

IN BRIEF



Sushma Swaraj to hold talks with Iran Minister

NEW DELHI  
India and Iran will hold crucial talks on energy and security scenario in the Gulf on Tuesday. The Iranian side at the talks will be led by Foreign Minister of Iran Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif who will pay a day-long visit here.

CBI conducts searches in scholarship case

NEW DELHI  
The CBI conducted searches on the premises of 22 educational institutions in connection with an alleged ₹250 crore scholarship scam. The searches were carried out in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab. A case has been registered against unknown officials for misappropriation of scholarships meant for the reserved categories and the minority communities.

Patna-bound train runs over cattle

NEW DELHI  
The Patna-bound Vikramshila Express was stranded for nearly three hours between Tundla and Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh after it ran over cattle, the railways said on Monday. PTI

SC staffer who posted wrong data gets bail

NEW DELHI  
A Delhi court has granted bail to a sacked Supreme Court staffer, Manav Sharma, arrested for allegedly posting wrong information on the apex court's website related to a case involving Reliance Communications chairman Anil Ambani.

4 policemen suspended for lathicharge on scribes

AHMEDABAD  
A sub-inspector and three constables were on Monday suspended in connection with a lathicharge on reporters covering elections of a temple trust in Junagadh town, around 320 km from here. Gujarat Minister of State for Home Pradeepsinh Jadeja said he had ordered an inquiry into the incident. PTI

Army Commander visits forward bases

JAMMU  
Northern Army Commander Lt. Gen. Ranbir Singh on Monday visited forward bases and posts along the LoC in Rajouri and Akhnoor sectors and stressed on the need for being prepared for effectively meeting emerging security challenges. PTI

Protests break out over minor's rape

Scores of people injured in Kashmir Valley

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR  
Violent protests erupted in the Kashmir Valley on Monday over the rape of a three-year-old girl, leaving scores of people, including security personnel, injured. The clashes brought life to a standstill in the Valley.  
A spontaneous shutdown in the Valley also forced the authorities to close down all educational institutes "as a precautionary measure".  
Hundreds of protesters, demanding justice for the victim and a fast-track investigation, hit the streets in parts of Srinagar, Baramulla, Pulwama and Bandipora. Women and students also participated in protests held at Srinagar's Lal Chowk. Holding placards, the protesters demanded "death penalty" for the accused. Lawyers of the Kashmir High Court Bar Association abstained from court work in Srinagar.  
A police officer said protesters turned violent in Baramulla's Pattan area where they blocked the Srinagar-Baramulla Highway. One protester was critically injured after a teargas shell hit him on the head. Over a dozen protesters sustained pellet shotgun and other minor injuries. "Several security personnel also suffered injuries in the clashes in Baramulla," said the officer.  
Jammu & Kashmir People's Conference (J&KPC) chief Sajjad Lone condemned the police action.



Up in arms: Protesters raising slogans at Mirgund on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Highway on Monday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

The incident of the alleged rape took place on May 8 at Sumbal in Bandipora district.  
SIT formed  
The police said the culprit was arrested immediately, and a medical report has also confirmed "sexual assault". A Special Investigation Team has been formed

for a time-bound investigation," said Bandipora SSP Rahul Malik.  
Governor Satya Pal Malik has directed the police "to work swiftly in the case and ensure that the culprit gets exemplary punishment." He spoke to religious leaders of different communities and called for a joint appeal to people to remain calm.

Rape accused not a juvenile, say police

SRINAGAR  
The police on Monday said the rape accused was not a juvenile. They said the accused was about 20 years old and "was being treated as an adult in the case". However, a medical team will establish the age of the accused by bone ossification, police sources said.

