



# Set up special courts for tainted politicians: SC

‘Can solve criminalisation of politics’

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Union government to set up special courts for “utmost expeditious disposal” of cases involving politicians.

It said the problem of criminalisation of politics can be solved by setting up special courts under a central scheme, on the lines of fast-track courts.  
“This would be in the interest of the nation,” a bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Navin Sinha said, while directing the Union government to present within six weeks a scheme, including allocation of funds for such courts, to try politicians exclusively.  
Hearing a PIL for a lifetime ban on convicted politicians, the court accepted a plea by Additional Solicitor General A S Nadkarni, representing the Union government, that the Centre was not averse to setting up special courts to

## Contentious issue

- PIL by BJP leader challenges six-year bar under Sec 8A of the RP Act for convicted politicians from contesting polls
- EC supports plea for lifetime ban on convicts
- Law Commission has also recommended for it
- Centre says it is yet to take decision on the EC’s recommendation
- Centre opposes plea on legal principle but agrees for expeditious disposal of cases against politicians
- Centre says ready to set up special courts to try politicians
- SC asks Centre to place scheme on special courts before it
- Apex court says special courts on the lines of fast-track courts can be set up

conduct expeditious trial of cases against politicians, MPs and MLAs.  
The court was informed that as many as 1,581 cases involving MPs and MLAs were pending, as per the election affidavits filed by candidates in 2014.  
It directed the Union government to place on record as to how many of those cases

were disposed of within a period of one year as per a previous direction of the apex court on March 10, 2014, or resulted in conviction and acquittal and reasons thereof.  
It also sought to know how many other cases were registered against former and sitting MPs and MLAs between 2014 and 2017.  
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# 20 dead, 100 hurt in NTPC boiler blast

LUCKNOW, DHNS: As many as 20 labourers were killed and over 100 injured in a blast in a boiler pipe at a National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) plant in Uttar Pradesh’s Raebareli district, about 125 km from here, on Wednesday.  
According to sources, the number of casualties may increase as many labourers suffered serious burns and are stated to be critical. District officials confirmed 20 deaths, though unofficial sources put the death toll at 22.  
Sources said that the blast occurred around 3.30 pm in the ash pipe of the 500 MW undertrial sixth unit at the NTPC plant situated in Unchahar of the district. Around 200 labourers were working at the unit when the incident occurred.  
NTPC said in a statement that hot flue gases and steam that gushed out of an opening



Smoke billows out after a boiler blast at NTPC’s Unchahar Power Plant in Raebareli district of Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday. PTI

impacted several people working there. Several labourers are reportedly missing after the incident.  
The injured have been rushed to hospitals at Raebareli, Lucknow and Allahabad.  
The hospitals have been put on alert and ambulances were rushed to the spot from the nearby districts to ferry the injured.  
A team of the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF) has

also been rushed to the site to assist in the relief and rescue operations. The premises have been sealed off and the entry of outsiders has been banned.  
A large number of people, mainly the kin of the labourers, had assembled outside the NTPC plant in the hope of getting information about their near and dear ones, sources said.  
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who was visiting Mauritius, has announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each to the next of the kin of the deceased.  
Uttar Pradesh Health Minister Siddharth Nath Singh said that beds have been reserved at the hospitals in the state capital for the injured, who were being ferried from the plant. A high-level probe has been ordered into the incident, Uttar Pradesh Power Minister Shrikant Sharma said.  
» **Related report, Page 7**

# Big rivers sea of drug-resistant bacteria

NEW DELHI, DHNS: From Cauvery in Karnataka to Yamuna in Delhi, big Indian rivers are reservoirs of antibiotic resistant bacteria, exposing millions to increased health risks, notes a new government report.  
Multiple studies carried out on Cauvery water samples highlighted the seriousness of the problem in southern parts

of the country.  
There are also studies on the Ganga, Yamuna and a few other rivers, which red flag the increased risks during the festive season when millions take a holy dip.  
In a 2015 study on the Cauvery, 100% of E.coli (bacteria) isolates were found to be resistant to third-generation cepha-

losporins.  
The researchers collected 283 river water samples in 2011-2012 and discovered that cent per cent of the bugs isolated from the samples were resistant to Ampicillin and Cefotaxime, while 75% were resistant to Ciprofloxacin.  
Carried out by scientists at Indian Institute of Science and

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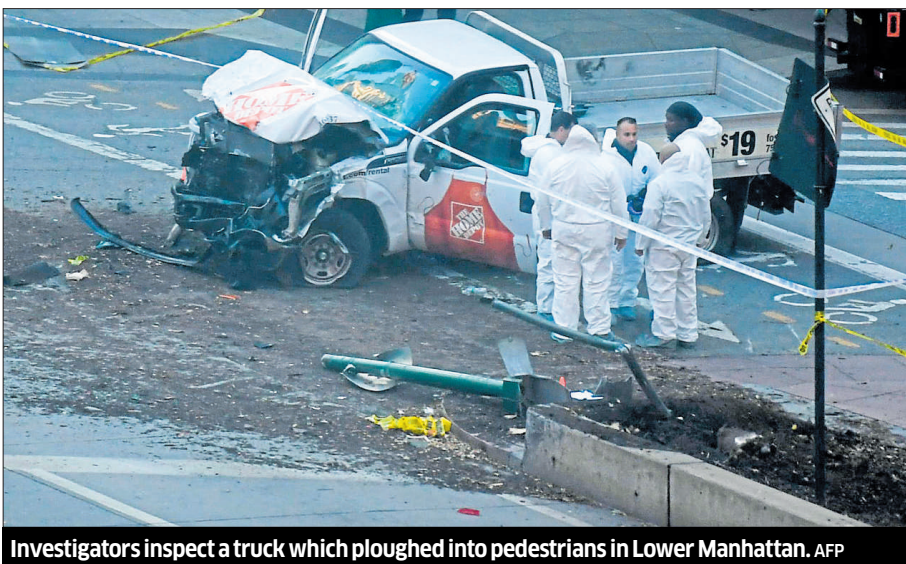
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## In brief

**LPG price up by Rs 4.50 a cylinder**  
The price of cooking gas was hiked by Rs 4.50 per cylinder on Wednesday, the 19th increase in rates since July 2016 when the government decided to eliminate subsidy on it by raising prices every month.

