

## MahaKaushal Express derails, 52 passengers injured

**BANDA (UP), MARCH 30/**—Fifty-two passengers were injured, 10 of them seriously, as eight bogies of the Jabalpur-Nizamuddin MahaKaushal Express derailed early today in neighbouring Mahoba district. Railways have ordered an inquiry into the derailment which left 400 metres of track damaged. The mishap disrupted rail traffic on the route with services of 14 trains disrupted, railway officials said. In Lucknow, the Law and Order Dajit Chaudhary said the incident took place around 2.20 AM when eight bogies of the train derailed injuring some 52 people of which two suffered "serious fractures" and have been referred to a Jhansi hospital.

Some have been discharged after first aid while others have been admitted to local hospitals, the ADG said, adding that ambulances and teams of doctors reached the spot and monitored the relief and rescue operations. Chaudhary said prima facie there was nothing suspicious but the case will be investigated as it is a serious issue. Railway officials and teams of ATS and NDRF are at the spot and investigations are on to ascertain the cause of the mishap, the ADG said. SP (Mahoba) Gaurav Singh said the incident took place between Mahoba and Kulpahar railway stations near Supa village.

UP Minister for Health Siddharth Nath Singh, who rushed to the spot, announced a monetary assistance of Rs. 50,000 each to the seriously injured and Rs. 25,000 to those who suffered minor injuries, he said. Railway Board member (Traffic) Mohd Jamshed told PTI in Delhi that an inquiry into the derailment will be conducted by a senior railway official.

Asked whether it was an act of sabotage or any defect in the rolling stock led to the mishap, he said, "Nothing can be ruled out till the report is submitted."

On some recent cases involving security around rail tracks in different parts of the state, the ADG said investigations proved there was no terror link but all cases are being thoroughly probed with the help of experts. All coaches that derailed today were conventional ones and manufactured at the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai. Though a few coaches tumbled, they did not climb over each other as it happens in such cases, resulting in minimum damage. The train with 10 coaches left the accident site at 6.48 AM. Railways have pressed 15 buses into service for carrying about 200 passengers, who were travelling in affected coaches, to Jhansi. At least 17 heliplanes have been made operational at different stations en route to assist relatives of passengers travelling in the train. Besides, railways have made catering arrangement for the passengers on the site. (PTI)

# Setback to Kejriwal as HC refuses to stay trial court proceedings

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 30/**—The Delhi High Court today refused to stay trial court proceedings in connection with a criminal defamation complaint filed against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

Justice I S Mehta, however, granted exemption to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders from personal appearance on April 6 before the trial court in the matter.

"Let the proceedings before the trial court go on. I am giving relief that they (Kejriwal and Sisodia) are exempted from appearing in person before the trial court on April 6," the court said. It said that the two will file an exemption application through their counsel before the trial court, which should be decided as per law. The court's direction was issued during hearing of a petition filed by the two AAP leaders, who sought quashing of the criminal defamation complaint filed by advocate Suresh Kumar Sharma.

The two also sought a stay on the proceedings before the trial court, which is yet to be issued in the matter. The leaders contended

that the order of the trial court summoning them was "erroneous".

They also said that a false complaint had been filed against the chief minister and his deputy. The high court today issued notice to complainant Sharma in the matter and asked him to file his response by July 28.

It also asked the Delhi police to file status report in the matter. Besides Kejriwal and Sisodia, the complainant has also named Yogendra Yadav in his complaint.

Yadav was a member of the National Executive of the AAP until 2015, when he was expelled for alleged anti-party activities.

Later, he floated his own party Swaraj India - which is going to contest municipal corporations election in Delhi. Sharma had alleged that in 2013 he was approached by volunteers of AAP who had asked him to contest the Delhi Assembly elections on a party ticket, saying Kejriwal was pleased with his social services. He filled up the application form to contest the polls after being told by Sisodia and Yadav that AAP's Political Affairs Committee had decided to give him the ticket.

However, it was later denied to him. On October 14, 2013 the complainant claimed, articles in leading newspapers carried "defamatory, unlawful and derogatory words used by the accused persons" which have lowered his reputation in the Bar and the society.

Opposing the complaint, the AAP leaders submitted that cancellation or allotment of an election ticket is the prerogative of the party. "Party has asked him if any cases were pending against him to which Sharma had said no. Later it was found that several cases were pending against him and he had concealed this information."

"Kejriwal did not issue any press release against Sharma."

The party had issued the press release. So no defamation case made out against Kejriwal," the counsel for the two submitted.