Decision to recuse is solely that of judge: SC  
'Litigant can't raise questions of bias'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
A litigant cannot seek recusal of the judge during a hearing, the Supreme Court has said.  
"Judicial functions, sometimes, involve performance of unpleasant and difficult tasks, which require asking questions and soliciting answers to arrive at a just and fair decision. If the assertions of bias are to be accepted, it would become impossible for a judge to seek clarifications and answers," a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi observed in a recent order.  
The order was based on an plea by activist Harsh Mander seeking the recusal of the CJI from his PIL highlighting the plight of inmates in Assam's detention centres for illegal immigrants.  
Refusing to recuse, Chief

Justice Gogoi said "a litigant should not be permitted and allowed to question a judge on perceived bias especially after hearing has commenced and orders on different dates have been passed".  
'Bound by oath'  
The decision to recuse is solely the judge's own. "Normally, this should be left to the judge himself who is bound by the oath of office to administer justice to all persons alike without fear, favour and prejudice. The litigant, without any firm basis, cannot be permitted to raise such objection on the basis of the court hearing," Chief Justice Gogoi observed in the order.  
If a judge recuses on the word of the litigant, it may fall into a practice and would descend into forum-shopping, the Bench said.

SC to hear plea on cadre allocation

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court decided to examine on May 17 a government appeal against the Delhi High Court's decision to quash the cadre allocation of IAS and IPS officers of the 2018 batch.  
Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta mentioned the matter for urgent listing before the Vacation Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and Sanjiv Khanna. He said the High Court wanted the government to redo the exercise.  
The High Court had recently quashed the cadre allocation under the new policy and ordered a fresh exercise. The verdict came on four petitions filed by various officers challenging the Centre's notification on the IPS cadre allocation based on the results of the Civil Services Examination, 2017.

Home Ministry cancels Infosys Foundation's FCRA licence

'Decision taken at NGO's request, there was no violation'  
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The Union Home Ministry has cancelled the FCRA licence of Infosys Foundation after a request was made by the not-for-profit initiative of the IT major, a senior government official said.  
The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) enables an association or an NGO to receive foreign funds, and they have to register under it to receive such funds. "The FCRA licence was cancelled at their own request. There was no violation," said the official.  
Another official said the NGO made "persistent requests" to cancel the licence. "We requested them not to cancel the registration but they were adamant. So we cancelled it," said the official.  
The Home Ministry last year served show-cause notice on 1,755 NGOs, including Infosys Foundation, for failing to submit annual income and expenditure statements on foreign funding electronically on the Ministry's portal, though they received "nil" contributions.  
'No longer under FCRA'  
The Infosys Foundation said in a statement that it had requested the Home Ministry to cancel the registration in June 2016. "The Foundation was registered under the FCRA in January 2016. In May 2016, the Government amended the FCRA in the Finance Bill, with retrospective effect from 2010, as a result of which the Foundation no longer fell under the purview of the Act," the statement said.

ED quizzes Chanda Kochhar, husband

Summoned again today in loan case



Chanda Kochhar arriving at the ED office on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

money in Nupower Renewables Limited through Supreme Energy Private Limited (SEPL). SEPL was later transferred to Pinnacle Energy Trust, another firm managed by Mr. Kochhar.  
The bank had sanctioned six high-value loans to the accused firms between June 2009 and October 2011. The outstanding as on April 26, 2012, were adjusted as another term loan of ₹1,730 crore sanctioned under refinance of domestic debt. The accounts became non-performing assets in June 2017, said the CBI.  
The ED probe is based on an FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation, alleging a *quid pro quo* of ₹64 crore in the form of investments in the company of Ms. Kochhar's husband for sanction of loans to Videocon Group companies.  
It has been alleged that Videocon Group head Venu-gopal Dhoot invested the

DNA database coming up for Indian rhino

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI  
The Environment Ministry has embarked on a project to create DNA profiles of all rhinos in the country.  
By 2021, the Indian rhino could be the first wild animal species in India to have all its members DNA-sequenced. The project's proponents, including the World Wildlife Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India) and the Centre-funded Wildlife Institute of India (WII), said the exercise would be useful in curbing poaching and gathering evidence in wildlife crimes involving rhinos.  
There are about 2,600 rhinos in India, with over 90% of the population concentrated in Assam's Kaziranga National Park. Around 60 samples of tissue have been collected so far from some rhinos living outside Kaziranga.

Experts ask NIN to withdraw report favouring Akshaya Patra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
Doctors, researchers and activists on Monday addressed an open letter to scientists at the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) urging them to withdraw a report that declared mid-day meals provided without onion and garlic by the Akshaya Patra Foundation (APF) as compliant with the government's nutritional norms on grounds that the conclusion is not based

on empirical evidence.  
The Karnataka government had sought a technical report from NIN following complaints by the State Food Commission as well as civil society groups about the foundation's refusal to provide onion and garlic in the food supplied to 2,814 schools in six districts in the State, which was in violation of norms prescribed by the local as well as the Central government.

