



Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh being welcomed during a function of Railway Mail Godam Sharamik Sangh Adhivesan in Lucknow on Sunday.

## India has shown it won't hesitate to cross border: Rajnath

**LUCKNOW, JAN 21/-**—Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh today said India has shown it can attack its enemies not only on its soil, but also in a foreign territory, if need be.

Singh's remarks come almost a month after a group of five Army commandos crossed the Line of Control in Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir and killed three Pakistani soldiers and smashed a post, in a swift and daring operation.

The operation was seen as avenging the killing of four Indian Army personnel by a Border Action Team of the Pakistan Army in Kerli sector Rajouri district.

"A few months ago, Pakistan, in an act of cowardice, attacked and martyred 17 of our jawans. Prime Minister Narendra Modi consulted all of us on this serious issue, and the Indian Army entered the Pakistani area and killed the militants," Singh said at a public meeting here.

"India's image in the world has become that of a strong nation and we have given a strong message to the world that we can attack our enemies not only on our soil, but also in their territory. India has

developed this power," he said. Singh said India wants to maintain a friendly relationship with Pakistan. "But Pakistan is not mending its ways," Singh said. I want to assure you that our government will not let India to bow its head," he said.

The home minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country's economy is moving ahead at a fast pace. "...and now even the global economists and experts accept this," he said, adding that India's prestige in the global arena is "rising rapidly".

Singh was addressing a meeting of 'Bharatiya Railway Maal Godaam Shramik Sangh' here. "The railway maal godaam shramik have, for the past few generations, been sweating and giving the Railways a good income. However, despite this, they do not have any identification card, nor do they get any treatment facility in any of the Railway hospitals," said Rajnath. He said he would take up the issues and problems of the labourers in the railway sector with their representatives and the railway minister. (PTI)

## Protests against bus fare hike in TN

**DINDIGUL/CHENNAI, JAN 21/-**—Protest demonstrations were held by public today in parts of Tamil Nadu against the steep hike in bus fares announced by the State government.

A group of villagers near Dindigul staged a road-roko against the hike and wanted the government to immediately withdraw the same. The protesters, comprising mainly of daily wage earners, said the new fare implemented from yesterday took away a chunk of their meagre income.

Similar protests were held in other places like Chengam and Thanjavur districts.

The bus fare hike in Tamil Nadu has drawn flak from political parties, including the main opposition DMK, which accused the government of being 'sadistic' and giving a 'thunderbolt' to the people.

PMK and DMK have announced protest demonstrations on January 25 and 27 respectively against the hike. CPI(M) will hold a protest demonstration on January 22. All the parties have sought an immediate rollback of fare hike.

Chief Minister K Palaniswamy said yesterday that the hike was effected with "anguish," which was inevitable due to a host of factors which includes increase in the cost of fuel, and maintenance.

## Lucknow admin to verify security parameters in city schools

**LUCKNOW, JAN 21/-**—In the backdrop of an attack on a class 1 student in a school here recently, the Lucknow district administration has decided to run a special campaign to verify the security parameters of schools.

Starting January 22, the administration will check if the schools which are also board examination centers have installed CCTV cameras—as mandated by law.

"Now, whether all the schools, which are examination centers have really installed CCTV cameras is yet to be ascertained. The verification will be carried out to ascertain the ground reality," Lucknow district magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma told PTI.

Sharma said the administration is getting the security cameras installed in all the government schools which have been made examination centres.

"But those schools, which have not been made examination centres, there is no budget for the administration to get CCTV cameras installed," he said.

"The administration can tell the private and government-aided schools to get CCTV cameras installed in their premises, and can even pressure them. But, owing to absence of any budget, the administration cannot put any pressure on the government schools," Sharma said.

In Lucknow, there are 1,027 government and private schools, which are made examination centres.

On January 16, a class 1 student was injured when he was allegedly attacked with a sharp-edged weapon in the toilet of a private school in Lucknow, an incident similar to the killing of a Ryan school student in Gurugram.

The incident evoked the call for more measures to ensure safety of children in schools. (PTI)

# NGT orders 'intensive survey' of rivers in western UP

**NEW DELHI, JAN 21/-**—The NGT has ordered "intensive survey" of the Kali, Krishna and the Hindon rivers in western Uttar Pradesh and directed the inspection of 316 industries which are allegedly polluting the water bodies.

The order comes after a plea filed by an NGO alleged that 50 villagers have died of cancer in western UP.

A bench headed by acting Chairperson Justice U D Salvi constituted a committee comprising officials from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), state pollution control board, UP Jal Nigam, to jointly inspect and carry out survey of the rivers and groundwater in six districts in the western part of the

state. "They shall collect samples, cause analysis to be made of such samples at the Central Pollution Control Board Laboratory," the bench said in its order.

