

Ayodhya Cheers As Temple Trust Is Announced

AYODHYA: The announcement of the temple trust by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sent a wave of cheers in Ayodhya.

Saints, seers and the local people have started celebrations after the announcement.

Chief Priest of Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, Acharya Satyendra Das, said, "Trust should have been formed a couple of months ago. Unless the trust is constituted, the temple cannot be built. I am happy that our wishes have been fulfilled."

Mahant Dharm Das Maharaj of the Akhil Bhartiya Panch Ramanandi Nirmani Akhara also expressed happiness over Prime Minister's announcement of the formation of Ayodhya temple trust and hoped that the construction of the temple would start soon.

Mahant Dinendra Das, head of the Nirmohi Akhara also said, "The world has got united for the



construction of the Ram temple. Lord Ram has fulfilled all our wishes. We all are one now. It is good that the announcement of trust has been made."

Rukmini Srivastava, a student at the Saket degree college, said, "Ever since I was born, I have been hearing about the Ram temple and stories related to it. I am so happy that I will now see the temple being built."

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in the Lok Sabha that the cabinet

had decided to form 'Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra', trust to take a decision on construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya as mandated by the Supreme Court in its decision.

"The trust will be autonomous and independent to take decisions on issues related to renovation and construction of Ram temple. We have spoken to the Uttar Pradesh government and five-acre land will be given to Sunni Waqf Board," the Prime Minister said.

Nirbhaya Convicts Should Be Hanged Together: HC

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said that four convicts in Nirbhaya rape and murder case should be hanged together and gave a weeks' time to them to avail their legal remedies.

"The death warrants should be executed together. Thus, convict Mukesh cannot be separated from the other convicts. I hereby direct the convicts to use their remedies within one week," Justice Suresh Kumar Kait said while pronouncing the order.

The order was passed on a petition filed by the Central government challenging a sessions court's order which stayed the death warrants issued against the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case.



The hanging of Vinay, Pawan, Akshay and Mukesh, originally scheduled for 7 a.m. January 22, was postponed to February 1 at 6 a.m. but was deferred again on January 31 after Mukesh filed an

application before a Delhi court contending that other convicts are yet to avail the legal remedies and cannot be hanged separately.

The stay imposed by the trial court was challenged by the Centre the next day.

Mukesh and Vinay have exhausted their legal remedies. However, a decision on Akshay's mercy plea is pending before the President. Pawan has yet not availed of the remedy of curative and mercy petition, which will be last judicial and constitutional resort for him.

The 23-year-old victim, later named Nirbhaya, was brutally gang-raped and tortured and succumbed to her injuries a few days later in 2013.

From Front page...

Shootout In City Outskirts, 3 Killed

a shopkeeper. SDG CRPF said that "significant recoveries" were made from the shootout spot including grenades. He also congratulated his troopers for dealing with militants in a professional manner since the area witnesses' huge public and private traffic.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar identified the slain militants as Lashkar-e-Toiba militant Zia-ur-Rehman from Budgam and Khateeb Das of Hizbul Mujahideen from Bijbehara. Dass, police said was brother-in-law of ISJK militant Mugees Mir of Parimpora who was earlier killed in an encounter.

The IGP further said that third militant who was captured alive in an injured condition was identified as Omar Fayaz who was affiliated with ISJK, a claim strongly contested by the family.

"Zia-ur-Rehman was involved in the weapon loot incident in year 2018 at the official residence of Congress leader Muzaffar Parry," the IGP said, adding "Dass was associated with Hizbul Mujahideen and was involved in attacks in the areas of south Kashmir. Several cases were registered against him."

When asked about the number of militants killed this year so far, DGP Singh said as many as 20 militants of different outfits were killed by security forces in the encounters.

"As many as 20 militants of different outfits have been killed in encounters, including the one in Jammu, during the last about a month. Three security force personnel were killed in the exchange of fire during this time. Many modules have also been busted during this time," he said.

Singh expressed optimism that the summer this year in the Valley will be peaceful.

"We are hopeful that the situation will remain peaceful," he said.

Singh was responding to a question about any possibility of disturbance during the summer in Kashmir.

He referred to successful anti-militancy operations in January in the valley and Jammu.

"We have busted several modules of terrorists last month but the grenade attack at Lal Chowk shows that there are some remnants. But the security forces are alert and foiling their plans," Singh said.

