



Children learn Kathak under the guidance of Kathak Maestro Padma Vibhushan Pandit Birju Maharaj during the first day of four days long Kathak Workshop in Patna on Tuesday

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SC declines urgent hearing on plea seeking review of Sabarimala verdict

NEW DELHI, OCT 9 /-/- The Supreme Court today declined an urgent hearing on a plea seeking review of its verdict allowing women of all age groups entry into the Sabarimala Temple.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justices S K Kaul and M J Joseph had considered the submission of Shylaja Vijayan, president, National Ayyappa Devotees Association through lawyer Mathews J Nedumpara, which contended that the five-judge Constitution bench verdict lifting the ban was "absolutely untenable and irrational". "It will be listed in due court," the bench said, adding that in any case, the review petition will be heard in chamber and not in open court.

The lawyer, appearing for the Devotees Association, also sought a stay on the verdict and said the temple would be opening on October 16 for pilgrimages.

The bench, however, said the review petition can only be taken up after the Dussehra vacation. Besides the Association, another petition seeking review of the September 28 verdict of the apex court has also been filed by the Nair Service Society (NSS). A five-judge Constitution bench headed by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra, had in its 4:1 verdict, said banning the entry of women into the shrine is gender discrimination and that the practice violates rights of Hindu women. The review petition filed by Vijayan submitted that, "Faith cannot be judged by scientific or rationale reasons or logic".

The judgment under review is revolutionary, one which removes the stigma or the concept of dirt or pollution associated with menstruation is unfounded. It is a judgment welcomed by hyphenites who were aspiring for media headlines. On the merits of the case, as well, they said judgment is absolutely untenable and irrational, if not perverse," the petition submitted. The second petition filed by NSS, an organisation for the uplift and welfare of the Nair community, said as the deity is a 'Naistika Brahmachari, females before the age of 10 and after the age of 50 years are eligible to worship him and there is no practice of excluding worship by females'. Hence, the delay or wait for 40 years to worship cannot be considered as exclusionary and it is an error of law on the face of the judgement," the plea said. (PTI)

Nine killed, 14 hurt in Bhilai Steel Plant blast



The raging fire at Bhilai Steel Plant

RAIPUR, OCT 9 /-/- Nine people were killed and 14 others sustained injury today in a blast at the Bhilai Steel Plant of state-owned SAIL in Chhattisgarh's Durg district, police said.

The explosion took place around 10.30 am in a gas pipeline connected to the coke oven section of the plant in Bhilai town, around 30 km away from the state capital, Inspector General of Police (IGP, Durg Range) G P Singh told news agency PTI. "At least nine people were burnt to death while 14 others received injuries and most of them were said to be in a serious condition," he said. "The Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) in a statement said: "In an unfortunate incident around 10.30 am, today at SAIL Bhilai Steel Plant, there was a fire in a gas pipe line of the Coke Oven Battery Complex No 11 during a scheduled maintenance

job." "Some persons working at the site sustained burn injury... So far, nine persons have lost their lives and 14 are undergoing medical treatment," it said. Singh said as per preliminary information, over 24 employees were working at the spot when the accident occurred. Some persons working at the site suffered burn injuries, the SAIL statement said, adding that those injured were immediately rushed to the BSP hospital for medical care and aid. Resources have been mobilised to provide adequate care to the injured, it said. "SAIL collective stands by the families of the affected and will ensure that no stone is left unturned in providing all kinds of support," the statement said. Police personnel and a rescue team are at the spot, Singh said. Rescue operations are underway at the plant, operated by the state-run Steel Authority

of India Limited (SAIL). Steel Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh said: "I have got the preliminary information about the blast in a coke oven at Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP)." "I have asked for further detailed information from the authorities. Rescue and relief measures are underway," he said. According to sources, minister of state for steel Vishnu Kumar and steel secretary Binoy Kumar and SAIL chairman Anil Chaudhary have also left for Bhilai. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in June declared the modernised and expanded Bhilai Steel Plant to the nation. As per SAIL's website, the Bhilai Steel Plant is India's sole producer and supplier of world class rails for the Indian Railways, including 260 metre long rails, and a major producer of a large variety of wide and heavy steel plates and structural steel. (PTI)

Terrorists pushing limits to hit global aviation sector: Rajnath

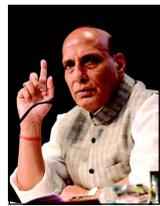
NEW DELHI, OCT 9 /-/- Recalling the 2009 "underwear bomber", who attempted to blow up an Amsterdam-Detroit flight mid-air, Union home minister Rajnath Singh today said terrorists are pushing their "limits" and "underpans" to attack global civil aviation operations.