On the basis of the complaint, the trial court sought their presence before it in the matter. It, however, had granted bail to Kejriwal, Sisodia and Yadav, after they had appeared before it in pursuance to summonses against them. The summonses were issued on



the complaint under sections 499, 500 (defamation) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC, with the trial court saying there was prima facie material to summon the accused. While issuing summonses against AAP leaders, the trial court had said, "The press release published in newspapers as well as testimonies of witnesses reflect the defamatory remarks were published in the newspaper which affected the reputation of the complainant in the society and lowered his reputation in the eyes of other members of the society. (PTI)

## UP CM asks officials to find out reasons behind derailment

**LUCKNOW, MARCH 30/**—Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed top officials in his government to find the reasons behind the derailment of the MahaKaushal Express in Mahoba district early today.

Adityanath has asked Principal Secretary (Home) and the state Director General of Police (DGP) to apprise him of the reasons behind the derailment, a statement released here said. The chief minister gave the instructions in view of the "recent suspicious incidents" involving rail mishaps in the state, the statement added.

Although the Railways will undertake an inquiry into the causes behind the derailment, Adityanath has asked the state officials to look into the matter at their level, an official release said.

Adityanath also directed that treatment should be ensured to the injured and extended a financial aid of Rs 50,000 for the seriously injured and Rs 25,000 with minor injuries.

On the directives of the chief minister, Health Minister Siddharth Nath Singh rushed to Mahoba and met the victims, the release added. Fifty-two passengers were injured, 10 of them seriously, as eight bogies of the Jabalpur-Nizamuddin MahaKaushal Express derailed early today in Mahoba district. (PTI)

## Crack in tracks apparently led to derailment: Officials

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 30/**—A crack in the tracks prima facie caused the derailment of eight coaches of MahaKaushal Express near Mahoba station in Uttar Pradesh today. Speaking on the sidelines of a function, Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha said that "according to the Divisional Railway Manager, prima facie fresh weld failure on left side caused the derailment."

Fresh weld means it was not an old crack and that the crack developed suddenly and could not be detected. While the UP ADG (Law and Order) Dajit Chaudhary said 52 passengers were injured in the mishap, Sinha said 21 were injured, including one seriously. The derailment took place near Mahoba station in Uttar Pradesh. The DRM of Jhansi Division and General Manager of North Central Railway have rushed to the site after the accident to supervise the rescue and relief operations. (PTI)

## Centre accords Z+ VVIP security cover to UP CM Adityanath

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 30/**—The Centre has accorded the top category Z+ VVIP armed security cover to newly-appointed Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The cover will be provided by a special command team of the CISF along with a small contingent of the Uttar Pradesh police. Adityanath was till now enjoying the smallest category of 'Y' category VVIP cover by the CISF in his capacity as a BJP Member of Parliament from Gorakhpur but officials said with his taking charge as CM, a threat perception report of central security agencies required his security paraphernalia to be upgraded. "The Chief Minister's security has been bolstered and he will now be secured by a strong team of CISF commandos everytime he moves across the country. A similar commando contingent will be deployed at his official residence," a senior officer said. As part of the new and upgraded security paraphernalia, Adityanath will have about 25-30 commandos accompanying him with sophisticated weapons at all times he is mobile and his convoy will have pilot and escort vehicles armed with jammers. (PTI)



Railway officials at the site after eight coaches of Jabalpur-Nizamuddin MahaKaushal Express derailed between Mahoba and Kulpahar railway stations on Thursday.

## Shah takes dig at Cong in Gujarat Assembly

**GANDHINAGAR, MARCH 30/**—Taking pot at the proceedings in Gujarat Assembly, BJP president Amit Shah today took a dig at the Congress, saying elections were won not by creating ruckus in the House but by winning people's hearts.

Shah, a member of the House representing Naranpur constituency in Ahmedabad, also asserted that the BJP will win the coming assembly polls in the state, due to the voters' trust. After making the hard-hitting speech in the House, Shah made a courtesy call on the opposition leader Shankar Singh Vaghela.

"You cannot win people's mandate by creating ruckus in the House. To win the mandate, one must win people's heart," Shah said in the Assembly here.

The BJP won all the elections here from 1990 to 2016. And, we will win the 2017 polls with more than 150 seats," he said during an hour-long speech.

Shah's assertion came while supporting a motion brought by BJP Ketan Inamdar, urging the state government to take forward the development agenda of the BJP.

In his speech, made in the absence of congress members, who were suspended for protesting over M B Shah Commission report, the BJP chief said that the "Journey of development" will continue even after 2017 and 2019.

"Our hunger for development is still intact. This journey for development will continue even after 2017 and 2019," said Shah.

Before 1996, the people of Gujarat were suffering due to large scale corruption, lawlessness and shortage of electricity. After Narendra Modi took over in 2001, we transformed this state. Now, the entire world talks about Gujarat model," he said.