"Police have got some clues about those who carried out the grenade attack at Lal Chowk on Sunday "and we will soon get to him".

On Sunday, militants hurled a grenade on CRPF personnel near Pratap Park in busy Lal Chowk area of the city, injuring two CRPF troopers and seven civilians

Injured Youth's Family Contest

heard a few bullet sounds. I went outside and saw Fayaz shouting auntie I am hit by a bullet and I am dying. We were stopped at Shalteng and despite repeated requests, we were allowed to proceed," she said amid tears.

She alleged that police claims that her nephew was taken to the hospital was a white lie.

Fayaz's uncle Abdur Rashid Thakur said that his nephew runs a poultry shop in the area and he was at his shop when hit by a bullet.

"Fayaz's mother is a patient and his father was recently operated for his heart ailment," said Thakur, adding, that there are blood marks of his nephew still left at his shop.

"Police should correct the facts and visit the shop once," Thakur said.

The government forces, he said stopped the family at Shalteng due to which Fayaz lost a lot of blood.

"We arranged 18 points of blood for him so far. May God save him," he said.

Fayaz is battling for his life at SMHS hospital. He was hit by a bullet and has operated, his conditions according to doctors is said to be critical.

"Bullet hit his chest and he has been operated. We have put him on ventilator and his condition is critical," Medical Superintendent, SMHS Dr. Nazir Chaudhary told Kashmir Observer.

However, the police in a statement issued in the evening maintained that Fayaz was an Islamic State of Jammu and Kashmir (ISJK) militant.

Earlier, DGP Dilbagh Singh at a press conference had claimed that Fayaz was injured in shootout and later arrested. He too had claimed that the injured youth was associated with ISJK.

Oppn Walks Out Over Farooq's Detention

several other opposition parties walked out of the House.

TMC leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay also raised the issue of detention of Abdullah and said the issue was also raised during the all-party meeting.

"I would request the government to intimate this House at least about his health condition," he said.

Earlier Congress MP K Suresh raised the issue of release of Abdullah, but it was cut short by the Speaker.

It is the responsibility of the government and House to ensure his welfare and also that he exercises his right as an elected representative, Suresh said.

Thereafter members of Congress, DMK, NCP, NC and Muslim League entered the well of the House raising slogans for release of Abdullah.

History's Longest Ever E-Curfew Continues

said Daniel Bastard, the head of RSF's Asia-Pacific desk.

He said that maintaining the restrictions prevents Kashmiri journalists from working freely and deprives all of the region's citizens of access to reliable and independently reported news and information.

"We call on the supreme court's judges to examine this issue more closely and ensure that the executive stops violating article 19 of the Indian constitution, as it has been doing for the past six months,"

The RSF statement said that government 'boasted' that it had restored 2G mobile Internet and was establishing a network of 844 kiosks where members of the public could connect to the Internet.

"But, for a region with 8 million inhabitants, this means only one connection point for every 9,500 potential users. The selection of sites for inclusion on the "white-list" seems completely arbitrary," the handout said

"Social media, news sites and peer-to-peer networks have been systematically excluded. Similarly, the Indian versions of search engines such as Google and Yahoo continue to be censored. But Yahoo's Quebec version is on the list," it added.

The RSF quoted a recent survey by the Medianama news website that said only 58 sites were really accessible.

"Kashmiris had few illusions. A week after the supreme court ruled on 10 January that the total Internet blackout in the Kashmir Valley was illegal, the government responded by publishing a "white-list" of 153 websites that were now supposedly accessible to Kashmiris. The number of sites was increased to 301 on 24 January," the statement said.

In Srinagar, the Kashmiri capital, RSF has been able to confirm that many of the sites on the "white-list" are in fact inaccessible because of the weakness of the 2G connection, which was originally designed to be used mainly for sending SMS messages. The bandwidth is very low and partial, and the connection ends up dropping.

Despite the blockade, RSF managed to conduct a series of video interviews with nine Srinagar-based journalists describing how it has become impossible to work and how the central government tries to 'control all news and information coming out of the region'. Entitled Voices From Kashmir, the video interviews were posted online of the 100th day of the communications blockade.