Singh also said closer to home, ensuring security of about 40 small airports and heliports in India is a subject that cannot be "ignored". "The civil aviation sector is highly sensitive and high profile in nature. It also gets worldwide attention when hit by any attack. Often these incidents have geopolitical ramifications," the minister said after inaugurating a two-day seminar on "International aviation security here". "The case of the shoe bomber in 2001, the use of liquid explosives in London in 2006 and the case of the underwear bomber in Amsterdam in 2009, clearly indicate that terrorists are pushing the limits and even their underpans to hit the aviation sector," the home minister said. On Christmas Day in 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab tried to blow up a commercial plane for the al-Qaeda, but

remains an important target for terror outfits. Terrorists always look for opportunities to draw maximum attention and media coverage, he said. Subsequently, the home minister spoke about the domestic scenario. "There are 40 other operational airports and heliports under the regional connectivity scheme (RCS) in India, which are guarded by airport security units carved out from the respective state police forces." "The strength of any claim is determined by the strength of its smallest unit, therefore the security of the smaller airports should never be ignored," Singh said. Office said while there has been a talk of deploying CISF personnel at airports under the RCS or UDAN scheme, no "final decision" has been taken. These facilities continue to be guarded by state police forces, which are not as professional as the central force, in rendering aviation security duties, they said. The minister said the attacks on Brussels and Istanbul airports (in 2016) have shown the vulnerability of airports, especially from the city side, and it highlights new threats to aviation facilities.

The governments and aviation agencies have to increasingly think about newer methods to tackle conventional and un-conventional threats

— Home minister Rajnath Singh



was badly burned when a bomb sewn into his underwear failed to detonate fully onboard a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit. Farouk earned the nicknames of underwear bomber and Christmas Day bomber. The minister also asked aviation security agencies in the country to undertake "perspective planning" to thwart possible terror-like threats to aviation facilities. Security agencies such as the CISF should undertake "untiring and sincere efforts to maintain fool-proof security" at airports, which are thronged by lakhs of travellers daily, Singh said. The seminar is being organised by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), a federal force that guards 60 civil airports at present. It is being attended by delegates from 19 countries and several airlines. Civil aviation security continues to be an ex-

equate set of infrastructure at airports which commensurate with the increased number of air passengers. But, there are still many challenges and vulnerabilities. Therefore, we need perspective planning, more international cooperation and better coordination," he said. "We should adhere to stricter implementation of internationally agreed guidelines and norms, and inducting of updated advanced technology in all airports would enhance our security capabilities," Singh said. "The governments and aviation agencies have to increasingly think about newer methods to tackle conventional and un-conventional threats," he added. The home minister spoke about some legal measures taken by his government to ensure safety in the aviation sector. (PTI)



IDOL TIME IN KOLKATA: Ferrying the Goddess across river Hooghly

BSP will rather fight alone than beg for seats in alliance: Mayawati

■ Moily still hopeful of 2 UP leaders' presence in Grand Alliance in 2019

NEW DELHI, OCT 9 /-/- BSP supremo Mayawati asserted today that her party will rather fight elections on its own than "beg" for seats in any alliance.

