



People performing Tarpan on the last day of Pitra Paksha in Agaratala on Monday.

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ECHO WORLD



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurating Durga Puja at Baghbazaar Sarbojain—Arijit Ganguly

BrahMos Aerospace engineer held for leaking info to Pak

NAGPUR, OCT 8 /-/ An engineer with the BrahMos Aerospace unit near here was arrested Monday for allegedly leaking "technical information" to Pakistan, an official said. Nishant Agrawal was nabbed in a joint operation by the Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS) at BrahMos' Wardha Road facility, an ATS official said. The engineer was living in a rented accommodation on Wardha Road since the last year, his landlord Manohar Kale said. The police team arrived at the building at 5.30 am and was there till 5 pm, he said. Agrawal had allegedly harassed and got married two months ago, he said. "He was staying with his wife here and had given his Aadhar card copy and a certificate from his employer to me while moving in," he said. BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Military Industrial Consortium (MICO) of Russia. The company was set up through an inter-governmental agreement signed on February 12, 1998, between India and Russia. The name BrahMos represents the fury of Brahma Putra and the grace of Moskva rivers. (PTI)

Apex court to hear PILs challenging Rafale deal tomorrow

NEW DELHI, OCT 8 /-/ The Supreme Court today agreed to hear on Oct 11 fresh PILs seeking directions to Centre to file "sealed cover" details of the agreement India has entered into with France for buying 36 Rafale Fighter Jets. A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, which has already listed for October 10 another PIL seeking a stay on the high-profile defence deal with the French government, said that the instant plea would be taken up together the same day. The fresh plea filed before the bench, which also comprised Justices S.K. Kaul and K.M. Joseph, has referred to the recent "controversy" over the Rs 58,000 crore deal between India and Dassault Aviation, a French company, for purchasing 36 combat jets and sought judicial intervention to put an end to the raging debate. "Issue an appropriate writ...or direction directing the respondents (Centre and the Ministry of Defence) to file the details of the agreement entered into between the Union of India and France with regard to the purchase of 36 Rafale Fighter Jets in a sealed envelope," said the plea, filed by lawyer Vineet Dhandu. The plea said the criticism had reached a "proverbial nadir" and opposition parties have adopted a very "ignominious and profligate way even to criticise the Prime Minister of the country". Seeking intervention of the court, the plea said, "In order to give full stop to denigrating statements, the agreement entered into between the Government of India and the Dassault Aviation is required to be known at least by this court." It said the apex court may peruse the details of the defence deal the details of which can be supplied in a sealed cover and "such information may not be made public due to the defence reasons".

Targeting of migrant labourers in Gujarat 'completely wrong': Rahul

Sanjay Nirupam attacks PM, Paswan expresses concern

NEW DELHI, OCT 8 /-/ Congress president Rahul Gandhi today said targeting of migrant workers in Gujarat is "completely wrong" and he is totally against it. Taking to Twitter, he said the root cause of violence in Gujarat is the closure of factories and unemployment there due to which both the system and the economy are reeling. "There is nothing more frightening than poverty. The root cause of the violence in Gujarat is the closed down factories and unemployment there. Both the system and that economy are reeling. Making migrant labour their target is completely wrong. Stand totally against it," he said in Hindi on Twitter.



Gujarat following alleged attacks on them there, Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam today targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying it must be remembered he has to contest election from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The Mumbai Congress chief also said that the people of Varanasi had embraced Modi and "made him the Prime Minister despite his lies from Modi, who was chief minister of

and they are being forced to flee." (Gujarat) is the home state of the prime minister. It would be remembered the Prime Minister has to contest polls (again) from Varanasi," Nirupam said. The Congress leader said the people in Maharashtra were asked what we have got to do there. But do you know George Fernandes contested election from Bihar," asked Nirupam. He also said that from Bihar Union minister and BJP ally Ram Vilas Paswan expressed concern Monday over cases of violence against Hindi-speaking migrants in Gujarat, while also seeking stringent action against those accused of raping a girl child in the western state. The Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) president said he spoke to the state's chief minister Vijay Rupani who, he added, told him that those involved in the incidents of violence against north Indians will face tough action. Rupani also told him that the state government will try the accused in the case of rape in a fast track court. Paswan said his party also stands for speedy action against the accused. "I also condemn attacks on north Indians in Gujarat," he said. (PTI)