## Pillion riders ban on under 100cc bikes to go

RAICHUR/BENGALURU: Days after sending commuters into panic over a new ban on pillion riders on bikes under 100 cc engine capacity, the state government on Wednesday said the relevant rule would be amended as a relief to bikers.  
Speaking at the district police parade ground in Raichur, Transport Minister H M Revanna promised necessary action allowing registration of below 100cc bikes and pillion riding.  
“Section 143/3 of Karnataka Motor Vehicles Act, 1989 will be amended,” he said.  
According to the rule, no pillion seat shall be attached to a motorcycle with engine below 100 cc capacity.  
“The institute responsible for ensuring automobile safety has allowed pillion riders on bikes below 100cc capacity. Senior officials have already proposed to modify the rule banning pillion riders on bikes below 50cc. I will hold another meeting to see whether we can do away with the rule against pillion riders,” the minister told *DH*.  
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Investigators inspect a truck which ploughed into pedestrians in Lower Manhattan. AFP

## Trucker kills 8 in NY terror attack

NEW YORK, AFP: A pickup driver killed eight people in New York on Tuesday, mowing down cyclists and pedestrians in the city’s first deadly “act of terror” since September 11, 2001.  
Eleven others were seriously hurt when the truck driver struck in broad daylight just blocks from the 9/11 Memorial, on the West Side of Lower Manhattan, close to schools as children and their parents geared up to celebrate Halloween.  
“This was an act of terror and a particularly cowardly act of terror aimed at innocent

civilians, aimed at people going about their lives who had no idea what was about to hit them,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio. Police shot the 29-year-old suspect, Sayfullo Saipov, in the abdomen after he crashed into a school bus and exited his pickup truck, brandishing paintball and pellet guns. He remains in custody but is expected to survive the shooting.  
“He’s a depraved coward is what he is, and he was associated with ISIS, and he was radicalised domestically,” New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo told *CNN*.  
The Uzbek citizen living in

Tampa, Florida, had recently been staying in New Jersey, where the truck was rented, reports said. President Donald Trump denounced him as “very sick” and a “deranged person.”  
Confronting what could be the most serious terror-related incident since taking power less than a year ago, the Republican commander-in-chief announced that he had ordered the Department of Homeland Security to step up his “extreme vetting program” on foreign travellers to the country.  
» **Related reports, P 10**

# Question bank of PU subjects soon

Meghana Choukkar

BENGALURU, DHNS: In preparation for online delivery of question papers in the future, the Department of Pre-University Education (DPUE) will be creating a question bank for all subjects of the Science, Commerce, and Humanities streams.  
The question bank will be exhaustive and cover every subject of both first and second year PUC.  
It will have a variety of one-mark, two-mark and five-mark questions. Just as in the final examina-

## Foolproof measure

- ◆ Exhaustive question bank for all Science, Commerce and Arts subjects
- ◆ To be used to set instant question papers, make exams leak-proof
- ◆ CET, NEET, question bank also to be created

tion, there will be a mix of understanding-based, knowledge-based, skill-based and application-based questions.  
“Our students have a habit of only studying from the questions at the end of the chapter. If they have more questions to practice with,

it will build their confidence and they will be better prepared to face examinations,” said C Shikha, director, DPUE.  
Subject experts have been identified and a preliminary meeting was held on October 24. Committees have been formed for

every subject, each with a chairperson, a reviewer, and several members. Specific topics and chapters have been assigned to members from which they will prepare questions.  
The bank will be ready by the end of December and hosted on the department’s website. “Usually students refer guide books but they are not always of good quality. Since the department is preparing this with help from experts, it will be validated and there will be proof of quality,” an official involved in the project said.  
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**Fortified foods to tackle malnutrition**  
MNCs, co-ops, other manufacturers will add premixes of micronutrients to products

**Food for thought**  
Fortification of eatables is aimed at fighting malnutrition

**What it means**  
Fortification is the addition of key vitamins and minerals, such as iron, sodium, zinc, vitamins A & D, to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content

• The nutrients may or may not have been originally present in the food before processing  
• It is a simple, proven, cost-effective and complementary strategy in use across the globe  
• The draft Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2016, prescribe the standards for fortification of salt, oil, milk, and rice

Malnutrition isn’t about acute starvation. Often, healthy-looking people are malnourished too, because their diet does not include the right micronutrients.

To tackle the issue, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) released a set of standards and a logo last year. Since then, it has focussed on awareness and consensus building. Now, a number of enterprises will begin adding premixes of micronutrients to launch fortified foods. **Smita Mankad, head of the FSSAI’s Food Fortification Resource Centre**, told The Hindu that in the next few months, **Kaleesuwari Refineries are working on oil.**

The Hindu - May 2, 2017

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