

IN BRIEF



L-G should own moral responsibility: CM

**PUDUCHERRY**  
Responding to the High Court order upholding the rights of an elected government Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy on Tuesday said Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi should own moral responsibility for stalling development and welfare schemes in the Union Territory.

68 carcasses of painted stork buried in T.N.

**TIRUNELVELI**  
Following the autopsy done by a veterinarian, forest personnel on Tuesday buried the carcasses of 68 painted storks, including 65 juveniles at Koonthankulam birds' sanctuary where sudden thunderstorm damaged nests atop trees from where the birds fell and died. A forest official said the injured birds were doing good.

Fresh farm loans by higher authority: BoM

**MUMBAI**  
State-run lender Bank of Maharashtra on Tuesday said any new or fresh proposals on agricultural loans by branches will have to be referred to the next sanctioning authority, the zonal office, while review and renewal of short term crop loans will be done by the branches.

Vistara to hire 100 pilots, 400 cabin crew from Jet

**MUMBAI**  
In one of its largest hiring exercises, premium carrier Vistara is hiring around 500 people—100 pilots and 400 cabin crew — mostly from the grounded Jet Airways, said sources in the airline industry. Tuesday was the last day of the two-day recruitment drive for cabin crew at the Tatas-Singapore Airline-run Vistara, which took place in Mumbai and Gurugram. PTI

Fani is country’s strongest April cyclone in 43 years: IMD data

Unusual formation due to the ‘warming of the Bay of Bengal basin’; protracted gestation could lead to it gaining strength

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

Cyclonic storm Fani, which is lying about 600 km east of Vishakapatnam and 800 km south of Puri, is the first severe, cyclonic storm to have formed in April in India’s oceanic neighbourhood since 1976, according to records from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

While severe cyclones (defined as generating maximum windspeeds of 89-117 kmph) can form any time, they tend to be concentrated in November – after the monsoon – or around May, when the monsoon prepares to arrive in Kerala in June.

The head of IMD told *The Hindu* that such quirks were a consequence of global warming. “This is a cyclone that’s forming due to the warming of the Bay of Bengal basin... with global warming we have to be prepared for such occurrences and take precaution accordingly,” said K. J. Ramesh, Director-General, IMD. He said that Fani, so far, was unlikely to have an impact on the advent of the monsoon.

From 1965-2017, the Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea have collectively registered 46 ‘severe cyclonic storms.’ As many as 28 of them were from October-December. Se-

ven of them have been in May and only two – in 1966 and 1976 – were recorded in April, data from the IMD’s cyclone-statistics unit shows.

Tropical cyclones in the Indian neighbourhood begin as ‘depressions’ or a gradual build-up of warm air and pockets of low pressure. About 35% of such formations intensify to ‘cyclones’ and only 7% intensify to ‘very severe cyclones’. About 20-30 severe tropical storms occur around the world every year.

The IMD ranks cyclones on a 5-point scale with the mildest at 62-88 kmph and



**Rough waters:** Fishermen trying to control their boat near the Chandrabhaga beach in Puri, Odisha. •BISWARANJAN ROUT

the strongest, a ‘super cyclonic storm’, at 221 kmph). Cyclone Fani is expected to graduate to an ‘extremely severe cyclonic storm’ by Wednesday and make landfall in Orissa (as a very sev-

ere cyclonic storm) by May 4, according to an evening forecast by the IMD on Tuesday.

“It is very likely to move northwestwards till May 1 evening and thereafter re-

curve north-northeastwards and reach Odisha Coast by May 3 afternoon with maximum sustained wind of speed 170-180 gusting to 200 kmph,” the IMD statement notes.

Meteorologists also point to Fani’s protracted gestation. The storm had been building up since April 25 and is expected to make landfall, according to current models, only after May 3. “Nearly 10 days is an extremely long period,” said Mr. Ramesh. On an average, tropical cyclones form and make landfall in less than a week.

Satheesh Shenoi, Director, INCOIS (Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services), a research unit responsible for tracking

the oceans, said that Fani’s slow progress – it is now moving at 11-18 kmph – was also a matter of worry as the longer it hovered in the ocean, the more moisture and energy it gained from the ocean and the stronger its impact along the coast.

“For now, models suggest that waves as high as 6.3 m are possible in the ocean under the influence of the storm,” he told *The Hindu*.

Heavy rains are expected in north Andhra Pradesh and Odisha and light rains in West Bengal under the influence of the cyclone. Strong winds are expected in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra. Fishermen have been advised to stay away from the sea.

Suspended sentence will not impact Ness, says Wadia group

He was sentenced on a drugs charge by a Japan court, according to a report

LALATENDU MISHRA  
MUMBAI

Ness Wadia, who was handed a suspended sentence by a Japanese court is now back in India and will be able to discharge his responsibilities as usual, the Wadia Group said in a statement on Tuesday.

“Ness Wadia is in India. The judgment is clear. It is a suspended sentence. Hence it will not impact Ness Wadia in discharge of his responsibilities and he will continue to play the role that he has done hitherto, both within the group and outside,” a spokesperson for the group, who declined to be identified, said in an e-mailed statement.

Earlier on Tuesday, the *Financial Times* reported that



Ness Wadia

Mr. Wadia had been sentenced for drugs possession while on a skiing holiday to Japan. Mr. Wadia had admitted to possession, arguing that the drug was for his personal use, the report said, citing a court official in Sapporo.