Plea filed in SC seeking review of Sabarimala judgement

NEW DELHI, OCT 8 /-/ A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking review of the Constitution bench judgement which lifted the ban on entry of women into the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala. The plea, filed by Shylaja Vijayan, president of National Ayyappa Devotees Association, said the September 28 judgement which had allowed entry of women of all ages in the hilltop shrine is "absolutely untenable and irrational, if not perverse". A five-judge Constitution bench headed by then Chief Justice Dipak Mishra, had in its 4:1 verdict said that banning the entry of women into the shrine is gender discrimination and that the practice violates rights of Hindu women. The nine stents named in the complaint have denied all the allegations against them. Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan Monday criticised those agi-

ting against his government's move to implement the Supreme Court verdict on entry of women of all ages into the Sabarimala temple, saying "deliberate" efforts were being made to destroy the state's unity and secular fabric. Asserting that his government was committed to protecting the religious beliefs and customs of different religions and places of worship, he said there was no question of succumbing to "politically motivated" efforts to create tension in the state. "The people of Kerala faced the re-

cent unprecedented floods unitedly but deliberate efforts are now being made to destroy that unity to destroy the secular fabric," he told newsmen. Holding out an olive branch, Vijayan also made it clear that the government was prepared for talks with all concerned if they had any misunderstandings over the state's stand on the issue. Meanwhile, the BJP is in power in the state for the first time. Travancore Royal family member Gowri Lakshmi Bai said it was "very painful" to hear about the recent developments relating to the Sabarimala temple. "It is sad to note that centuries-old traditions are being violated," she said in a statement here. Reaffirming the government's stand not to seek a review of the SC verdict, Vijayan said the government in its earlier affidavit had made it clear that it would implement the court's order. (PTI)

Delhi HC allows CBI to file closure report in missing JNU student's case

NEW DELHI, OCT 8 /-/ The Delhi High Court today allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to file a closure report in the case of JNU student Najeeb Ahmed, who went missing from the university nearly two years ago. A bench of justices S. Muradilal and Vinod Gokhale "declined" the plea of the missing student's mother, Fatima Nafees, to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and monitor the probe, thereby removing the CBI from the investigation. The bench said Nafees, who had moved the high court in November 2016 seeking directions to the police to take her, "can raise all contentions available to her before the trial court," and disposed of the plea. The court had reserved its verdict in the case on September 4. The CBI, which had taken over the probe on May 16 last year, had after more than a year of investigation said it had looked into all the aspects of the case and was of the view that no offence was committed against the missing student. Ahmed had gone missing from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) here on October 15, 2016, following a scuffle with some students allegedly affiliated to the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) the previous night. The lawyer for Nafees had contended before the court that it was a "political case" and that the CBI has succumbed to the pressure of its masters. Nafees had moved the high court on November 25, 2016, seeking directions to the police to trace her son. (PTI)

Price cuts of petrol, diesel 'jumla', 'loot' by Govt continues: Cong

NEW DELHI, OCT 8 /-/ The Congress today termed the recent price cuts of petrol and diesel prices as a mere "jumla" (rhetoric) and said the "loot" of the Modi government has been continuing unabated even during the festival season. The Opposition party alleged that "looting" people's pockets through taxes on petrol and diesel has become the primary duty of the BJP-led government and reiterated its demand for bringing petrol and diesel under the ambit of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). "The Modi government is continuously looting

