

Shaheen Bagh Residents Light 'Holika Pyre' But Don't Play Holi



NEW DELHI:- Shaheen Bagh, where the women's sit-in protest against the CAA has been going on since December, on Monday night lit the pyre of 'Holika' as per tradition but did not play Holi on Tuesday in view of the deaths during the riots in northeast Delhi.

Ritu Kaushik, who is associated with the Shaheen Bagh agitation, said: "We have lit the pyre of CAA, NPR and NRC along with hatred as per the tradition and hope peace prevails in the country."

Taseer said: "We lit the 'holika' but did not celebrate Holi in remembrance of the people who lost their lives in the riots and Shaheen Bagh is a symbol of resistance... its not about religion so we celebrate every religion here."

Shaheen Bagh has become a symbol of opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Act, and inspired many such protests elsewhere in the country and evoked solidarity at various places abroad too.

However, it is now surrounded

in some controversy with claims that the agitation is losing its sheen and number of people on the spot is coming down and sirens are being used to collect people.

However, the protesters say that this is being done on behalf of the government as they could not find anything negative about all women protest.

The matter of Shaheen Bagh is pending in the apex court which is hearing a petition to remove them due to their effect on daily commuters.

Supreme Court has appointed advocates Sanjay Hegde and Sadhna Ramachandran to talk to the protesters and they who had urged women to vacate the place as a "Holi gift".

Indirectly urging protestors to clear the protest site by Holi, the interlocutor said, "We expect our sisters will send love to India on the occasion of Holi from Shaheen Bagh. Sisters can give a Holi gift in advance. We will celebrate Holi this month. We will hug each other on Holi."

Three New Coronavirus Cases Confirmed In Karnataka



BENGALURU:- Three new cases of coronavirus were confirmed in Karnataka on Tuesday taking the total number of infected people to four. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said and asked people not to panic.

A software engineer who returned here from the US on March 1 tested positive for the coronavirus on Monday, becoming the first COVID-19 patient in Karnataka.

According to health department officials, his wife and daughter too tested positive for the virus on Tuesday.

Another person, who had travelled from America via London and arrived here on March 8, also tested positive, they said.

Surveillance at airports for those with symptoms has been stepped up, Yediyurappa, who chaired a high level meeting with officials here, told reporters.

"So far four people have been confirmed for COVID-19.

The patients as well as their family members have been quarantined."

Yediyurappa said the engineer's driver and his family have been quarantined.

His friends too have been screened, he added.

"There is no need for the citizens of our state to panic.

We are going to screen all the international passengers effectively," the Chief Minister said after chairing a meeting with the officials about the preparedness to tackle the disease.

He asked people not to pay heed to rumours and sought media support to allay public fear.

Yediyurappa appealed to the

media for support to tackle the coronavirus challenge.

"We need media support. Do not publicise small incidents to make it look big," Yediyurappa said.

To a question about shortage of face masks due to black-marketing, Yediyurappa said raids have been conducted to ensure that no one sells these products at a higher price.

A Mangaluru report said a man, who was under coronavirus quarantine at a district hospital following his arrival from Dubai on March 8, and later left the premises, has been readmitted to the facility following the district administration's intervention.

Dakshina Kannada Deputy Commissioner Sindhu B Rupesh said the patient's samples have been collected and sent to a testing centre in Bengaluru.

Meanwhile, medical education minister K Sudhakar said the state government is mulling providing additional health insurance coverage to doctors and paramedics treating the coronavirus cases and working in laboratories besides existing schemes.

Stressing that their safety was 'paramount', he also asked them to follow the guidelines laid down by the Health department while treating the virus cases.

He was speaking after inaugurating a laboratory which will have testing facilities for coronavirus and other pathogens, including H1N1, at the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute in the Victoria Hospital campus here.

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Congress Govt Tottering In Madhya Pradesh As Scindia Resigns

BHOPAL:- Numbers continue to be the key topic of political discussion in Madhya Pradesh after Jyotiraditya Scindia's resignation from the Congress, 18 years after he first joined it.

It is a matter of time before the Kamal Nath-led Congress gets the marching orders. The odds that were stacked against the BJP till a week ago now overwhelmingly are in its favour. With the resignation of 19 MLAs from the assembly, the Congress is reduced to minority in the state.

MLAs and ministers supporting Scindia have sent their resignations to State Assembly Speaker on Tuesday. The Congress which was claiming to get some BJP MLAs into its fold may have to revise its numbers downwards. There were claims of seven members switching sides.

