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Soon, flyers will have to pay slightly higher security fee

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Air travellers will soon be paying a little more to ensure they fly secure. The passenger security fee (PSF) of Rs 130 paid by each flyer to cover cost of security deployment at airports could see a hike. Domestic and international passenger may be required to pay Rs 20 and Rs 40 more, respectively taking their PSF to Rs 150 and Rs 170.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which provides security deployment at 61 airports, has huge outstanding dues from airports. While the PPP metro ones owe it the largest amount, there are some dues from Airports Authority of India (AAI) airports. All airport operators have maintained PSF of Rs 130 decided years ago is inadequate to meet CISF deployment expense.

"The government then set up a panel to review this demand. The panel is looking at a hike of Rs 20 for domestic passengers," said M A Ganapathy, CISF's additional DG and in-charge of airport sector. The hike for international passengers could be about Rs 40.

CISF DG Rajesh Ranjan on Thursday during the force's annual press meet did not give the amount of dues from airports. "Airport operators are gradually paying. A decision (on PSF hike) is in fairly advanced stage," he said. Last July, airports owed CISF about Rs 1,000 crore with nearly 80% of the dues being from Delhi Airport alone. Despite repeated attempts, CISF did not state the current dues from airports.

The force estimates that growing air travel and opening of new airports and terminals will mean nearly 20,030 personnel will be required at those places.

Full report on [www.toi.in](http://www.toi.in)

**Traffic violators beware, new DL, RCs coming from October**

Dipak Dash@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Driving licences and registration certificates issued by transport departments across the country will have the same look, colour and security features from October 1. Hiding past violations will be almost impossible as the new DLs and RCs will have QR codes that can be read by hand-held devices to access past records of the driver or the vehicle from the central online database.

The road transport and highways ministry has issued a notification making it mandatory for the states to follow the uniform norm. However, the states have the option to install extra features such as a "chip" and the near-field communication (NFC) in these cards. The specifications by the Centre said the chips in these documents must have the capacity to retain information of the driver and the vehicle for 10 years.

"Though there was a proposal to make the chip and NFC feature mandatory, the Centre decided to leave the option to the state governments," said an official. The new DLs will have details of a driver's declaration to donate organs and mention if he/she is driving a specially designed vehicle meant for the physically challenged.

**Quad may be shelved, hints US official**

**Singapore:** A US military commander suggested Thursday that a loose security grouping of his country, Japan, Australia and India, also known as the 'quad', may be shelved for now. Admiral Phil Davidson, who heads the US Indo-Pacific Command, said he was on a panel with the other navy chiefs at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi in January. Davidson said the issue came up "several times" but Indian Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba "made it quite clear that there wasn't an immediate potential for a quad". While members have said the Quad is not in opposition to China, it is viewed as a counterbalance to Beijing's rising influence in the Indo-Pacific. AP

## In poll season, govt stops cut in SC/ST, OBC faculty

Ordinance Reverses HC Order

Manash.Gohain @timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** The Union Cabinet approved an ordinance on Thursday to restore the system of reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs for teaching positions in higher education institutions, with the university or college being considered as one unit instead of treating the department as one.

The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Ordinance, 2019 will restore the 200-point roster system for faculty recruitment under which quotas for SC/STs and OBCs were



FINALLY, A FAIR SHARE?

re calculated on the basis of an institution's staff strength and not that of an individual department.

The ordinance reverses the Allahabad HC's 2017 order of a 13-point roster which recognised individual departments as units for considering reservation. It was recently upheld by the Supreme

Court which dismissed a special leave petition of the Centre against the HC verdict.

Soon after promulgation of the ordinance with presidential assent, UGC ordered all central, state and deemed universities to resume faculty recruitment for over 5,000 vacancies immediately, which had been on hold since July 2018.

