

# 11 killed, several injured as bus falls into gorge in J&K's Poonch



Agency  
Srinagar, Dec. 8

At least 11 passengers are reported to have died and several others were injured in a bus accident in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday. The accident took place

when a passenger bus — registration number JK02W0445 — heading from Loran to Poonch skid off the road and fell into a deep gorge at Plera. Plera is nearly 30 km away from Poonch. A police official said that the driver appeared to have lost control of

the bus. The badly mangled bus came to a halt at the bottom of the gorge by a river bank. The injured have been shifted to a sub-district hospital in Mandi for treatment. The death toll is likely to go up. Further details are awaited.

# Voting for panchayat polls underway in J-K

Agency  
Srinagar, Dec. 8

Voting for the penultimate phase of the nine-phased Panchayat polls is underway Saturday at over 2,600 polling stations in Jammu and Kashmir. Polling began at 8 am at 2,633 polling stations - 550 in Kashmir division and 2083 in Jammu division, officials said. They said 361 polling stations have been categorized as hypersensitive with 171 in Kashmir division and 190 in Jammu division. The officials said 6,304 candidates are in the fray for 331 Sarpanch and 2007 Panch seats in this phase, while 43

Sarpanchs and 681 Panchs have been elected unopposed.

An electorate of 515121 have the right to exercise their franchise for Sarpanch constituencies and 419775 for Panch constituencies, they said. The officials said all arrangements, including security related, have been put in place for the smooth conduct of the polls.

At the end of seven phases of the Panchayat Polls, an overall voter turnout of 73.8 per cent has been recorded across the state, with a poll percentage of 44.4 per cent in the Kashmir division and 83.2 per cent in the Jammu division.

# Popular Front of India Chairman condoles demise of Maulana Asrar-ul-Haque Qasimi MP



IT News  
Imphal, Dec. 8

Popular Front of India chairman E. Abubacker has conveyed deep condolence on the demise of Maulana Asrar-ul-Haque Qasimi, MP. By his demise we have lost a great Islamic

scholar and political leader. Maulana Qasimi was the real representative and the leader of the people in Kishanganj in social, educational and economic fields also. E. Abubacker remembered his support to the activities of Popular

Front of India. Maulana Qasimi has addressed public programmes of the organization including National Political Conference held at Calicut. E. Abubacker prayed for his hereafter life and joined in the grief of the family.

# Goa govt opposes PIL for declaring CM's health status in HC

Agency  
Panaji, Dec. 8

Citing the fundamental right to privacy, the Goa government has opposed a plea seeking the High Court's direction to the state administration to declare the health status of Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar.

In an affidavit filed before Justice R M Borde of the Goa bench of the high court Friday, state Chief Secretary Dharmendra Sharma questioned the maintainability of the petition filed by activist Trajano D'Mello a month ago. "Like any other person who may not occupy public office has a right to not disclose his health problems to the public. If a person is directed to disclose his health ailments to the public merely because he happens to be the CM, the same would be the violation of Right to Privacy under Article 21," it stated.

In his public interest litigation, D'Mello had claimed "administrative

collapse" in Goa due to extended absence of Parrikar, 62, from office. The chief minister, who has been in and out of hospitals since early this year, is currently recuperating at his private residence here since he was shifted there from AIIMS in Delhi in October. "The present petition is absolutely lacking in good faith which is an essential prerequisite for the maintainability of public interest litigation," the affidavit said.

The petitioner's claim of "administrative collapse" is absolutely unsubstantiated, vague and is entirely based on hearsay which cannot be the basis of a PIL, it said. "The petitioner, through this PIL, indirectly seeks to assail the right to privacy of the CM, as an individual," the affidavit read. In his plea, D'Mello had raised apprehension that Parrikar's signatures on several official documents are being forged.

"Despite physically incapacitated and bed-ridden in the ICU, Parrikar

has breached constitutional trust by virtue to remain as CM despite the fact that he is physically and mentally incapable of discharging his constitutional obligations," D'Mello's affidavit said. The chief secretary stated that there is no genuine grievance by the petitioner to substantiate his allegation of administrative collapse in Goa. He stated that the chief minister chairs cabinet meetings regularly, meets legislators and takes decisions on various matters concerning the state.

"The petitioner has relied upon only those press items which suit him. The petitioner is therefore guilty of suppressing vital information from this court. "The entire petition is lacking in any material particulars and as such is a roving and a fishing inquiry which prima facie is inadmissible," the affidavit said.

The HC will hear the matter on December 10.

# At 7.6 deg C, Delhi records lowest temperature for season

Agency  
New Delhi, Dec. 8

Delhiites Saturday woke up to a cold morning with the minimum temperature dipping to 7.6 degrees Celsius, the lowest for the season so far.

The humidity level was recorded at 95 per cent at 8.30 AM, a Met department official said. Visibility was recorded at 1000 metres at 8.30

AM. The Met office has forecast clear skies for the day ahead and haze and smoke towards the afternoon.

"The maximum temperature is likely to settle at 24 degrees Celsius," the weatherman said.

On Friday, the minimum temperature settled at 8.8 degrees Celsius, while the maximum was recorded at 24 degrees Celsius.

# New rail stoppage inaugurated in Bihar's Bihiya

Agency  
New Delhi, Dec. 8

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday inaugurated a stoppage at Bihar's Bihiya station for the Shramjeevi Express, meeting a long pending demand of locals, a ministry official said.