The BJP prepared to hold a meeting of the legislators in festive mood of Holi on Tuesday. But with some legislators failing to reach Bhopal it has been rescheduled to 4

p.m. The morning meeting was confined to state party chief V.D. Sharma, leader of the Opposition Gopal Bhargava and former chief minister Shivaj Singh Chouhan who may take the mantle from Bhargava.

How is the likely party position going to be after 19 MLAs supporting Scindia quit the Assembly? They will have to do so to escape disqualification while voting against the Congress candidates in Rajya Sabha elections.

Its Raining Resignations From Congress In Madhya Pradesh

BHOPAL:- Madhya Pradesh's former Home Minister Bhopendra Singh arrived here on Tuesday evening from Bengaluru by a chartered flight, carrying hard copies of the resignations of 19 ministers. He said five more Congress MLAs are expected to reach Bengaluru in a few hours and would also hand in their resignations, taking the total number to 24.

Singh hoped the number would touch 30 by Wednesday morning.

The 19 resignations were already mailed electronically to the Speaker, he said, but with a circumspect approach, said he would rather wait for the events to pan out instead of making any predictions.

Unexpected rain matched the political mood with a downpour of resignations from the ruling party. The Congress strength in the Assembly could slump from 117 to the below 90 mark.

Some Congressmen like state unit chief Arun Yadav still held out hope that the ruling party could wriggle out of the crisis. There were few buyers for this though.

Former Speaker Sitasaran Sharma said the party's claims sounded hollow as of now. The House is scheduled to meet for the Budget session on March 16 and the Congress would start the day with a hopeless minority.

Former Union Minister and four-time parliamentarian Jyotiraditya Scindia resigned from the Congress this morning, shortly after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi.



He is expected to join the BJP and is likely to be rewarded with a Rajya Sabha seat and subsequently a berth in the Union Cabinet.

Shortly after his resignation, 19 Congress MLAs sent their letters of resignation and Raj Bhavan sources said 22 MLAs had already resigned by 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday. Once they were accepted, the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government will be reduced to minority.

Madhya Pradesh BJP MLAs will meet here at 7 p.m. and the BJP is expected to stake its claim to form the government. The party is likely to present former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan as its chief ministerial candidate.

Veteran Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh, who led a "rescue" operation last week after 10 MLAs were alleg-

edly held hostage by the BJP at a resort near Delhi, hit out on Tuesday at a "conspiracy" to unseat the government. Singh had accused Bhopendra Singh and Chouhan of hatching it.

In response, Chouhan criticised the Congress over "double standards", saying: "For some Congress leaders when Scindia was in Congress, he was a maharaja, now he is a mafia?"

Interestingly, Chouhan had also coined a slogan "Abki bar Maaf Karo Maharaj" to rile Scindia during the Lok Sabha elections. Kamal Nath had accused the BJP of trying to destabilize the government because it was acting against mafias.

The drama continued with Congress MLA Bisahu Lal, one of those who had resigned first, joined the BJP in the presence of Chouhan. Lal claimed there were several other Congress leaders waiting to join the BJP.

Coronavirus 58 Indians Brought Back From Iran



NEW DELHI:- Twelve more people have tested positive for coronavirus -- six in Kerala and three each in Karnataka and Pune, state authorities said on Tuesday as the total cases went up to 59 and amid COVID-19 scare, a combination of two anti-HIV drugs was used for the first time in India in the treatment of two patients.

The health ministry said the total number of confirmed cases has risen to 50, adding the rest are being retested for confirmation. Once the fresh cases declared by the state governments are taken into account, the figure will go up to 59.

In Karnataka, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said four persons have been confirmed for coronavirus, including three new cases. In Pune also, three persons tested positive, a day after two cases were reported.

In the morning, 58 Indians were brought back home from coronavirus-hit Iran in a military transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

IAF spokesperson Group Captain Anupam Banerjee said the C-17 Globemaster aircraft evacuated 25 men, 31 women and two children. It also brought swab samples of 529 Indians to carry out laboratory tests and check whether they have coronavirus infection.

Those who returned have been quarantined at a medical facility in Hindon.

Announcing the latest cases in Kerala at a media interaction in Thiruvananthapuram after a special cabinet meeting held to discuss the coronavirus situation, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said at least 1,116 people are under observation -- 149 in isolation wards of various hospitals and 967 under home quarantine.

The fresh cases are friends and relatives of an Italy-returned couple and their son who had on Saturday tested positive for the deadly virus along with two other kin staying with them at their home in Rane in Pathanamthitta district, Health Minister K K Shailaja, who was also present, said.

The aged parents of the couple are among the six latest positive cases, she said.