## Post-Pulwama, Parties Snipe At Each Other For Poll Gains



Armymen take position near the site of an encounter in north Kashmir's Handwara district on Thursday. One terrorist, a Pakistani national belonging to Jaish-e-Muhammed, was killed in the gunbattle

**4 held in UP for assault on two J&K vendors**

Pathikrit.Chakraborty @timesgroup.com

**Lucknow:** Four people, members of Vishwa Hindu Dal (VHD), were arrested for assaulting two Kashmiri dry fruit vendors in the city late Wednesday. The four, including one with a criminal record, were booked for attempt to murder and sent to jail on Thursday.

Later on Thursday, Ambuj Nigam, who goes by the title 'national president' of VHD and who called the police action uncalled for announcing his outfit would continue with similar action, was also arrested.

Police action was quick after the video surfaced of the assault on Kashmiri youth. In the video, the accused were seen attacking the vendors with acane and branding them 'stone pelters' and 'jihadis'. The arrested include Bajrang Soni, who has 17 cases pending, including murder. The others were Himanshu Awasthi, Anirudh Kumar and Amar Kumar.

**FM: Need J&K people in fight against terror**

**New Delhi:** Finance minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday condemned the attacks on two Kashmiri vendors in Lucknow and said the country needed people of Jammu and Kashmir in its fight against terror.

"The attack on innocent Kashmiris is condemnable. Our fight is against separatists and terrorists. We need the people of Jammu & Kashmir with us in the fight against terror," he tweeted.

Jaitley's comments came a day after the Kashmiris were beaten up by a group of men, one of whom was found to be a history-sheeter and an accused in a murder case. The video of the incident went viral on social media, triggering sharp reactions from various sections as it happened even after the Supreme Court's instructions to states to ensure safety of Kashmiris. TNW

## Modi-Imran match-fixing led to attack: Cong neta

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Congress MP B K Hari Prasad sparked a row on Thursday by claiming that the Pulwama attack, in which 40 CRPF troopers died, was a result of "match-fixing between PM Modi and Imran Khan", inviting immediate retaliation from BJP which termed the statement "most unfortunate and made at the



B K Hari Prasad

best of the Congress leadership". Hari Prasad, an MP from Karnataka, went on to allege that the attack would not have happened "without the knowledge of the government". "If you look at the chain of events that have taken place after Pulwama, looks like Modi had match-fixing with Khan," Hari Prasad said, adding that a government that could "detect 2kg of beef in Kerala" could not "detect 300kg of RDX in J&K".

BJP's Ravi Shankar Prasad hit back, terming Hari Prasad's statement "shameful, deeply reprehensible and painful". "Hari Prasad crossed all limits of propriety and decency... Is he equating India with the terrorist hub of Pakistan?" he said.

**'Pak refused UN ombudsman visa to block meet with Saeed'**

Islamabad sought to help Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed get his name removed from the sanctions list by blocking a visit by the United Nations ombudsman to Pakistan, in an apparent attempt to prevent a face-to-face meeting, said government sources in Delhi.

Saeed later faced the ombudsman in a video conference. In his 32-page report, on the basis of which UN rejected Saeed's plea to delist him, the ombudsman mentioned that he had to cancel his air ticket to Pakistan after he was informed by the permanent mission of Pakistan to UN that he would not be issued a visa, reports Sachin Parashar. Pakistan had requested him to postpone his visit until early 2019. The ombudsman replied that it was not possible to delay it beyond December 2018 under relevant provisions of resolution 2368 (2017). When he didn't hear from Pakistan again, the ombudsman cancelled his visit. The visit was important for the UN to gather more information about activities of Saeed and his outfit.

After his video conference with Saeed, which was carried out with help from an interpreter, the ombudsman found that there was enough evidence to provide a "reasonable and credible basis" for not delisting Saeed. In the video conference, Saeed is understood to have argued that he was freed by Pakistani courts. India countered, stating Pakistani courts which lifted his house arrest, did not and could not pronounce on whether Saeed posed a threat outside Pakistan. India managed to successfully convince the ombudsman that Saeed could not infer anything other than the "judicial exclusion" of him posing a threat to (peace and tranquility) in Pakistan (and not outside). Indian officials have argued that Saeed's role as a terrorist has not been examined by any court in Pakistan. "Pakistan had the option of opposing Saeed's appeal but it didn't. On the contrary, it tried to help him by blocking the ombudsman's visit," said an official source.

