

'Time to address vandalism against Jain temples'

New Delhi/Rajasthan:

Deeply disturbed over the destruction of idols in a famous Jain temple in Rajasthan, JAINA, the Federation of Jain Associations in North America, has decided to write to the Indian government asking it to protect Jain temples across the country.

"In Rajasthan, Narlai is a famous Jain Tirth with numerous Jain Temples dotting the place. There exists a 6,000-year-old Girnar Jain Tirth of Lord Neminath. On December 12, the ancient idol of Lord Neminath was found broken."

"The Jain community here requests JAINA to raise this issue with the Indian government to safeguard Jain temples in the state," says Pankaz Jain.

"The crime and vandalism against Jains is on the rise across the world. In North America, almost every Jain temple has been vandalised one way or the other in last few years. I am sure local community leaders took appropriate action but fell short of formally sharing information with others as a matter of precaution," says Sushil Jain, President, JAINA.

"We have chalked out a strategy



The destructed ancient idol of Lord Neminath in Narlai, Rajasthan

for this: Jains must speak up in one united voice, write to respective leaders and demand for strategic action plan; follow-up two-three weeks after to insure that leaders are taking actions; enhance community relations, especially with other minority faith-based groups and establish community outreach initiatives at local levels to engage with mainstream population," he added.

Little hope for quota bill

New Delhi: There was little hope for a bill promising reservation to Dalits and tribals in job promotions getting passed in the Lok Sabha on December 20 with the house adjourned five times till on the last day of the winter session.

Samajwadi Party (SP) members disrupted proceedings and reached the speaker's podium protesting against the bill even as Speaker Meira Kumar tried to broker peace among various parties so that the house could run.

Minister of State for Personnel and Training V. Narayanasamy moved the bill for consideration and passing and the speaker allowed Congress member P.L. Punia to speak on it amid the din. While the SP members continued to disrupt the house proceedings and did not allow Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) member L.K. Advani to speak, the BJP and Janata Dal-United members also trooped into the well of the house pressing the chair to bring the Lok Sabha to order. The Congress members too started raising pro-quota bill slogans.

In between the adjournments, SP and Congress members were seen huddled around their respective party leaders Mulayam Singh Yadav and Sonia Gandhi discussing strategies.

Both houses of parliament have seen many adjournments over the Constitution (One Hundred Seventeenth Amendment) Bill, 2012, which was passed by the Rajya Sabha.

India tests nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile

Bhubaneswar: India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear-capable ballistic Prithvi-II missile from a test range in Odisha, a defense official said.

The 350-km range surface-to-surface missile blasted off at about 9.20 a.m. from launch complex number three at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) of Chandipur-on-sea in Balasore district, around 230 km from here. "The mission was successful," ITR director M.V.K.V. Prasad said.

The launch was carried out by the Indian armed forces as part of a training exercise and was monitored by scientists of Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), DRDO spokesperson Ravi Kumar Gupta said.

Prithvi is India's first indigenously built ballistic missile and one of the five being developed under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program.

The medium-range missile, with a flight duration of 483 seconds



Prithvi is India's first indigenously built ballistic missile

and reaching a peak altitude of 43.5 km, has the capability of carrying a 500 kg warhead. Prithvi uses an advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring capabilities and comes within metres of its target.

The missile, already inducted into the armed forces, has been successfully flight-tested a number of times from the same test range in the past.