the public on petrol and diesel, looting people's pockets as the primary duty of the BJP. In the last three days, prices of petrol have risen by 53 paise and diesel by 67 paise in Delhi. The loot of Modi government is continuing unabated during the festivals," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said on Twitter. Petrol and diesel prices were cut by a minimum Rs 2.50 on October 5 when the government's only second cut in excise duty of Rs 1.50 per litre and state-owned fuel retailers providing a Re 1 per litre subsidy came into effect. Congress

spokesperson Priyanka Chaturvedi said Union finance minister Arun Jaitley announced a reduction of Rs 1.50 in excise duties on petrol and diesel, but rise in prices of petrol and diesel subsequent to it clearly shows that fuel price reduction has turned out to be a mere "jumla". Asked about Congress chief ministers not favouring bringing petrol and diesel under the GST, Chaturvedi said there was no dichotomy in the Congress's stand on the issue. "Our stand is clear that petrol and diesel be brought under the GST ambit. There

is no dichotomy within the party on the issue. Currently the BJP is in power in 21 states and if they want, petrol and diesel prices can be brought under GST," she told newsmen. She said the chief ministers and finance ministers of states on board on the issue, but there may have been differences over some issues about revenue sharing with states that can be sorted out. The party has last month gone on the offensive on the rising petrol and diesel prices and observed a day-long 'Bharat Bandh' on the issue. (PTI)

#MeToo storm gathers force, more big names reveal their experiences

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, OCT 8 /-/ The #MeToo storm intensified today with more women recounting their experiences of sexual harassment in the entertainment and media industry, leading to actor Rajat Kapoor apologising for his alleged misconduct and AIB facing uncertainty after two members distanced themselves from the controversy under a cloud. As newer names cropped up on social media with increasing number of women outing those who had allegedly harassed them over the years, Union women and child development minister Maneka Gandhi noted that anger at molestation and

sexual abuse never goes away. Maneka told newsmen in the national capital she is "very happy" that the #MeToo campaign had started in India and encouraged women to come forward to complain against sexual harassment. While the entertainment industry remained consumed by the many ramifications of the spectrum of sexual harassment charges, she started with Tanushree Dutta's allegations against veteran actor Nana Patekar - the Delhi-based bureau chief for the English newspaper reportedly resigned from his post. Mainstream star Hrithik Roshan, who has just made "Super 30" with Vikas

Bahl, broke his silence on the allegations of molestation by a junior employee of Phantom Films against the director. "It is impossible for me to work with any person if he/she is guilty of such gross misconduct. I am away and have access to only sporadic information. I have requested the producers of 'Super 30' to take stock of the apparent facts and take a harsh stand if need be. This is not to be hushed or brushed under the carpet. All proven offenders

must be punished and all exploited people must be empowered and given strength to speak up," Roshan said in a Twitter statement. Phantom Films - helmed by Bahl, Anurag Kashyap, Vikramaditya Motwane and Madhu Mantena - was dissolved over the weekend ahead of a HuffPost article that detailed the victim's account and how the production house failed to take action. AIB, which became popular for its 'roasts' and satires, could face a similar

future, said Vidhi Jotwani, AIB HR head. While Tanmay Bhat has come under attack for his inappropriate comments as a low writer-comedian Utsav Chakraborty, Gursimran Khamba has been directly accused of sexual misconduct. Both are founding members of the comedy collective. "Truthfully, we don't know what this means for the future of AIB and whether there is one. In the interim, Ashish Shukla, Rohan Joshi and other senior team members will work towards being able to answer that question over the next several months," Jotwani said in a statement. (PTI)

AT A GLANCE

SC reserves verdict on duplicate voters
NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court today reserved its verdict on pleas of Congress leaders Kamal Nath and Sachin Pilot alleging duplicate voters in the voters' list in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. A bench of justices A.R. Sikri and Ashok Bhushan concluded the hearing on the issue in which Election Commission had earlier claimed that attempts were being made to malign the poll panel and get favourable orders by fabricating the documents.