News of the legal troubles for the 47-year-old Mr. Wadia, the elder son of Wadia Group chairman Nusli Wadia, triggered a slide in

shares of the group’s listed companies that span businesses ranging from textiles to trading and cookies to chemicals. The Wadia scion is on the boards of several group companies, including Bombay Dyeing & Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, Britannia Industries Ltd., National Peroxide Ltd. and Go Airlines (India) Ltd.

Bombay Dyeing slumped 9.8% on the BSE to close at ₹112.60, while Bombay Burmah fell 2.4% to ₹1,241.30. Biscuit manufacturer Britannia dropped 2.5% to ₹2,893.10 and National Peroxide declined 5.8% to ₹2,645.75.

Mr. Wadia had spent a period in detention before his indictment on March 20 and

an undisclosed period of detention before a court hearing, the *Financial Times* reported, adding that the Sapporo District Court had handed him a two-year prison sentence, which was suspended for five years.

“He has been sentenced for two years for sure but the court has released him on some conditions,” said Brian DLima, an advocate practising at the Bombay High Court, explaining the suspended sentence. “It appears that he has been asked by the court to not to repeat the same offence any time in five years, failing which his suspension will be revoked and he will be summoned by the Japanese court and will immediately [have to] serve the two years.”

India’s ASAT test a response to growing space threats: France

‘Outer space becoming an arena of rivalry between nations’

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

Stating that defence and offensive space technologies are being developed with various aims of spying, gaining control, deactivating service and destroying, French Envoy in India Alexandre Ziegler has supported India’s Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile test as a response to these growing threats.

“India shared the same observation and desire to act, which is actually reflected in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s announcement of the ASAT missile test on March 27 this year. It is obvious that it was a clear response to an assessment of growing threats in the outer space. And that’s an assessment that we share....” Mr. Ziegler said addressing the

5th Kalpana Chawla annual space policy dialogue organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) that began on Monday.

Debris concerns

He also observed that outer space has become an “arena of rivalry between major powers.”

At the same time, he said there was common concern on space debris. Satellites today have to avoid almost 6,00,000 debris of over 1cm travelling at speed faster than a bullet, he stated.

On March 27, India shot down a live satellite in the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) of 300 km using a modified interceptor of the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. Officials had stated that the LEO was particularly chosen

to minimise space debris.

India and France, which have been cooperating in the area of space for several decades, had announced the setting up of a constellation of satellites for maritime surveillance of the Indian Ocean.

Mr. Ziegler said as part of this, the two countries are co-developing a constellation 10-15 satellites that could help “monitor the maritime traffic in the Indian Ocean.”

“It is part of the joint vision that we signed. It is a civilian project,” he stated.

In this regard, Rod Hilton, Deputy High Commissioner of Australia, said his country was keen to be part of the broader maritime security cooperation and was working with India and France.

Asaram’s son gets life term in rape case



Narayan Sai

MAHESH LANGA  
AHMEDABAD

A local court in Surat has awarded life imprisonment to Narayan Sai, son of self-styled controversial godman and rape convict Asaram Bapu, in a rape and sexual harassment case filed against him in 2013.

The court found Sai, also a godman with sizeable follow-

ing, guilty of raping a woman and sexual harassment. The court imposed a fine of ₹ 1 lakh on him.

₹5 lakh compensation

Additional sessions judge P.S. Gadhwani asked Sai to pay a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the victim. His three key aides have also been awarded 10-year imprisonment in

the case. They are Ganga, Jamma and Hanuman alias Kaushal.

All three have been fined ₹10,000 each. One more accused, Ramesh Malhotra, has been awarded a six-month jail term.

Of the total 11 accused, the court had acquitted six, while convicting five, including the main accused Sai.

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the CBI to show one shred of evidence from investigation records to prove that former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar was involved in the disappearance or suppression of crucial evidence, like call data records, to protect

“the mighty” in connection with the Saradha Ponzi scam case.

The CBI has sought his custodial interrogation and claimed that he responded either evasively or arrogantly during an apex court-ordered questioning in Shillong recently.

“We want you to satisfy us that he had a role to play in

the disappearance or suppression of evidence. We have to be satisfied that your request for custodial interrogation is bona fide and not prompted by political considerations... Satisfy us that he had something to do, even vaguely, with the suppression of evidence and we order his arrest,” Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi

addressed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

The CBI had been urging the court to lift its order of a stay passed on February 8 against any “coercive action” against Mr. Kumar.

It had said his arrest was necessary to “unravel the entire gamut of the larger conspiracy in the ponzi scam cases.”

11 officers say no to higher courses

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

In a sign of military officers increasingly opting to leave service at mid-level, 11 officers of Colonel rank have expressed their unwillingness to attend the Higher Command (HC) and Higher Defence Management Courses, defence sources said on Tuesday. “Four officers expressed unwillingness due to personal issues and the others for other reasons,” a source said.

A major reason is that those going for the courses cannot leave service for the next five years. This is a major catch as Colonels and equivalent officers in other services go for HC after finishing their command appointment and are close to finishing the 20 years of pensionable service limit. This is not palatable for those officers not promoted to the next rank and wish to leave service.

“There is no additional weightage in the second selection board for promotion due to the course which means that if one gets overlooked a second time, he will still have to continue serving for the balance years,” a serving officer said on condition of anonymity. The recent cut down in various allowances and perks and reduction in equivalence of military with civilian counterparts have also added to this.