While reports from Islamabad have suggested that Pakistan may drop its opposition to the fresh proposal introduced by the US, the UK and France for a ban on Azhar, the government remains unsure about support from both Pakistan and China.

## India inks \$3bn N-sub deal with Russia

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** India on Thursday inked yet another mega defence deal worth over \$3 billion for the lease of a nuclear-powered attack submarine from Russia, despite the threat of US financial sanctions still looming over the earlier \$5.4 billion contract for Russian S-400 Triumf missile systems inked last October.

Defence sources said the over \$3 billion (around Rs 21,000 crore) contract for the Akula class submarine, which will be ready by around 2025, includes a comprehensive package for refurbishment of the nuclear boat lying mothballed at Severodvinsk, its sustenance and spares support for 10 years, as well as training and technical infrastructure for its operations.



The new vessel will be ready by around 2025 and replace INS Chakra

This submarine will replace INS Chakra, the Akula class submarine taken on a 10-year lease from Russia in April 2012, under a secret over \$900 million deal inked way back in January 2004.

"INS Chakra's existing lease will be extended till at least 2025 through another contract till the new submarine, which will be bigger and more advanced, becomes operational," said a source.

The deal, however, will further raise hackles of the US, which under its new law Caat-sa (Countering America's Ad-

**India, France plan eye in sky over IOR**

India and France's CNES agreed on Thursday to set up a satellite network for maritime surveillance in the Indian Ocean Region, reports Surendra Singh. The pact comes amid increased Chinese activity in IOR. ISRO chairman K Sivan said, "We need to work out the contours of the system, decide on the kind of satellites and payloads and do a cost analysis."

versaries through Sanctions Act) seeks to prevent countries from buying Russian weapons or Iranian oil. Though India is hopeful of eventually getting US presidential waiver for the S-400s, the latest deal could complicate matters.

Full report on [www.toi.in](http://www.toi.in)

## SC makes Shimla hospital, docs pay for insensitivity

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Thursday granted an additional Rs 10 lakh in compensation to a poor woman from the hills in a medical negligence case on finding that when she was writing in pain, doctors at a Shimla hospital insensitively chided her by saying "people from hilly areas make unnecessary noise".

Due to medical negligence at Ripon Hospital, Shimla, the woman's right arm had to be amputated. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission awarded her Rs 2 lakh compensation in addition to Rs 2.93 lakh ex gratia granted by the state consumer forum. She appealed in the SC and sought more compensation.

A bench of Justices A M Sapre and Dinesh Maheshwari acceded to her request and said the approach in awarding compensation should not be restrictive when the victim comes from a poor and rural background, rather in a case like this, it should be reasonably higher.

Writing the judgment, Justice Maheshwari said,

**Ruling in a case of medical negligence, the SC granted Rs 10 lakh in compensation, over and above what consumer forums had awarded, to a poor woman from the hills on finding that when she was writhing in pain, doctors at a Shimla hospital insensitively chided her by saying 'people from hilly areas make unnecessary noise'**

"Grant of reasonably higher amount of compensation in the present case appears necessary to serve dual purposes: one, to provide some succour and support to the appellant against the hardship and disadvantage due to amputation of right arm; and second, to send the message to professionals that their responsiveness and diligence has to be equi-balanced for all their consumers and all human beings deserve to be treated with equal respect and sensitivity.

"We are impelled to make these observations in the context of an uncomfortable fact indicated on record that when the appellant was writhing in pain, she was not immediately attended to and was snubbed with the retort that 'people from hilly areas make unnecessary noise'. Such remarks, obviously, added insult to injury and were

least expected of professionals on public duty.

"When the appellant is shown to be a poor lady from rural background, her contribution in ensuring the family making both ends meet also deserves due consideration... the amount of compensation ought to be of such level as to provide relief in reasonable monetary terms to the appellant..."

