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GOVT RECONSTITUTES CABINET COMMITTEES

All in a day's work: Morning order omits Rajnath from key panels, he's in by night

Within 16 hours, Singh finds place in 6 of 8 panels, including political and Parliamentary affairs

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

WITHIN A span of 16 hours, the government Thursday night amended its order to include Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in key committees of the Union Cabinet — Parliamentary Affairs; Political Affairs; Investment and Growth; and, Employment & Skill Development — from which he had been left out earlier in the day.

Home Minister in the first Modi government, Singh was

not part of these Cabinet committees announced by the government early morning — the official release was issued at 5.57 am Thursday. The new Home Minister, Amit Shah, was a member of all these committees, giving rise to talk that he was now the de facto No. 2 in the government despite Singh being at the second place in the pecking order after the Prime Minister.

The reconstitution order was "revised" late Thursday night — a new official release was put out at 10.19 pm — to include Singh as a member of these committees.



In the pecking order, Rajnath Singh is at No. 2 after Prime Minister Modi, and ahead of Amit Shah. File

ECONOMY

NITI AAYOG REJIGGED, BIBEK DEBROY OUT

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In the revised order, Singh was placed above Shah in all these four committees.

The release provided no explanation for the revised reconstitution of the Cabinet committees. With a guessing game on in the party and the government

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RBI Governor Das, his deputies in Mumbai. Ganesh Shirsekar

To spur growth, RBI cuts interest rate, stance now accommodative

25 bps reduction, banks expected to pass benefits to consumers

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, JUNE 6

TO REVIVE consumer demand and give growth a fillip, the Reserve Bank of India Thursday reduced the repo rate — the rate at which banks borrow from the central bank — by 25 basis points to 5.75 per cent. Banks are expected to pass on the benefits of lower interest rates to the corporate sector and individual consumers in coming months.

The RBI simultaneously changed its monetary policy stance to "accommodative" from "neutral" stating "there is scope to accommodate growth concerns and reinvigorate private investment activity". Private investment, according to latest GDP data, had sequentially slowed down in the last three quarters in 2018-19.

This is the third such rate cut of 25 basis points in calendar year 2019. With this, the RBI's main policy rate now stands at a level touched almost nine years

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EXPLAINED

Opens window for another cut

With the fiscal policy remaining constrained, and inflation forecast benign, the RBI's 'accommodative' stance reflects the imperative of the monetary policy to foster growth. A mere 25 bps cut this time opens up the possibility of another rate cut if the monsoon progresses favourably and the government sticks to its fiscal consolidation path.

BUSINESS AS USUAL



ECONOMY



PREMIJI HANDS OVER REINS TO HIS SON

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Cong collapses in Telangana, 12 of 18 MLAs say they are joining TRS

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, JUNE 6

IN A severe setback for the Congress in Telangana, 12 of the party's 18 MLAs Thursday submitted a representation to Assembly Speaker P Srinivas Reddy seeking to merge the Congress Legislature Party with the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti Legislature Party. The 12 MLAs also pledged their support to TRS leader and Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu.

The Congress had won 19 Assembly seats in the December 2018 state elections while the TRS had won 88 in the 119-member House. The number was reduced to 18 after Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president N Uttam Kumar Reddy resigned from the Huzurnagar constituency following his victory from the Nalgonda Lok Sabha seat.

On Thursday afternoon, five Congress MLAs, led by senior MLA Sabita Indra Reddy, met TRS working president KT Rama Rao and submitted a list of 12 MLAs willing to join the ruling party. The other four MLAs were Sudhir Reddy, Hari Priya Naik, C Lingaiah and K Upendra Reddy. Sabita Reddy said the Congress MLAs "wish to work with CM KCR to achieve his vision of a golden Telangana". "We will join the TRS shortly," she said.

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Pragya too unwell to be in trial court, but she is well enough to be here

Her lawyer told Malegaon blast case court she is in hospital, can't travel to Mumbai

SADAF MODAK & MILIND GHATWAI
MUMBAI, BHOPAL, JUNE 6

BJP MP and Malegaon 2008 blast case accused Pragya Singh Thakur Thursday sought exemption from appearance before the trial court in Mumbai stating that she has been hospitalised following high blood pressure and related ailments. But in Bhopal around noon Thursday, Thakur attended an event in MP Nagar to garland the statue of Maharana Pratap on his birth anniversary.

On Wednesday evening, Thakur, accompanied by local BJP leaders, visited the home of the Bhopal Shahar Kazi, Syed Mushtaq Ali Nadvi, on the occasion of Eid, offering him sweets and dry fruits. She was admitted to Care Hospital at night and discharged Thursday morning.

She was to appear before the Mumbai trial court Thursday. Last month, the court had directed all accused in the blast



BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur paid tributes to Maharana Pratap on his birth anniversary in Bhopal, Thursday. Express

case to remain present before it at least once a week.