In Jaipur, the combination of lopinavir and ritonavir, both second-line HIV drugs, was administered was administered on an elderly Italian couple undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at the SMS Hospital.

The Drug Controller General of India approved "restricted use" of these medications for treating those affected by novel coronavirus after the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) sought their emergency approval.

SMS Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr D S Meena said the Italian man and his wife had developed severe respiratory problems following which a decision was taken to put them on the combination of lopinavir and ritonavir.

According to officials, consent of the patients was taken before the drugs were administered.

This combination along with other drugs has been used in clinical trials in China, where coronavirus first emerged, and Thailand for treating Covid-19 patients.

In Karnataka, a software engineer who returned from the US on March 1 tested positive on Monday, becoming the first COVID-19 patient in the state.

According to health department officials, his wife and daughter too tested positive for the virus on Tuesday.

Another person, who had travelled from America via London and arrived in Bengaluru on March 8, also tested positive, they said.

State Health Minister Sriramulu said the family members of the four persons have been quarantined. Using a hashtag of #CoronavirusOutBreak, the minister said, "I appeal to the people to make sure that this disease does not spread further."

A day after two persons related to each other tested positive for novel coronavirus in Pune, the Maharashtra health department said. This takes the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Pune district as well as in Maharashtra to five.

One of them is related to the two confirmed coronavirus patients and had returned from Dubai with them, while the other is driver of the cab in which the family had travelled from the Mumbai airport to Pune, said district collector Naval Kishore Ram.

The condition of all of them was stable and they were undergoing treatment in the isolation ward of civic-run Naidu Hospital, he said.

After Mizoram, Manipur has shut its border with Myanmar indefinitely amid the novel coronavirus scare.

Neighbouring Mizoram had on Monday also sealed its borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh, and banned the entry of foreigners to prevent the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

An official order, issued by Special Secretary (Home) H Gyan Prakash, said the Indo-Myanmar border in the Manipur sector would remain shut until further orders.

In Kerala, schools and colleges and cinemas will remain closed in the state till March 31. Classes 1 to 7 of all schools -- state, CBSE and ICSE boards -- will remain shut and examinations which have begun for them will be put on hold.

Examinations for class 10, class 12 and vocational higher secondary will, however, continue. Final examinations of class 8 and 9 also will proceed as usual.

Temple and church festivals, which witnesses mass gatherings should be avoided, but rituals can be held in a low key manner, Vijayan said.

As the hill temple Lord Ayyappa at Sabarimala will reopen on March 13, monthly pujas can be held, but at this juncture devotees should avoid darshan, he said.

The coronavirus threat also cast a shadow on Holi celebrations which were subdued across the country.

Amul Posts Ad, Celebrates 'Wholly Maska' Holi

NEW DELHI:- Giving out all the colourful festive vibes, India's dairy giant Amul has dropped a colourful ad on their Twitter handle on the occasion and has left netizens impressed.

The company posted on its official Twitter handle @Amul_Coop the ad which shows a picture of the Amul mascot smearing colour denoting the festival and wrote, "#Amul Topical: Celebrating the festival of colours!"

The creative ad reads, "Holi masti, wholly maska!..Khilao, peela lao!"

As the post surfaced on the Internet, social media has been abuzz with reactions.

A user wrote, "May this day bring peace and happiness for you



Cherry blossom...Happy Holi."

Another wrote, "I don't think water and colour celebrations should take place publicly because of corona."

A user commented and wrote, "Unbeatable."

"Stay away from chemical colours and intoxicants this Holi,"

a user remarked.

On the day of Holi, people enjoy by splashing colors over each other and they also play with liquid colors. This part of playing with colours goes on till the end of the afternoon and in the evening people start off with preparing delicious meals.

NEWS MAKERS

LT Gen KJS Dhillon Will Take Over As DG DIA

NEW DELHI :- Lieutenant Gen K.J.S. Dhillon will take over the post of Director General, Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Intelligence), sources in the Ministry of Defence said on Monday.

The post is under the Department of Military Affairs under the Chief of Defence Staff.

Lieutenant General Dhillon (57) is presently on a two-month leave and will assume the new charges once he rejoins duty, sources said.

Dhillon, who is from the 1983 batch of Indian Mili-



tary Academy (IMA), recently handed over the charge of XV Corps to Lt Gen B.S. Raju.

DG DIA and DCIDS is responsible for collating technical as well as human intelligence for the three armed forces. DIA was created in 2002 on the recommendations of a Group of Ministers which looked into the lapses leading to the Kargil intrusion in 1999.

It is a nodal agency for all defence related intelligence which collects information technically as well as through satellites to safeguard the interests of the country.