahul accuses him of betraying people on job promises

CHHATARPUR, NOV 24 /- / Prime Minister Narendra Modi today hit out at the Congress today, days after its leader Raj Babbar compared the rupee's slide with the age of his mother, saying those who did not have issues to talk about, resort to abusing someone else's mother.

Addressing a rally here, the Prime Minister, in an apparent dig at UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, said 125 crore people of the country were the "high command" of his government, which was "not remote-controlled by a madam". Hitting out at the Congress on Babbar's remarks, he said: "When one doesn't have issues to talk about, he resorts to abusing somebody else's mother." The Congress leader had kicked up a row in Indore Thursday when he compared the falling value of rupee against US dollar with the age of the Prime Minister's mother.

Attacking Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Modi alleged that "offers of banks were emptied for the rich during the madam's government". "However, our government opened doors of banks for the needy youth," he said. The Prime Minister asked why the Congress was worried about Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan being called "mama". "You are worried Shivraj is called mama... Why don't you remember (Ottavio) Quattrocchi's mama and Warren Anderson (then chairman of the Union Carbide) mama," he said, referring to the Bofors scandal and the 1984 Bhopal Gas tragedy.

The Congress president today alleged that the Prime Minister has betrayed the people, claiming that he had not fulfilled promises of providing two crore jobs every year and "depositing Rs 15 lakh in the ir bank accounts. The Congress chief was addressing a rally at Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, where Assembly polls will be held on November 28. "Modiji has betrayed the people on the issue of providing jobs to two crore people every year and depositing Rs 15 lakh cash into their accounts by bringing (back) black money stashed abroad," Gandhi said.

Sidhu to visit Pak for Kartarpur Border corridor ceremony?

ISLAMABAD, NOV 24 /- / Pakistan's information minister Fawad Chaudhry said today that Punjab cabinet minister Navjot Singh Sidhu would visit the country to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of the Kartarpur Border corridor, according to a media report on Friday. Prime Minister Imran Khan will inaugurate the groundbreaking ceremony of the facilities at the crossing on the Pakistan side on November 28.



Chaudhry confirmed that the former Indian cricketer would visit the country. This will be Sidhu's second visit to Pakistan this year. Sidhu told Roznama Express that he has gladly accepted the invitation, sent by Khan for the November 28 event. He said the Pakistani premier was his friend and he will visit the country whenever he is invited by him. "I don't have words to express my joy," he said. A long-pending demand of the Sikh

community to build a religious corridor linking India's border district of Gurdaspur with a historic gurdwara in Pakistan may finally be fulfilled with both the countries announcing that stretches would be developed in their respective areas. In a significant decision, India's Cabinet on Thursday cleared a proposal to develop a corridor from Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab's Gurdaspur district to the International Border

to facilitate Indian pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur in Pakistan. The issue of Kartarpur Sahib came into focus after Punjab minister Navjot Singh Sidhu visited Pakistan in August to attend the oath-taking ceremony of Khan as prime minister of that country. After his return, Sidhu said that Pakistan Army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa had told him that Pakistan may open a corridor to Kartarpur Sahib.

NSA Doval, Chinese foreign minister hold border talks

BEIJING, NOV 24 /- / National security advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi held the 21st round of border talks in China's southwestern Sichuan province today, officials said.

Besides the border dispute, the two senior officials at the picturesque Duijiangyan city, would also review the progress made in bilateral ties since the Wuhan Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping in April, officials said. Doval and Wang are the designated special representatives for border talks between India and China. The talks were expected to be concluded later Saturday.

This is the first round of talks for Wang after he succeeded State Councilor Yang Jiechi earlier this year. Wang has become the state councillor, a rank higher than the foreign minister in the Chinese government's hierarchy.