India is ranked 140th out of 180 countries in RSF's 2019 World Press Freedom Index but is likely to fall even further in the 2020 Index because of the crackdown on journalistic freedom in Kashmir, RSF said.

RSF quoted a number of journalists in the statement who complained of facing problems in discharging their professional duties

in view of continued internet blockade. "It's definitely no better than it was six months back," freelancer Quratulain Rehbar told RSF. "With 2G speed, you can't do anything because it's too slow. It's a farce to suggest that the Internet has been restored here for betterment of the people."

Syed Ali Safi, a Srinagar-based correspondent for various international media outlets, is barely able to work. "Every time the government imposes a communication blockade in Kashmir, journalists working for foreign media outlets suffer most," RSF quoted him as saying. "Moreover, we are constantly under strict surveillance and are subjected to censorship."

"There is clearly an assault on Kashmir's freedom of expression by the [ruling] BJP's Hindu supremacists," said journalist and political commentator Gowhar Geelani, accusing the central government of controlling all news coverage about the region. "Kashmir has been converted into an open prison. This information black hole is the longest ever e-curfew in history, and is making journalism almost impossible."

Gulmarg Shivers At Minus 11

spokesperson said that rain or snow could occur at isolated places in the valley under the influence of a Western Disturbance (WD).

"The WD has phased off and will have very less impact in the valley," he said, adding weather will again turn dry from Thursday onwards.

All water-bodies remained frozen due to extreme chilly weather conditions in Ladakh region, where people are dependent on hot water springs during winter months. Border town of Kargil was the coldest place in the region at minus 23.5 followed by Leh, where the mercury improved about 7 degree and settled at minus 15.3 degree.

After witnessing a dipped of about a degree in the night temperature, people woke up to a cloudy and chilly Wednesday morning in the summer capital, Srinagar. However, as the day progressed sun came out from behind the clouds, resulting in considerable improvement in the maximum temperature. The night temperature in the city improved and settled at minus 3.9 degree, against minus 3 degree recorded on Tuesday. During this 40-day-long Chilai Kalan, which ended on January 29, Srinagar received heavy snowfall, breaking about 30 year old record.

The night temperature at Gulmarg, about 55 km from here in north Kashmir, dipped about a degree and settled at minus 11 degree. "The weather witnessed improvement as sun came out from behind the clouds on Wednesday in Gulmarg, which is famous for its ski slopes and quality of snow. Tourists, including foreigners, were out on ski slopes enjoying different activities," a hotelier said. The mercury during the night at Qazigund, Kupwara in north Kashmir and tourist resort of Kokernag settled at minus 4.5 degree, minus 3.2 degree and minus 3.4 degree, respectively.

India Committed 'Fatal Mistake' By Revoking

be put back," he said. Khan also claimed that the chain of events would "finally result in the independence of Kashmir."

His remarks came as Pakistan observed the Kashmir Solidarity Day, with the top leaders extending their support to the Kashmiri people. The day is observed every year on February 5 by Pakistan.

"It is my faith that Kashmir will become free after the August 5 action by Modi. If he had not taken this step, we would not have been able to highlight it to the world," he said, adding that it was "our duty" to inform the world about it.

Indian abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution on August 5, 2019 that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. India has categorically told the international community that its move to scrap Article 370 was an internal matter and has also advised Pakistan to accept the reality.

In his address, Khan also criticised Modi's statement to conquer Pakistan in 7-10 days. "No normal man can say such a thing," he

said. Addressing the National Cadet Corps in New Delhi, Modi last month said the Indian armed forces won't take more than a week-10 days to make Pakistan bite dust.

Khan said that Pakistan should not give any opportunity to India to divert world's attention from Kashmir. "Either they will launch false flag operation or launch crackdown in Kashmir by using the threat of terrorism," he claimed.

He said it was political and diplomatic fight, and Pakistan should avoid the trap laid by India.

Khan once again talked at length about the RSS and linked it to Nazi philosophy.

"Thrice I explained to (US President Donald) Trump the issue of Kashmir," he said.

Khan also demanded immediate lifting of the restrictions and communications blackout in Kashmir.

President Arif Alvi in his message said India by abrogating Article 370 has directly contravened the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in his message reaffirmed Pakistan's unstinted political, diplomatic and moral support for the Kashmiri people.

