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Ahmedabad	40 25	Chennai	34 26	Indore	40 21	Nagpur	35 24
Bangalore	35 23	Kochi	32 26	Jaipur	38 20	Panaji	24 23
Bhopal	40 22	Lucknow	40 22	Kolkata	34 27	Pune	27 21
Chandigarh	34 26	Hyderabad	37 25	New Delhi	39 24	Guwahati	35 24



Irregular... manjul



We have made terrific progress — from attacking taxiwallas to attacking air taxiwallas

Short stories...

Dasmuni better, but...

New Delhi: Information and broadcasting minister PR Dasmuni, who is undergoing treatment at AIIMS following a severe heart attack, showed no further clinical improvement from Wednesday, though he has recovered considerably, doctors said on Thursday. The 62-year-old has been taken off the ventilator and his vital parameters, including blood pressure and heart rate, are stable, but he is not completely out of danger.

PIL in HC seeks nightshift safety

New Delhi: TV journalist Soumya Vishwanathan's killing in the early hours while returning home from office has prompted lawyer Sanjiv Kumar Singh to approach the Delhi high court seeking better security for people working late nights. Singh said the number of murder cases had gone up in the city due to police failure and sought a direction to the Centre and the Delhi government to ensure safety of those working nightshifts.

Dalai Lama discharged



The Dalai Lama waves as he leaves Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi on Thursday —AP

New Delhi: Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who underwent a surgery for gall-bladder stone removal at a private hospital here recently, was discharged on Thursday morning. "He is absolutely fit to go back home now," Pradeep Chaubey, gastro-surgeon at the hospital, said. Coming out of the hospital at 9 am, the 73-year old Nobel Laureate said, "I am extremely happy with the treatment given and I had a pleasant stay here."

Kamat heads for crisis

Panaji: Goa chief minister Digambar Kamat is in trouble with a group of ministers seeking a change in leadership in the wake of the recent charges against education minister Atanasio Monserrate's elder son Rohit, who allegedly raped a minor German girl here. A group of ministers from the Congress and the NCP met at Monserrate's residence on Wednesday night and drafted a memorandum to be submitted to the Congress high command seeking a leadership change in the coastal state, sources said.

Kanpur blast solved: Police

Lucknow: With the arrest of two people, police claimed on Thursday to have solved the blast in the industrial city of Kanpur this week that was accidentally caused by firecrackers. Atiq Mohammad, who used to illegally manufacture firecrackers, was caught on Wednesday, hours after general goods shop owner Kamal Sahu was arrested in the case. The explosion on Tuesday outside a liquor shop in Colonelganj locality around 7 pm left five people injured.

It's Karva Chauth time again



Women show their hands decorated with henna on the eve of Karva Chauth in Amritsar on Thursday —PTI

UPA MINISTERS VERSUS UPA MINISTERS

Aviation crisis Civil aviation minister Praful Patel (left) favours a government bailout for the sick industry and has sided with Jet Airways that sacked a large number of employees. But petroleum minister Muri Deora is staunchly opposed to it. Deora is supported openly by ministers Kapil Sibal (science), Oscar Fernandes (labour) and somewhat tacitly by P Chidambaram (finance).

Packaged food Women and child development minister Renuka Chowdhury favours serving ready-to-eat packaged food instead of hot-cooked food to *anganwadis* children to curb malnutrition. But ministers Mani Shankar Aiyar (panchayati raj), Jaipal Reddy (urban development), Raghuvansh Prasad (rural development), Kumari Selja (urban employment) and deputy chairman of the planning commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia are dead set against supply of packaged food, saying it will lead to corruption.

gay sex Health minister Anbumani Ramadoss favours legalisation of homosexuality saying its criminalisation only pushes gays underground, leading to spread of HIV/Aids. He says its legalisation would facilitate better treatment of HIV-infected homosexuals. The home ministry of Shivraj Patil argues that decriminalisation of homosexuality would open floodgates of delinquent behaviour and encourage child abuse.

PM tells Ramadoss, Patil to resolve gay sex differences

Viiveeta Pandey, New Delhi

Upset over the constant squabbling in court between the health and home ministries over legalising homosexuality, prime minister (PM) Manmohan Singh has directed ministers Anbumani Ramadoss and Shivraj Patil to sit and resolve their differences. The ministries have taken contradictory stands in their affidavits filed before the Delhi high court, which is hearing a PIL filed by Naz Foundation challenging the legality of IPC section 377 that bans same-gender sex terming it unnatural. During a cabinet discussion on amending the section, PM remarked that it was embarrassing for the government if its ministries were taking different stands in court. The government should put up a united face, he said. However, the cabinet deferred a decision on the issue since Ramadoss was not present. The health minister is pushing for radical changes in the law. His logic is criminalisation of men having sex with men has pushed gays underground, leading to spread of HIV/Aids. However, the home ministry, which is the main custodian of law, argues that repealing the law would "open floodgates of delinquent behaviour".

