



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with ISRO Chief V Narayanan during a meeting, in New Delhi



Former Dy NSA & former BSF Director General, Pankaj Kumar Singh speaks at a seminar titled 'Global & Geopolitics, Security & Economics In a World of Uncertainty', in Kolkata



People collect water for drinking purposes from partially dried well, amidst a shortage from the River Ganga, in Shankargarh on the outskirts of Prayagraj



People try shield themselves from the intense heat during a hot summer day, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

MBBS student gang-raped in Maharashtra's Sangli district

Two classmates, their friend held; further probe underway

PTI, MUMBAI: A third-year MBBS student was allegedly raped in Maharashtra's Sangli district by her two classmates and one of their friends after they spiked her drink, police said on Friday.

Police have arrested the three accused persons, who are from Pune, Solapur and Sangli. A court has remanded them in police custody till May 27, an official said.

The 22-year-old medical student was allegedly

The accused, who were under the influence of alcohol, offered her a spiked drink. She felt giddy after consuming, the survivor told the police. The survivor, originally from Belagavi in Karnataka, later narrated the incident to her parents, following which they approached the Vishrambag police station

targeted on May 18, when she and the accused had planned to watch a movie in a theatre around 10 pm. Before that, the accused took her to a flat for a brief halt.

The accused, who were under the influence of al-

cohol, offered her a spiked drink. She felt giddy after consuming, the survivor told the police.

The trio, aged between 20 and 22, then allegedly sexually assaulted her and threatened her with dire consequences if she spoke

about it, the official said.

The survivor, originally from Belagavi in Karnataka, later narrated the incident to her parents, following which they approached the Vishrambag police station.

The accused have been booked under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections for gang rape and other charges.

Police are also analysing the complainant's statement, he said, adding that a further probe is underway.

48-hour bandh affects normal life in Manipur

PTI, IMPHAL: The 48-hour state-wide bandh called by Meitei organisation Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) in protest against the removal of the state's name from a government bus affected normal life in the five districts of Imphal Valley for the second day on Friday.

All business establishments, educational institutions, government and private offices remained closed and public transport remained off

the roads.

Except for medical emergencies and those seeking to go to Ukhrul district to attend Shirui Lily festival, no other private vehicles are allowed to ply on the roads.

Several women bandh supporters stopped vehicles of central security forces in different parts of Bishnupur and Thoubal districts and pasted "Manipur/ Kangleipak" on the windshields of security vehicles. Kangleipak is the ancient name of

Manipur.

On Friday morning roadside vegetable vendors had opened their stalls at Andro

Parking, Kongba and Khurai areas in Imphal East district but bandh supporters told them to close their stalls.

Bandh supporters enforced the bandh at Uripok, Singjamei and Kwakeithel in Imphal West district.

MONSOON TOIL



As pre-monsoon rains begin to drench Karnataka, agricultural laborers were seen making their way through fields in Nettekere Halli, near Chikmagalur. Despite challenging weather conditions, the workers continue their field activities, highlighting the resilience of rural communities reliant on seasonal farming

Delhi govt issues Covid alert, asks hospitals to boost preparedness

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Delhi government on Friday issued an advisory on Covid-19, asking hospitals to prepare for the availability of beds, oxygen, medicines and vaccine.

The advisory, issued by the Health Department, comes in the wake of several states reporting Covid cases.

The government has asked health institutions to send all positive samples for genome sequencing to Lok Nayak Hospital.

"The hospitals must ensure preparedness in terms of availability of beds, oxygen, antibiotics, other drugs and vaccine. All equipment such as ventilators, Bi-PAP, oxygen concentrators and PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) must be in functional condition," it stated.

Daily reporting of all parameters must also be done on the Delhi State Health Data Management

NINE-MONTH-OLD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

PTI, BENGALURU: A nine-month-old baby boy has tested positive for Covid-19 in Bengaluru, health department officials said on Friday. They said a gradual rise in cases has been observed over the past 20 days. Harsh Gupta, principal secretary of the Health & Family Welfare department, said the baby tested positive via a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) on May 22.

Portal, the advisory stated.

The advisory also states that respiratory etiquettes are to be followed, including the wearing of masks on hospital premises and health facilities.

Several states, including Gujarat, Haryana and Kerala, are reporting Covid-19 cases.

Four Maoists gunned down in Gadchiroli district

PTI, GADCHIROLI: In a joint operation, police's special commando unit C-60 and the CRPF killed four Maoists in an encounter along the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border in Gadchiroli district on Friday, a senior official said.

