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NEARBY

Fire at furniture market; metro services hit

NEW DELHI
A major fire broke out at an unauthorised furniture market in south-east Delhi's Kalindi Kunj close to a metro line on Friday morning. No injuries were reported but metro services between Kalindi Kunj and Jasola Vihar Shaheen Bagh were suspended for nearly five hours. Normal services were restored around 10:30 a.m.

CITY • PAGE 3

Gym owner thrashes woman toll collector, held

GURUGRAM
A 40-year-old gym owner has been arrested for allegedly beating up a woman toll collector over payment of charges at the Kherki Daula toll plaza here on Friday. The accused allegedly threatened to kill and rape the woman. Accused Manjeet was a co-accused in a 2011 murder case wherein his friend had shot dead a toll collector at the same toll plaza.

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Amid protests, triple talaq Bill introduced

Opposition says that it violates the Constitution

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi government on Friday introduced the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019, also known as the triple talaq Bill, in the Lok Sabha, amid protests by Opposition members who said it violated the Constitution. The Bill, the BJP-led government's first legislation in the second term, was introduced after the Opposition asked for a division of votes. The treasury won with 186 "ayes" to the 74 Opposition "nays".

543 cases reported

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, who introduced the Bill, said the legislation was meant to ensure gender justice and equality. The Bill was not about religion but a "question of dignity of women and we are committed to safeguarding [it]". There were 543 cases of triple talaq reported in the country. Even after the Supreme Court banned the practice, over 200 cases were reported and this necessitated, in his view, a Bill that addressed the issue. "The job of Parliament is to legislate, and it is up to courts to interpret the law," he said. Several Opposition members stood up to protest as

The legislation is meant to ensure gender justice and equality. It is not about religion but a question of dignity of women and we are committed to safeguarding [it]. The job of Parliament is to legislate, and it is up to courts to interpret the law
RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD
Union Law Minister

The Bill conflates civil and criminal laws. It is a textbook example of class legislation as it is pointed at one community...
SHASHI THAROOR
Congress

The Bill violates constitutional rights as it stipulates a 3-year jail term: a similar offence by non-Muslim men attracts only a year in jail
ASADUDDIN OWAIISI
AIMIM

soon as Mr. Prasad was asked by Speaker Om Birla to table the Bill. The Speaker asked Shashi Tharoor of the Congress, N.K. Premachandran of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and Asaduddin Owaisi of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) to present their views.

Mr. Tharoor said he was against triple talaq, already voided by the Supreme Court, but opposed the Bill as it conflated civil and criminal laws. The Bill was a "textbook example of class legislation" as it was pointed at one community - the Muslims - even though abandoning wives was not unique to it. Mr. Owaisi said the BJP's "affection" for Muslim women and its advocacy of gender justice were suspect, considering the party's opposition to the entry of Hindu women into the Sabarimala temple. The Bill violated constitutional rights as it stipulated a three-year jail term for men, whereas a similar offence by non-Muslim men attracted only a year in jail. Mr. Premachandran made similar points against the Bill, which had faced objections from Opposition parties from the beginning. They had claimed that jail term for a man for divorcing his wife was legally untenable.

'Operation Bandar' code name of Balakot strike

No specific reason in choice of name

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The air strike by the Indian Air Force (IAF) on a terrorist training camp in Balakot, Pakistan, was code-named 'Operation Bandar'. "It was code-named Operation Bandar but was known to very few," a defence source said on Friday. There was no particular reason in the choice of the name, the official stated and added, "It could have been anything."

Secrecy maintained
To maintain secrecy, the Mirages took off directly

Kaleshwaram project inaugurated

B. CHANDRASHEKHAR HYDERABAD

The Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP), claimed to be the world's largest multi-stage and multi-purpose lift irrigation scheme, was inaugurated on Friday by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Nara Chandrababu Naidu in Jayashankar-Bhupalpalayam district, where the first barrage of the project is located. It is meant to irrigate over 37 lakh acres of new and existing ayacuts and supply drinking water to Hyderabad and villages en route.

TELANGANA CM DEDICATES PROJECT TO PEOPLE • PAGE 8

Icy stretches



Soldiering for peace: Thousands of people stretched and twisted as the world marked the International Day of Yoga on Friday. In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi headlined the main event at Ranchi. Here, soldiers take part in a session in the Himalayas. • PTI (PAGE 13)

GST Council eases returns filing process

T.C.A. SHARAD RAGHAVAN NEW DELHI

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, at its 35th meeting on Friday, took a number of decisions aimed at easing the registration and returns filing process, including the use of Aadhaar for registrations, introduction of e-invoicing and setting a deadline for the roll-out of the single-return filing system. The meeting, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, decided to allow the use of Aadhaar as the identity and address proof for registration for the GST. No other documents would be required, and authentication can be done using a one-time password, Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey told reporters.