"The National Institute of Nutrition, to our utter shock and dismay, has made sweeping statements praising Akshaya Patra Foundation, without carrying out any systematic scientific study. No empirical data was collected on the quantity and quality of ingredients used or amount consumed and amount wasted by children to certify food supplied by APF as nutritionally adequate," says the letter signed

by 10 organisations and 94 individuals.  
Instead, the signatories say, the entire report had been prepared on the basis of a menu submitted by the Foundation.  
"We urge you to withdraw the report immediately pending a systematic field evaluation of the food being supplied by APF," adds the letter.  
The NIN was asked to look into four major issues – nutritional compliance, food safety measures, taste, and diversity of meals. Earlier, the Karnataka State Food Commission (KSFC), following visits to schools, noted that the food provided by APF was bland and monotonous, as a result of which children were consuming less than the prescribed quantity of meals, defeating the purpose of the mid-day meal scheme.  
In its report on February

14, 2019, the NIN had submitted that the nutritive value of APF's meals "certainly meet and often exceed the prescribed energy and protein requirements" and cited "convincing personal accounts" by scientists who visited APF's kitchens as proof of high safety standards. It concluded that the mid-day meals served by APF complied with nutrition norms laid down by the government.

AI project eyes early stage diabetic retinopathy

Onset diagnosed in 92 patients at 18 civic-run Mumbai dispensaries with device attached to smartphone

JYOTI SHELAR  
MUMBAI  
In a first for Mumbai, early stage diabetic retinopathy has been detected using artificial intelligence (AI) at civic-run dispensaries. The unique project is being implemented by the Aditya Jyot Foundation for Twinkling Little Eyes (AJFTLE) and, in a span of eight months, nearly 1,300 diabetes patients have been screened on a retinal imaging device attached to a smartphone.  
Commenced in August 2018, the Foundation has screened patients in 18 civic-run dispensaries across the city. Till March this year, 92 patients were diagnosed with early stage diabetic retinopathy and referred to municipal hospitals or the Aditya Jyot

Eye Hospital for further treatment.  
"Diabetic retinopathy is tricky because there are no early signs. That's why screening is the only way to detect the complication early and prevent diabetic blindness," said eye surgeon Dr. S Natarajan, also managing trustee of AJFTLE.  
Common cause  
Diabetic retinopathy is the commonest diabetic eye disease; it damages blood vessels in light-sensitive tissue at the back of the retina.  
While some patients may have symptoms like blurred vision or impaired colour vision, it's a common cause of blindness in the diabetic population. A robust screening programme is



A patient being screened on a retinal imaging device. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

thus the need of the hour.  
As a part of the AI project, technicians from the Aditya Jyot Foundation visit civic dispensaries along with Remedio Fundus on Phone, a portable device attached to a smartphone equipped with retinal imaging.  
After the patient's eye images are clicked, the AI on the device screens them

for signs of diabetic retinopathy, and prompts technicians on whether they should be referred to a hospital or not. If the image is unclear, the device also prompts a retake of the picture.  
Besides diabetic retinopathy, 97 patients, who had been referred, were diagnosed with cataract, and 69 had other eye diseases, including retinitis pigmentosa, age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma, of which they were unaware.  
Not the last word  
"The AI diagnosis cannot be termed as the last word. Thus, the diagnosis is verified by an ophthalmologist when the patient is referred further.

But this is an excellent tool to indicate the risk of retinopathy in patients. Also, the added advantage is that the device does not depend on [an Internet] network and is completely offline," said Dr. Radhika Krishnan, AJFTLE's chief executive officer, adding the initiative was in the process of expanding to 60 civic dispensaries in Mumbai.

A growing challenge  
The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that diabetes is a growing challenge in India, with an estimated 8.7% diabetic population in the age group of 20 to 70 years. "There are an estimated 73 million diabetics in the country. Of these, nearly 25% are at the risk of diabetic retinopathy," said Dr. Natarajan.