Cabinet shoots down Renuka's packaged food plan

Minister wanted to supply ready-to-eat meals to *anganwadis*

Viiveeta Pandey, New Delhi

In a major setback to women and child development (WCD) minister Renuka Chowdhury, the cabinet committee on economic affairs (CCEA) rejected on Thursday her ambitious proposal to supply ready-to-eat (RTE) packaged meals to the lakhs of *anganwadi* children in the country. CCEA, instead, favoured hot-cooked food (HCF) similar to midday meal. CCEA decided to constitute a group of ministers (GoM) which will recommend, after consultations with the states, how to implement HCF without hiccups. At present, RTE is served in three states, while HCF is served in 15 states. Eleven states serve both. Chowdhury had proposed RTE, procured from private contractors, in all states. Taking a united stand against Chowdhury, CCEA, headed by the prime minister, outrightly rejected her demand to supply fortified packaged food through the integrated child development scheme (ICDS), saying centralised procurement was not favourable for the government. CCEA was of the view that the government should instead provide infrastructure, such as kitchen and utensils, to *anganwadis* to prepare HCF. The ministers who strongly opposed RTE were Mani Shankar Aiyar (panchayati raj), Jaipal Reddy (urban development), Raghuvansh Prasad (rural development), Kumari Selja (urban employment and poverty alleviation) and deputy chairman of the planning commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia. None of the ministers bought

Chowdhury's argument that RTE could be an important tool to curb malnutrition and deficiency among children between 3-6 years of age. In fact, Reddy, it is learnt, even suggested Chowdhury to provide eggs to children to reduce deficiency. Ahluwalia reportedly said no centralised procurement should be done as it would breed corruption. Arguing that *panchayats* should be involved in ICDS, Aiyar reportedly even went to the extent of remarking: "Renuka ji, we know the issue is very close to your heart," prompting a burst of laughter from others. There were also no takers for Chowdhury's argument that many states did not have the in-

frastructure to make HCF. CCEA felt GoM could work out a way for that after consulting state governments. Already hinting at the possibility of corruption, the supreme court, which is hearing a PIL with regard to corruption in various ICDS schemes, has favoured HCF to packaged food and directed the government to keep contractors out of the scheme. "Contractors shall not be used for supply of nutrition in *anganwadis* and preferably ICDS funds shall be spent by making use of village communities, self-help groups and *mahila mandals* to buy grains and prepare hot meals," it has said. **p_viveeta@dnaindia.net**

Is PM eyeing Amritsar Lok Sabha seat?

As speculation grows, sitting MP Sidhu gets jittery

Ajay Bharadwaj, Chandigarh

Will prime minister Manmohan Singh contest the coming Lok Sabha election from Amritsar against sitting BJP MP Navjot Singh Sidhu? The unanimity among state Congress leaders, including MLAs and former ministers, over his candidature has certainly fuelled speculation. The prime minister has relatives in Amritsar where he also spent some time when his family migrated from Pakistan after Partition. A resolution adopted by Amritsar District Congress Committee (Urban and Rural) was submitted to Charan Singh Sapra, the visiting MLC from Mumbai who has been appointed observer by AICC president Sonia Gandhi to assess the mood of party leaders and voters in the constituency. Sapra held separate meetings with senior leaders in the District Congress Committee. Later, he also met Bihar governor RL Bhatia, who has represented Amritsar five times in the past. Party leaders told the AICC observer that post delimitation the parliamentary constituency had become Sikh-dominated



Creating a friendly pitch Congress leaders in Punjab told AICC observer Charan Singh Sapra recently that post delimitation the Amritsar constituency had become Sikh-dominated and Manmohan Singh would have a cake walk if he chose to contest the seat

and Manmohan Singh would have a cake walk if he chose to contest the seat. They said Manmohan had a distinct advantage in Amritsar as it was his hometown and a number of his relatives and friends lived there. Apparently rattled by the speculation, Sidhu has challenged the prime minister to try his luck in Amritsar. "Let the prime minister fulfil the expectations of his party men by contesting from Amritsar, so that the over 10 lakh voters could at least get the chance to ask him what his contribution to the holy city has been," the former cricketer said. **b_ajay@dnaindia.net**

Centre of attraction



Congress president Sonia Gandhi (C) visits handicraft stalls at a fair organised by an association of wives of Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel in New Delhi on Thursday —AP