Mayawati's comments assume significance as she had last week called talks with the Congress to fight the upcoming Assembly polls in three states together as it did not agree to part with as many seats for the BSP as she demanded. A Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) statement quoting her also lashed out at the Congress and the BJP, saying the BSP will never compromise with these two parties. That is why the BJP has put forth the condition of being given a "respectable number" of seats to enter into an electoral alliance, Mayawati said, according to the statement. "What it clearly means that the BSP will not beg for seats in any alliance. If this (respectable number of seats) does not happen, then it will continue to fight polls on its own," she said. Speaking on the occasion of the death anniversary of

the BSP founder Kanshi Ram, she said neither the Congress nor the BJP works in the interests of the upper castes' poor and the remaining majority. The BSP supremo, however, also added that her party will continue to strive to oust the Bharatiya Janata Party government, describing it as casteist, communal, arrogant, malicious and narrow-minded. Amid protests by upper caste groups against the Narendra Modi government's decision to restore the original stringent provision of a law on atrocities against Dalits and tribals, she said her party never supports misuse of any law. The SP-BSP alliance has resulted in humiliating defeats for the BJP in three Lok Sabha seat bypolls. Experts are of the view that if the BSP fights on its own, then the BJP may again do very well in the state in 2019. However, senior Congress leader M Veerappa Moily said Tuesday the BSP and the Samajwadi Party would be part of the grand alliance of Opposition parties against the BJP-led NDA in the next year's Lok Sabha polls. Moily also claimed the Congress will win at least four of the five states where assembly elections will be held over the next two months. (PTI)

AT A GLANCE

Key Madhesi party threatens Oli Govt

KATHMANDU: The Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal, a key Madhesi party which has been demanding amendments to Nepal's Constitution, has threatened to withdraw its support to Prime Minister P Sharma Oli-led government. The RJP-N leaders, who presented a memorandum to Prime Minister Oli on Monday, warned that if government failed to address their demands, the party would withdraw its support to his government after Diwali.

Aadhaar Seva Kendras

NEW DELHI: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) plans to set up 'Aadhaar Seva Kendras', similar to the concept of Passport Seva Kendras, covering 53 cities across India at an estimated project cost of Rs 300-400 crore, official sources said. These proposed Aadhaar centres, meant to facilitate enrolment, updation and other activities, will be UIDAI's own and operate in addition to 30,000 centres, currently being run by banks and post offices, and in government premises (offering similar Aadhaar services), they added.

'Titi' gaining strength

KOLKATA: The Met department today said the cyclone Titi brewing in the Bay of Bengal is gaining strength and is likely to cause heavy to very heavy rain from Thursday in Gangetic West Bengal, raising concern among organisers of Durga Pujas which is around the corner. The deep depression over the central Bay of Bengal has intensified into the cyclonic storm and lay centered about 860 km south-southwest of Kolkata at 11.30 am, the Met department said.

Gujarat migrant attacks: Rahul says govt must act decisively to restore peace

Blames Centre's economic policies and 'poorly-implemented' GST for rise in unemployment



Rahul Gandhi interacting with party members at a corner meeting in Maniya in Dholpur, Rajasthan

NEW DELHI, OCT 9 /-/- Congress president Rahul Gandhi today said attacks on migrant workforce in Gujarat are not good for business and the economy and that the Union government must act decisively to restore peace and ensure safety of every Indian.

In a Facebook post, he said "poor" economic policies, demonetisation and a "poorly-implemented" GST has led to closure of factories and rise in unemployment that is being manifested in violent attacks on migrants across Gujarat. He said there is growing frustration and anger with the government's "inability" to create jobs. Across Gujarat, poor economic policies, demonetisation and poorly executed GST have devastated industry resulting in shutting down of factories and industrial units, leading to massive unemployment.

Frustration and anger with the Government's inability to create jobs. This anger and frustration is being manifested in violent attacks on migrants, across the state of Gujarat, he said in his post. The Congress chief said the migrant workforce is "critical to our economic growth" and attacks on them create an environment of fear and insecurity that isn't good for business and economy". The government must act decisively, and do all it can to restore peace and to ensure the safety of every Indian, he also said. Since the alleged rape of a 14-month-old girl in Sabarkantha district on September 28, six districts, most of them in north Gujarat, have witnessed sporadic incidents of violence against Hindi-speaking people, police said. Police have arrested Ramesh Sahu, a labourer hailing from Bihar and working in a local ceramic factory, for the crime.