A dozen C-60 parties (300 commandoes) and a component of the CRPF launched the operation from Kawande and Nelgunda areas towards the banks of the Indravati river amidst heavy rains. An automatic self-loading rifle, two 303 rifles, a Bharmar gun, walkie talkies, camping material and Naxal literature, among other items, were recovered from the spot

The official, in a statement, informed that based on credible intelligence inputs about the presence of Maoists formations on the Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border near a recently opened FOB (Forward Operating Base) in Kawande area, an operation

was launched on Thursday afternoon.

A dozen C-60 parties (300 commandoes) and a component of the CRPF launched the operation from Kawande and Nelgunda areas towards the banks of the Indravati river amidst heavy rains, it said.

On Friday morning, when the cordon was being laid and river banks were being searched, Maoists started indiscriminate firing on C-60 commandoes, leading to an effective retaliation by security forces in Gadchiroli district in eastern Maharashtra, said the official.

Intermittent exchange of fire continued for almost two hours and a search of the area by security forces later led to the recovery of bodies of four Maoists, he added.

An automatic self-loading rifle, two .303 rifles, a Bharmar gun, walkie talkies, camping material and Naxal literature, among other items, were recovered from the spot, according to the statement.

The encounter in Maharashtra comes two days

Naxalite killed in encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh

PTI, SUKMA: A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, a police official said on Friday.

The gunfight broke out on Thursday evening in a forest under the jurisdiction of Kistaram police station area when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation, he said.

Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force and 210th battalion of CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action), an elite unit of CRPF, were involved in the operation, he said.

"One Naxalite has been killed in the gunfight, and an intermittent exchange of fire is still underway in the area," the official said, adding that further details are awaited.

On Thursday, a CoBRA commando of the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) and a Naxalite were killed during an encounter in the forests of Tumrel

CHHATTISGARH CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO JAWAN KILLED DURING ANTI-NAXAL OPS; PRAISES FORCES FOR TAKING ON MAOISTS

PTI, RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Friday said security forces have been fighting strongly against Naxalism for the past one and a half years, and the Centre's resolve to end the menace by March 31, 2026, will be fulfilled. He was talking to reporters after paying homage to a CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) commando of the CRPF, who lost his life during an encounter with Naxalites in the state's Bijapur district on Thursday. The wreath-laying ceremony for the martyred jawan was held at the 4th battalion of Chhattisgarh Armed Force in Mana area here. Sai said CoBRA jawan Mehul Bhai Nandlal Solanki, a resident of Gujarat, attained martyrdom while fighting with Maoists in the Usoor area of Bijapur, and asserted that his sacrifice will not go in vain. "He displayed indomitable courage. We salute his martyrdom. We pray to God to rest his soul in peace and give strength to his bereaved family to bear the grief. Solanki ji's martyrdom will not go in vain. He has sacrificed his life in the service of the nation. Peace will definitely be established in the Bastar region," he said.

along the border of Sukma and Bijapur districts of the state.

In a major success on Wednesday, 27 Naxalites, including their top commander Nambala Keshav Rao, alias Basava-

raju, the general secretary of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), were killed in an encounter with the DRG of the state police in a dense forest along the Narayanpur-Bijapur border.

Maternity leave integral to maternity benefits, says SC, sets aside Madras HC verdict

PTI, NEW DELHI: Maternity leave is integral to maternity benefits and reproductive rights are now recognised as part of international human rights law like right to health, privacy, equality and non-discrimination and dignity, the Supreme Court said on Friday.

The top court also set aside a Madras High Court judgement declining maternity leave to a Tamil Nadu government school teacher and said she was entitled to the benefit despite having two children from a previous marriage.

A bench comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan did not agree with

Maternity leave is integral to maternity benefits. Reproductive rights are now recognised as part of several intersecting domains of international human rights law viz. the right to health, right to privacy, right to equality and non-discrimination and the right to dignity



the findings of the high court that had denied her maternity benefits.

"Thus, as can be seen..., through various international conventions, the world community has recognised the broad spectrum of reproductive rights which includes maternity

benefits. "Maternity leave is integral to maternity benefits. Reproductive rights are now recognised as part of several intersecting domains of international human rights law viz. the right to health, right to privacy, right to equality and

non-discrimination and the right to dignity," the verdict said.

The court emphasised the expansive scope of Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to life, including the right to health, dignity, and reproductive choice.

"By judicial interpretation, it has been held that life under Article 21 means life in its fullest sense; all that which makes life more meaningful, worth living like a human being. Right to life includes all the finer graces of human civilisation, thus rendering this fundamental right a repository of various human rights. Right to life also in-

cludes the right to health. Right to live with human dignity and the right to privacy are now acknowledged facets of Article 21," it said.

It also referred to Article 42, which mandates just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief and criticised a rigid interpretation of administrative rules that deny such benefits based on numerical limits on children.

An English teacher at a government higher secondary school in Dharmapuri District, joined service in December 2012 and had two children from her first marriage, which ended in divorce in 2017.

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