"They shall carry out joint inspections of 316 industries...as well to give answers to the queries already made and ascertain contribution of each of the industries in terms of the contaminants generated by them," the order stated.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was hearing a petition filed by NGO Doaba Paryavaran Samiti head C V Singh, a retired scientist of Haryana Pollution Control Board, who has alleged that due to the consumption of contaminated groundwater more than 50 villagers have died of cancer in western UP.

It was alleged by the petitioner that groundwater in Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, Meerut, Bagpath and Ghaziabad districts was being polluted as a result of effluents being released underground by reverse boring by the industries.

The green panel said that the central and state pollution control boards will bear the expenses of the inspection and a report will be submitted within two months.

The CPCB shall be the convener of the team. In case of any difficulty, necessary police protection shall be given to the joint inspection team and its members for the purposes of execution of this order," the order stated.

Advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal, appearing for the petitioner,

contended that the people were suffering due to the failure of the authorities.

The matter will be now heard on March 19. The bench had earlier observed that it was the fundamental duty of the state government to look after the health and the environment of the villagers. Earlier, the UP Jal Nigam had faced the NGT's ire for its failure to comply with a 2015 order directing it to seal all hand pumps which were releasing contaminated groundwater in six districts of the western part of the state. It had earlier directed the state government and its officials to provide potable drinking water to the villagers of the six districts through GPS installed vehicles. (PTI)

## CPM leader writes to CM to drop case on Assembly violence

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN 21/-**—CPM leader and former MLA V Sivankutty has written to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan seeking withdrawal of a case registered against him and five others in connection with the "unprecedented" violence witnessed by the state assembly in 2015.

Sivankutty today said he had written to the chief minister seeking withdrawal of the police case against him and 5 other LDF members and a similar letter had also been sent to Assembly Speaker P Sreeramakrishnan.

According to the Marxist leader, the case should be withdrawn as it was "politically motivated" and it was up to the chief minister to take a decision.

The Kerala Assembly had witnessed unprecedented and ugly scenes on March 13, 2015 as opposition members tried to prevent then Finance Minister KM Mani, who was facing allegations in bar bribery scam, from presenting the budget.

Some opposition members had destroyed the Speaker's podium, hurled his chair and engaged in a scuffle with the watch-and-ward staff.

"Following the unruly happenings inside the assembly, a case was registered

against six LDF MLAs under the Prevention of Destruction of Public Property Act, criminal trespass and mischief causing damage."

Strongly opposing any move to drop the case, Leader of Opposition in the state assembly, Ramesh Chennithala, said UDF would oppose any move by the CPI(M) led LDF government to withdraw the case as it will be a "mockery of democracy."

"We will strongly oppose any move by the government to withdraw the case and even take legal steps to prevent it," he told reporters here.

According to Sivankutty, they had faced suspension on the matter and a police case was registered only to settle political scores.

The case had been filed against K T Jaleel, presently minister in the Pinarayi Vijayan's cabinet, E P Jayarajan, C K Sadasivan, K Ajit, Kunhammed Master and Sivankutty.

According to the complaint by assembly secretary, property worth Rs 5 lakh had been destroyed in the violence that took place on March 13, 2015 when the ruling and opposition MLAs had come to blows over budget presentation by Mani. (PTI)

## 89-yr-old man gets SC relief in 1988 case

**NEW DELHI, JAN 21/-**—Coming to a respite of the 89-year-old man from West Bengal, the Supreme Court has set aside the three months jail awarded to him for possessing 187 litres of kerosene oil in excess at his ration shop in 1988.

The top court said that it is not interfering with the conviction of his Madan Mohan Kabiraj but looking at his age, he can be accorded benefit of provisions of Probation of Offenders Act.

"Though we are not interfering with the conviction recorded against the appellant herein, having regard to the circumstances of this case and particularly the fact that the appellant is 89 years of age and that there is no other blemish against the appellant, we are of the opinion that the benefit of provisions of Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, be extended in the present case," a bench of justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan said.

It said that the three months sentence awarded to him by the Calcutta High Court is set aside and Kabiraj is released under the provisions of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958.

Kabiraj through his advocate Dushyant Parashar has challenged the high court order which sentenced him for three months jail after holding him guilty under provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

An FIR was lodged against Kabiraj on September 2, 1988, after an inspection of his ration shop, which he was running under the Public Distribution Scheme (PDS), found an excess of 187 litres of kerosene oil.

On April 20, 1990, a special court at Morshidabad had held Kabiraj guilty under provisions of Essential Commodities Act and awarded him four months rigorous jail term.

Kabiraj challenged the order of special court before the high court in 1998, which had after 26 years, on May 3, 2016, upheld the conviction but modified the sentence from four to three months jail term.