CONTINUED ON • PAGE 12

I stopped a strike on Iran, says Trump

Reprisal move was for downing drone

REUTERS WASHINGTON
U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he aborted a military strike on Iran because such a response to Tehran's downing of an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone would have caused a disproportionate loss of life. In a series of early morning tweets, Mr. Trump said U.S. economic sanctions against Iran were having an impact and more were imposed late on Thursday, following the destruction of the U.S. drone by an Iranian surface-to-air missile.



Trump said that economic sanctions against Iran were having an impact. • AP

3 sites were to be hit
Mr. Trump said the plan was to hit three different sites in response to the drone's downing, and that he was told 150 people would have

died. "Ten minutes before the strike I stopped it, not proportionate to shooting down an unmanned drone. I am in no hurry, our military is rebuilt, new, and ready to go, by far the best in the world," he tweeted. Earlier, Tehran had received a message from Mr. Trump warning that a U.S. attack was imminent.

IRAN INSISTS DRONE VIOLATED AIR SPACE • PAGE 14

'IS was initially unaware of Easter attacks'

MEERA SRINIVASAN COLOMBO

The Islamic State (IS) may have claimed responsibility for the Easter terror attacks in Sri Lanka, but its chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was initially not aware of the horrific serial bombings, according to a top official familiar with the probe. The ongoing investigation in Sri Lanka has revealed that a local Islamist radical, who is an IS sympathiser, had contacted the IS leadership after the attacks. "Through a third party, he [the suspect, now in custody] had pleaded with the IS for recognising the blasts carried out by jihadists, who had 'sacrificed' their lives," the senior official told *The Hindu*.

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Madrassa teacher attacked for not saying 'Jai Shri Ram'

Claims he was hit by car in Rohini

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A madrasa teacher was allegedly hit by a car after he refused to say "Jai Shri Ram" on Thursday evening in Rohini. DCP (Rohini) S.D. Misra said the victim, Mohd. Momin, told the police that around 7 p.m., he was taking a stroll near the madrasa when a white car pulled over and its occupants started talking to him. "Mohd. Momin was contacted by an investigating officer [on Thursday evening] but he said he will file his complaint in the morning. In

his complaint [filed on Friday], Momin said he was asked by the men in the car to repeat some words [Jai Shri Ram] written on a sticker pasted on the vehicle. When he refused, they hit him and he sustained injuries," Mr. Misra said. The police have registered a case under Sections 323 of the IPC and started a probe into the incident. "During preliminary investigation we found an eyewitness who gave a sequence of events [on Thursday evening]. Momin's claims have not been substantiated so far," the DCP said.

Kejriwal meets PM, offers 'full cooperation'

Delhi Chief Minister assures Modi of Ayushman Bharat relook, invites him to see AAP govt.'s work

JATIN ANAND NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Friday assuring him of what the Delhi government officially termed was its "full cooperation for the further development of Delhi". Mr. Kejriwal, the State government said in a statement, also "appealed that it is important for Delhi and Central governments to work together". The 20-minute-odd meeting, which commenced around 11.30 a.m., was the third meeting between the two since the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party government in the Capital in early 2015 and the first after the commencement of the NDA government's second



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal addressing the media after meeting the Prime Minister in New Delhi on Friday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

term in office. In addition to congratulating Mr. Modi for his victory in the recent Lok Sabha polls, the Chief Minister also invited him to visit the AAP government's flagship Mohalla Clinics and schools administered by it. **Conciliatory note** Mr. Kejriwal, who has on innumerable occasions accused Mr. Modi of attempting to obstruct the functioning of his government indirectly through the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, seemed to strike a conciliatory note in Friday's meeting. He offered to "examine" if the Centrally-sponsored Ayushman Bharat health scheme "could also be integrated into the Delhi government's", after having criticised it on several counts recently. "Ayushman Bharat was briefly discussed. Informed Hon'ble PM that Delhi Govt's Delhi Health scheme is

much bigger and wider in scope. However, assured him to examine if Ayushman Bharat scheme could also be integrated into our scheme (sic)," the Delhi Chief Minister tweeted.

Water storage project

The Delhi government statement said Mr. Kejriwal also sought the Central government's cooperation for an "ambitious" project aimed at the natural storage of water in the Yamuna floodplains. "Mr. Kejriwal said that since Delhi faces an acute water shortage, particularly in summer months, this project once implemented will ensure that storage of water during a single monsoon will be sufficient to meet Delhi's

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