Justice Maheshwari said, "We are of the view that the appellant deserves to be allowed further an amount of Rs 10 lakh towards compensation, over and above the amount awarded by the state commission and the national commission... it is also considered proper to grant three months' time to the respondents (hospital and doctors) to make the requisite payment and else, to bear the burden of interest."

## SC: Tell us in 10 days when panel will meet to pick Lokpal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the attorney general to inform it within 10 days when the PM-headed high-powered selection committee would meet to choose the chairperson and members of anti-corruption body Lokpal from among the names suggested by the search committee.

The selection committee comprises the PM, the leader of opposition, the CJI and eminent jurist Mukul Rohatgi. Since there is no leader of opposition, the committee has invited leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge as a special invitee. Attorney general K K Venugopal informed a bench of CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Sanjiv Khanna that Kharge had objected to the special invitee status given to him and refused to attend the meeting.

Venugopal said the search committee headed by former SC judge Ranjana P Desai had recommended three panels of names, one for chairperson and the other two for judicial and non-judicial members, from among which the selection committee will choose.



Congress's Mallikarjun Kharge has objected to the special invitee status and refused to attend the meeting, AG Venugopal told the SC bench

On behalf of petitioner 'Common Cause', advocate Prashant Bhushan requested the court to make public the recommended names to maintain transparency.

The bench asked, "Is there a statutory provision for inviting public objection to the recommended names? Transparency does not have a set definition. We appreciate the work you are doing. But there is a limit to everything.

"The committee will weigh each name and select the best. There is no mandate under Lokpal and Lokayukta Act to make the names public. The matter should be left to the just determination of the selection committee. When the names... are finalised, you (Bhushan) can take appropriate steps."

## Will Ayodhya dispute go for mediation? SC order today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court will pass its order on Friday on whether the more than 70-year-old litigation over Ram Jammabhoori-Babri Masjid disputed land in Ayodhya should be referred for a mediated settlement.

Mediated settlement would be the preferred solution to the vexed issue, the SC had said on Wednesday, adding that it was not merely a litigation over a piece of land but a matter relating to hearts, minds and faith of a large swathe of the population.

Sending the issue for resolution through mediation will be a brave decision on the part of the bench comprising CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer as the Hindu parties have stoutly opposed the move and called it a futile exercise.

In response to the apex court's proposition to the parties to suggest names of mediators, the Muslim parties and Nirmohi Akhara had separately submitted names. But the Hindu parties stuck to their stand that they were opposed to mediation and did not offer any names.

Four earlier attempts to find a solution to the dispute through mediation had failed.

## SC: Customary divorce from wife no licence to remarry

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Thursday said marrying a second time on the basis of a "customary divorce" from the first wife will render the second marriage void as the law stipulates that a man and woman are permitted to tie the nuptial knot only if they do not have a living spouse.

This decision came in the case of an inter-caste marriage solemnised in 2010. The marriage developed strains allegedly because of the husband's drunken habits and matrimonial torture inflicted on the wife. While leaving for her parental home with her belongings, she discovered a marriage dissolution deed of her husband from his first wife and later moved a Pune court seeking her marriage to be declared void.

The second wife alleged that the marriage was solemnised by fraud as the man declared himself a bachelor in the marriage registration document under the Special Marriage Act. She said there was no divorce decree from the first wife, a fact concealed from her, and he had a spouse



**The apex court bench also ruled that no time limit can be set for filing a petition for annulment of marriage and that it could be filed as and when a party to the marriage discovers that the other had a living spouse**

and void. It said under Section 4 of the Special Marriage Act, at the time of marriage neither party should have a living spouse. The bench also ruled that no time limit can be set for filing a petition for annulment of marriage and that it could be filed as and when a party to the marriage discovers that the other had a living spouse.

Writing the judgement, Justice Shah said, "The husband was required to prove that such customary divorce was permissible in his case or community. In the absence of any such issue or any evidence, the courts were not justified in observing that there was customary divorce between the man and his first wife."

A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and M R Shah set aside orders of the trial court and the HC and declared the second marriage null