He claimed before the apex court that the high court had upheld his conviction solely on the statement of a police officer who lodged the case while holding the two independent witnesses as "most unreliable". (PTI)

## Azad blames BJP, CPM for political murders in Kerala

**KOZHIKODE, JAN 21/-**—Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad today blamed the ruling parties at the Centre and in Kerala for the continuing political violence in the state.

"Both the BJP and CPI(M) are equally responsible for the continuing political violence in Kerala. They should share the responsibility for the loss of lives in political violence," he told reporters here.

Triple talaq, if implemented in the present form, would affect the entire Muslim community in the country, the opposition leader in the Rajya Sabha said.

"If the wife makes a complaint against her husband, then her laws will also be jailed for three years as per the draft bill," he said.

However, instant triple talaq is against the law and the Supreme Court verdict in this matter is welcome," he added. The bill

criminalising talaq-e-biddat was passed by the Lok Sabha in the recently-concluded Winter Session of the Parliament but was stuck in the Rajya Sabha. Opposition parties as well as the NDA ally TDP had reservations over criminal provisions in the draft law.

MPs in the Upper House had demanded that the bill, which proposes to make triple talaq a cognisable and non-bailable offence, be referred to a parliamentary committee for review.

## Saharanpur Police 'inaction': FIR against three suspended cops

**SAHARANPUR (UP), JAN 21/-**—Three police personnel had been booked in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district for refusing to take two wounded teenagers to a hospital allegedly because they did not want blood stains in their vehicle, a senior police officer said today.

The delay led to the death of Arpit Khurana and his friend Sunny, both aged 17. The two were on their way home on Friday night, when they lost control over their motor-bike and it crashed into a pole in Beri Bagh area.

Saharanpur SP (City) Prabal Pratap Singh said the trio was booked under IPC section 304 A (culpable homicide not amounting to murder). A departmental inquiry has also been initiated against the accused policemen, he said.

On the basis of a complaint by an eyewitness, the FIR was registered against the policemen at Janakpuri police station late last night. Locals rushed to the scene and pulled the teens out of a drain they had fallen into after the crash.

The teenagers were seriously wounded, the SP said, adding that the residents then informed the police on the 'Dial 100' service. They said the policemen who reached the site refused to take the wounded persons in their vehicle to a hospital.

The Dial-100 service has been initiated by the Uttar Pradesh government to ensure better policing through increased number of vehicles, painted in black. The vehicles help respond to emergency after distress calls. The policemen reportedly refused to take the blood of the injured teenagers would stain their vehicle, the SP added.

The residents then took the teenagers to a hospital in an autorickshaw but doctors there declared them 'brought dead'. The three policemen—Indrapal Singh, Pankaj Kumar and Manoj Kumar—were suspended over the alleged incident, the SP said yesterday. (PTI)



Security personnel not allowing people to proceed towards curfew bound area at Kaundar in downtown Srinagar during curfew like restrictions on Sunday.

## Raj govt should make Padmaavat tax free: Pt Vishwa Mohan Bhatt

**BHOPAL, JAN 21/-**—Veteran musician Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt today said that the Rajasthan government should make the movie "Padmaavat" tax free as it promotes Indian culture, especially of Rajasthan.

The set of the movie was vandalised twice in Jaipur and Kolhapur, while Bhatt said it was roughed up by members of the Karmati Sena last year. The Supreme Court has cleared the decks for the all-India release of "Padmaavat" on January 25 and stayed notifications and orders issued by Rajasthan and Gujarat prohibiting exhibition of the film in their states. "The Rajasthan government should at

least make the movie "Padmaavat" tax free as it promotes culture, especially of Rajasthan, worldwide," Bhatt, the Grammy winner who visited Madhya Pradesh yesterday, told PTI.

In fact, the "Ghoomar" song that has created a row promotes the folk music of Rajasthan "my native state. To be honest, I have not seen the movie but I have full faith in its director Sanjay Leela Bhansali and his works which are magnificent. I know him very well. He does his work with utmost responsibility,"

the Padma Bhushan awardee said.

Bhatt said Bhansali is a great artiste and thinker as well, and he believes there is nothing objectionable in the movie. "In fact, the movie shows Rajasthan in good light and promotes its magnificent palaces worldwide," he said.

"The Rajasthan dresses worn by the women in the beautiful 'Ghoomar' song are not only decent but also graceful," the musician said. He said those against the movie should first watch it and then react. (PTI)

## Police SI commits 'suicide' in Kochi

**KOCHI, JAN 21/-**—A 41-year-old Police Sub-Inspector was today found hanging in a hotel room near Ernakulam Town North railway station, police said.

Probationary Police Sub-Inspector Gopakumar T was found hanging from the ceiling fan in his hotel room this afternoon, they said adding it was a suspected case of suicide. Gopakumar, hailing from Thiruvananthapuram, had been undergoing training in the city for the past five and a half months.

The officer's body will be handed over to his relatives after performing autopsy, police said. (PTI)