Things Happening In Kashmir

primarily should be dealt under the Foreign Affairs Committee, and it will have a hearing on the difficulties of Kashmiris.

"We don't think we can turn our heads and pretend it is not happening, it cannot be swept under the rug," said the US lawmaker.

He said that the Congress plays a very important role certainly in war and peace, and likewise in human rights violations, expressing hope that a lot of things will be done in US President Donald Trump's administration.

Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, Ami Bera also spoke on the subject of alleged atrocities against Kashmiris, saying that he will personally attempt to visit the valley to ascertain the situation. On Feb 5, Pakistanis observed Kashmir Solidarity Day today in support of "Kashmiri people's struggle for their right to self-determination under United Nations resolutions".

Coronavirus: 21 J&K Residents Return

Of these, seven reports have arrived back and all of them are negative, the officer added.

"All these people are under observation and are being monitored. They have been asked to remain in isolation and take necessary precautions. However, no one has been hospitalised," he said.

The new strain of coronavirus, which originated in Hubei province in central China late last year, has so far killed 490 people in that country and infected further 24,324. Globally, around 130 cases have been reported and three of them are from Kerala, India.

Admin Says No Need To Panic

people are requested not to panic due to this deadly virus," Dulloo said, adding "The administration is completely alert and making all preventive measures towards ensuring safety of the people", he added.

He said that adequate arrangements have been made at the government run hospitals to face any such eventuality. He said that isolation wards have been kept at the hospitals where team of doctors and paramedics have been deployed to observe people with the symptoms.

Dulloo said that proper protocol is being followed as suggested by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and samples are being taken of the people who come from China or other virus affected country.

He said that hoardings have also been placed at the airports and other places educating people about the virus besides helpline numbers have also been made available at these locations.

However, he advised for maintaining ba-

sic hand and personal hygiene as a precautionary measure.

Indo-Pak Nuclear War Would Harm Ocean

climate reacted to soot (black carbon) in smoke that would be injected into the upper atmosphere from fires ignited by nuclear weapons.

They considered a range of hypothetical nuclear wars, including a relatively small one between India and Pakistan and a large one between the US and Russia.

Excess carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels enters the ocean and reacts with water to form carbonic acid, which decreases ocean pH (makes it more acidic) and lowers levels of carbonate ions.

Corals, clams, oysters and other marine organisms use carbonate ions to create their shells and skeletons, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

A more acidic ocean makes it harder to form and maintain shells and skeletons. The massive amount of smoke from a nuclear conflict would block sunlight and cause global cooling, the study said.

The cooling would temporarily boost the pH in the surface ocean over five years and briefly lessen the decline in pH from ocean acidification.

But the cooling would also lead to lower levels of carbonate ions for about 10 years, challenging shell maintenance in marine organisms, said researchers.

"We have known for a while that agriculture on land would be severely affected by climate change from nuclear war," Robock said.

"A lingering question is whether the survivors could still get food from the sea. Our study is the first step in answering this question," Robock added.

The next step is to combine projected changes in ocean chemistry with projected changes in temperature and salinity and assess their impacts on shellfish and fish stocks throughout the oceans, he said.

Whether We Are Still A Democracy:

The state was also bifurcated into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Priyanka Gandhi pointed out that it has been six months since the former chief ministers have been incarcerated without any charges and millions of people locked down in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Six months ago we were asking how long this will carry on? Now we are asking whether we are still a democracy or not," Priyanka Gandhi tweeted.

Illegal Occupants From Govt Quarters

Department to form committees for physical verification of all the Estates accommodations and eviction of illegal occupants from government quarters at Jammu and Srinagar.

The Principal Secretary issued these directions while chairing a review meeting of the Department which was attended by Director Estates, Subash Chibber; Deputy Director Estates Kashmir, Deputy Director Estates, Jammu, Executive Engineer Estates Division, Jammu and Srinagar, besides other officers of the Department.

The Principal Secretary directed the officials that unauthorized allotments of both government and private accommodations should be vacated as early as possible. He said that the field officers should work in coordination to ensure that all the illegal occupants are vacated from the government occupancies

The principal Secretary also said that the committees shall also re-verify the particulars of employees accommodated in private houses and private hotels and to ensure that no illegal occupant is staying there.

He said that a database management system (software) should be developed to make allotment process of accommodation to Government Officials more transparent.