Earlier in the day, Speaker Ramanlal Vora suspended Congress MLAs for the first session. But later, Shah met Congress leader

Vaghela. After the meeting, which lasted for about half an hour, Vaghela termed it as a "courtesy call".

"It was a courtesy call by Shah, who had come here to attend the assembly session. No political issue was discussed," Vaghela added.

When asked if there was any indication of advancing the state polls, Vaghela said, "There were no indications of early polls, as I understand, but nothing can be said of these RSS people."

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and state BJP chief Jitendra Vaghani were present during the meeting that took place at Vaghela's chambers at the Assembly building. Vaghani also said it was a courtesy call.

"As our national president was here, we wished to meet Vaghela and he met," he said.

Shah also attended the lunch hosted by Assembly speaker Ramanlal Vora for the MLAs. (PTI)

## UP gov't mulls blanket ban on stubble burning

**LUCKNOW, MARCH 30/**—Concerned over air pollution and other harmful effects of stubble burning, the Uttar Pradesh government is mulling a blanket ban on it in the state. "Burning of stubble after the crops are harvested creates massive air pollution. This has an adverse impact on the health of the public."

"It also increases the temperature of farm land and kills a large number of friendly insects and soil bacteria," Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi.

The minister said that in the past few years, stubble burning has created serious problems in various parts of the country ranging from smog to untimely rains, which harmed the crops.

"We are monitoring the situation very closely and planning to put a blanket ban on stubble burning across the state," he told PTI in an interview.

Instead of burning the stubble, it would be wise if it is used as fodder for cattle, he added and said that state government would en-

courage farmers to cooperate in this direction. He said reaper machines which harvest the crop by digging the soil must be utilised. "Farmers who do not have reaper machine must switch over to this machine within the next three months," he said.

In November last year, the national capital was reeling under intense smog for days which even forced closure of schools. The poor air quality was largely blamed on stubble burning in Haryana, Punjab and other surrounding states.

The Haryana government had initiated action against 406 violators, while cracking the whip on farmers who defied orders against burning paddy stubble.

Many farmers in Haryana and Punjab have continued with the practice, adversely affecting environment and soil health.

Burning of paddy residue causes air pollution, smog and also poses a serious health hazard as it leads to breathing problems, allergies and asthma attacks. It causes emission of toxic gases

such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane and nitrous oxide and leads to poor soil health by eliminating essential nutrients, agricultural experts said.

Citing noted agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan, Shahi said, "Apart from using the stubble to make cattle feed, it can be used for making cardboard, paper and other products."

A technology has been developed in Maharashtra for using paddy straw as animal feed. (PTI)

Pakistan apprehends 12 Indian fishermen off Gujarat coast AHMEDABAD, MARCH 30/—The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) apprehended 12 Indian fishermen and seized two boats off Gujarat coast this morning, the National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) said.

This comes days after over 100 Indian fishermen were captured by the neighbouring country. With this, the total number of fishermen from India captured by Pakistan so far this month has gone up to 230, the NFF said.

"These fishermen had sailed off from the coastal town of Porbandar a few days ago and were apprehended by the PMSA near the International Maritime Border Line (IMBL) today," secretary of NFF, Manish Lodhari, told PTI.

"We have learnt that at least 12 fishermen from Porbandar in their two boats were apprehended by the PMSA near Jakhau coast this morning. These fishermen and their boats were being taken to Karachi port by PMSA," Lodhari said.

According to him, 230 Indian fishermen along with their 40 boats were captured by Pakistan agency in this month alone.

"It seems PMSA has suddenly increased its vigil across the IMBL. This situation is worrisome for the fishermen community," said Lodhari. On March 26, the PMSA had apprehended over 100 Indian fishermen and seized 19 fishing boats near IMBL. The action had come two days after Indian Coast Guard captured nine Pakistani fishermen along with a fishing boat from Indian waters. (PTI)

## Rlys announces ex-gratia for those injured in derailment

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 30/**—Railways announced ex-gratia payment of Rs 50,000 in case of grievous injury and Rs 25,000 for those with minor injuries in the MahaKaushal Express derailment today.

While the UP ADG (Law and Order) Dajit Chaudhary said 52 passengers were injured in the mishap, Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha said 21 were injured, including one seriously.

Railways has ordered an inquiry into the derailment of the Jabalpur-Nizamuddin MahaKaushal Express in the wee hours today near Mahoba in Uttar Pradesh. Prima facie, a crack in the rail tracks seems to be the cause of the derailment. The mishap disrupted rail traffic on the route with services of 14 trains disrupted, railway officials said. (PTI)

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