Don Dawood funding Bengali films: Police

Sumanta Ray Chaudhuri, Kolkata

In a significant breakthrough, the newly-formed special task force (STF) of Kolkata Police has discovered that underworld don Dawood Ibrahim is funding Bengali cinema and television serials. Sources said the money was being routed through Bangladesh. The link was established after STF sleuths recently arrested Dawood's Bangladeshi confidant Fatch Ali from a posh locality in south Kolkata. Sources said Ali told STF during interrogation that he was introduced to the world of film and serial financing by a popular Bengali film actress. The sources refused to divulge the name of the actress but said Ali helped her make inroads into the Bangladeshi film world. "We have come to know that through this actress, Ali got close to a number of influential traders in Kolkata. He was also a regular on the city's page 3 scene," an STF officer said. Besides films, the sources said, Ali was actively involved in real estate financing in the northern suburbs of Kolkata and an erstwhile heavyweight Trinamool Congress leader from south Kolkata was his close associate in the business. Ali, once a most-wanted criminal in Bangladesh, was also known as the Dawood Ibrahim of that country at one point. He shifted base to Kolkata using fake identity and passport after the recent crackdown on criminals by the Bangladesh government. **r_sumanta@dnaindia.net**

Biological parents win lovechild from foster care after a year

Puneet Nicholas Yadav, New Delhi

A legal battle between biological and foster parents of a child born out of wedlock and brought up in foster care for almost a year was decided in favour of the former on Thursday. Savita (name changed) handed over her lovechild to a couple days after delivery fearing social stigma. However, she soon married the child's biological father and they decided to seek the baby back. The foster parents refused to return the child, forcing Savita and her husband to move court. Metropolitan magistrate Naveen Arora decided to hand over the boy's custody to his biological parents. He contended that Savita had given the baby to the couple to avoid social stigma. However, since she married his biological father, "prima facie the couple must have given the custody of the child to the accused on a temporary basis". Savita contended that she had handed over her 17-day-old child to the accused for four months. However, after she married his biological father on November 22 last year, she approached the accused to get back her son. Savita said she repeatedly pleaded before the accused but they turned down her pleas. The accused argued that they adopted the boy after his mother "abandoned the lovechild". They said they brought up the child all by themselves and that Savita or her husband never enquired about his well being until recently when they moved court. Nitin Sharma, the counsel for the accused, argued that handing over a child was enough for adoption and there were no set rules and procedures for the purpose. However, the fact that the accused couldn't prove that they had legally adopted the child went against them. **y_puneet@dnaindia.net**

Hammad, who has designed Pakistan's first gay website, pakistangays.com, and his lover want to settle abroad as man and spouse

First Indo-Pak gay love story blooms on internet

Amir Mir, Islamabad

There have been many heart-warming cross-LoC love stories, but this gay one takes the cake. Hammad from Pakistan is in love with an Indian man, whose name he doesn't want to disclose. He met the Indian on the internet. He confides, "I am in love with an Indian man I met over the internet, but we have not met yet in person. We can't think of marriage in either of the (conservative) countries." Hammad, who is studying accounting, plans to get a job abroad where he can settle down with his partner as man and spouse. "My parents keep insisting that I get married or at least engaged. May be they have sensed my chill towards girls, but that is the way we are supposed to be. We are born this way... we can't help it." Hammad has gone down the gay lane a bit too far, designing Pakistan's first gay website, pakistangays.com. He runs the site, which had 569 Pakistani members last checked, from internet cafes for obvious reasons. Of those who have registered, 302 are "gays", 241 "bisexuals" and the remaining "transgender". "I cannot run it (the site)

Amritsar guy weds Pak girl

Amritsar: Amid pomp and show, a Pakistani Hindu girl entered into wedlock with an Indian boy here on Monday. The wedding was solemnised in the holy city as the bridegroom's family, relatives and friends could not get Pakistani visas. Pawan Kumar and Anita tied the knot as Punjabi folk songs and traditional dances added zing to the occasion. Father Dhian Chand said Pawan met Anita when he went to visit some relatives in Pakistan last year. They fell in love and were engaged in Peshawar where the girl's family resides. "We wanted to solemnise the marriage in Pakistan, but could not get visas," he said. The coy bride said she from home because my parents sense of guilt that homosexuality is illegal and *haram* in this country. "I want to leave Pakistan and



Pawan and Anita arrived in India on a 45-day visa but now wanted to settle down in Amritsar with husband and in-laws. —PTI

In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, homosexuality is not only illegal, but a crime punishable by whipping, imprisonment, or even death. But across classes and social groups, men have sex with men. In villages throughout the country, young boys are often forcibly "taken" by older men. Often, these boys move to the cities and become prostitutes. In some areas, homosexuality is sometimes acceptable. In the Northwest Frontier Province, the ethnic Pashtun men who dominate the region are known to take young boys as lovers. No one has been executed for sodomy in Pakistan's recent history. **amirmir1969@gmail.com**