The minister, while inaugurating the stoppage via video conferencing from the

national capital, said it will promote tourism and employment in the area.

"It will provide direct connectivity to Rajgir, Lucknow, Varanasi, Delhi," he said.

The minister highlighted the development pushing for Railways development projects in Bihar.

Railway projects worth Rs 48,170 crore have been sanctioned for creation of infrastructure in Bihar.

# Days after Bulandshahr violence, UP govt transfers top cop

Agency  
New Delhi, Dec. 8

Days after an Inspector was killed in violence that broke out in Bulandshahr over allegations of cows slaughter, the Uttar Pradesh government Saturday made a string of administrative changes. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Krishna Bahadur Singh was transferred to the DG headquarters in Lucknow and Superintendent of Police (SP) of Sitapur Prabhakar Chaudhry was brought in to replace him.

The government transferred two other police officers; Syana Circle Officer DSP Satya Prakash Sharma was sent to Police Training College in Moradabad and Chingravathi police station in-charge Suresh Kumar was transferred to Lalitpur.

The development comes a day after ADG (Intelligence) S B Shiradkar, who was asked to probe the violence over allegations of cows being killed, submitted his report to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Adityanath Friday said

the incident was an "accident" and that the death of Inspector Subodh Kumar Singh was not a case of "mob lynching". He added that the law was taking its course and the culprits would not be spared.

So far, four people have been arrested in the cow-slaughter case under sections of the UP Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act 1955. Separately, nine people have been arrested in connection with the death of the Inspector and another civilian, Sumit.

# Swaraj holds talks with counterpart from Iceland

Agency  
New Delhi, Dec. 8

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj Saturday held wide-ranging talks with her counterpart from Iceland Guolaugur on ways to deepen bilateral ties in areas of trade, investment and energy. Por arrived here Friday on board the inaugural flight between New Delhi and Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. At the meeting, Swaraj said Iceland is a world leader in geothermal energy and cooperation

in this sector could benefit India's transition to greener energy mix and help it in achieving ambitious renewable energy targets, according to MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar. "EAM @SushmaSwaraj and Iceland Foreign Minister @GuolaugThor discussed enhancing cooperation in trade & investment, renewable energy, specially geothermal energy, blue economy with a focus on fisheries, tourism and culture at the

delegation-level talks," he tweeted. India's ties with Iceland have witnessed steady progress in the last few years. Iceland was the first Nordic country to publicly extend support to India's candidature for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. It was one of the countries co-sponsoring India's resolution at the UN to declare June 21 as the "International Day of Yoga".

# Mueller files new papers in court on Russian investigations

Agency  
Washington, Dec. 8

Special Counsel Robert Mueller has filed a new set of papers in court that may increase the legal woes of US President Donald Trump in connection with the alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election and possible contacts between the Trump's presidential campaign and Moscow. While the court papers does not answer the central question of whether Trump or his associates conspired with the Russians, the documents suggest that the president's legal woes are far from over and reveal a previously unreported contact from a Russian to Trump's inner circle during the campaign, according

to a report in the Washington Post. The Court papers directly implicated Trump in plans to buy women's silence as far back as 2014 and offering new evidence of Russian efforts to forge a political alliance with Trump before he became the president - disclosures that show the deepening political and legal morass enveloping the administration, said the report.

In his filings before a US federal court in Washington DC, Muller said that Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign manager lied to prosecutors about his contacts with the White House and an associate with suspected ties to Russian intelligence.

The president and the White House denied of any wrongdoings.

"Totally clears the President. Thank You," Trump responded with his characteristic fiery tweets. In another court submission, Mueller said Michael Cohen, the former personal attorney of Trump, has gone to "significant lengths" to assist his ongoing Russia investigation.

Mueller said Cohen has provided the special counsel "with useful information concerning certain discrete Russia-related matters core to its investigation that he obtained by virtue of his regular contact with company executives during the campaign."

A federal court in New York is scheduled to give its sentencing order against Cohen on December 12. In August he had pleaded guilty to the charges of campaign-finance violations and tax frauds.

Federal prosecutors have recommended substantial prison time for Cohen.

The White House said none of these filing showed any involvement of the president.

"The government's filing in Mr Manafort's case says absolutely nothing about the President. It says even less about collusion and is devoted almost entirely to lobbying-related issues. Once again the media is trying to create a story where there isn't one,"

White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said.

Sanders also said that the government's filing in Cohen's case was nothing new.

"The government's filings in Mr Cohen's case tell us nothing of value that wasn't already known. Mr Cohen has repeatedly lied and as the prosecution has pointed out to the court, Mr Cohen is no hero," Sanders said in another statement.

Senate Judiciary Committee Ranking member Dianne Feinstein said that these legal documents outline serious and criminal wrongdoing, including felony violations of campaign finance laws at the direction of President Trump.

# Iran's Rouhani: US sanctions are 'economic terrorism'

Agency  
Tehran, Dec. 8

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said US sanctions were "economic terrorism", as he sought to foster a united front from visiting regional officials on

Saturday. "America's unjust and illegal sanctions against the honourable nation of Iran have targeted our nation as a clear instance of terrorism," Rouhani told a conference in Tehran attended by officials from

Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey.

"Economic terrorism is designed to create panic in the economy of a country and fear in other countries in order to prevent investment in the target country," he added.