On Monday, Thakur had sought exemption from appearing for the whole week from June 3 to June 7, but her plea was rejected by the court. On Thursday, while the court accepted her exemption plea for

the day, it said that she should remain present on Friday. It also noted that no medical documents were submitted along with her plea stating that she has been hospitalised.

In her plea, Thakur said that following the court's order on

Our neighbourhood policy has to be more generous: Jaishankar

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

OUTLINING THE NDA government's approach towards the neighbourhood in its second term, newly appointed External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Thursday said India should follow a "generous policy" and "incentivise cooperation... by often stepping out" and not emphasising too much on reciprocity.

"I will like to see a generous policy where we pave the way," he said. There are already substantial lines of credit and programmes on the ground and livelihood in some neighbouring countries also derives from economic activity in India, he said.

Speaking at a public event for the first time since taking charge, Jaishankar also said that the government needs "tighter integration" between ministries and departments, and ministers have to take the lead. He said he has spent more time with Finance and Commerce ministers, than with his own External Affairs



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi. Tashi Tobgyal

ministry, in the one week since he took charge.

Jaishankar was addressing the plenary session of The Growth Net Summit 7.0, which is being organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Ananta Centre and Smadja & Smadja.

On Friday, Jaishankar is leaving for Bhutan on his first visit abroad as Union Minister (June 7-8), while Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in the Maldives and Sri Lanka on June 8-9. In 2014, Modi chose Bhutan

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THE EDITORIAL PAGE

FOR INDIA, AN OCEAN OF NEIGHBOURS

BY CRAJA MOHAN
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Dhoni gloves have insignia of Special Forces, ICC says ensure it's removed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JUNE 6

THE INTERNATIONAL Cricket Council (ICC) has asked M S Dhoni to remove an Indian Army insignia from his wicket-keeping gloves at the World Cup, as it exceeds the number of logos permitted on specific gear.

"Two manufacturers' logos are permitted on each wicket-keeping glove. No other visible logos other than the manufacturers' logos are allowed," Claire Furlong, the ICC General Manager — Strategic Communications, told The Indian Express.



He donned gloves with the Balidaan Badge in SA match

The ICC has communicated its decision to the Indian team management and said that

Dhoni will face no penalty. "We have asked for it to be removed. (It's a) breach of regulations. No penalty," Furlong said.

During India's opening match against South Africa Wednesday, Dhoni was spotted with the regimental dagger insignia — Balidaan Badge — of the Indian Special Forces on his keeping gloves.

Balidaan is a distinct insignia of the Special Forces, which is worn by para commandos on the pockets of their uniform. It shows a commando dagger pointed down, with wings extending upwards from the blade

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Home for Eid, soldier shot by suspected militants in Valley, dies of injuries

ADILAKHZER
SRINAGAR, JUNE 6

A TERRITORIAL Army jawan, who had come home on leave for Eid, was killed at his residence Thursday evening by suspected militants in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. J&K police said the attackers fired at Manzoor Beigh, a resident of Sadoora village, who later succumbed to injuries.

A police spokesperson said that Beigh "sustained critical

gunshot injuries" and was "evacuated to hospital for treatment where he succumbed". Police are "investigating the circumstances of this terror crime", the spokesperson said.

Srinagar-based defence spokesperson Col Rajesh Kalra said in a statement: "Havaldar Manzoor Ahmad Beigh, serving with the Territorial Army unit, was shot at by terrorists and grievously injured at his residence today evening." He said "the soldier was unarmed and

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Amid din over 3-language proposal, Tamil Nadu tops voluntary Hindi learning in southern states

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JUNE 6

TAMIL NADU'S opposition to what its political leaders call the "imposition" of Hindi is well known. Just last week, the DMK led protests against the three-language formula proposed in the draft National Education Policy (NEP), forcing a revision.

But what is not so well known is the spike in number of students from the state who appear for Hindi language courses held by the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, a Chennai-based society established by Mahatma Gandhi in 1918 "with the sole aim of propagating Hindi in southern states".

Over the last decade, latest data from the Sabha show, there has been a nearly six-fold increase in the number of students that appeared for exams conducted by the society in the



His party led protests to force revision in NEP draft

Chennai city region alone. The figures show that 1.6 lakh students in Chennai appeared for

the Sabha's exams in 2018, compared to 27,600 in 2009. For the Tamil Nadu region, excluding Chennai city, the number was 4.2 lakh in 2018, a nearly three-fold rise from 1.5 lakh in 2009.

With over 5 lakh students appearing for these exams from the state, Tamil Nadu (including Chennai city) topped the southern states on the Sabha's 2018 chart by a huge margin. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana together totalled 2.38 lakh, followed by Karnataka (42,005) and Kerala (20,005).

"About 80 per cent of our students are school children enrolled by parents who hope they will have a better future by learning one more language. The remaining 20 per cent are professionals, job-seekers and those who learn the language out of personal interest," says S Jayaraj, general secretary, DBHP Sabha.

According to the Sabha's website, its exam wing conducts tests for eight proficiency levels — "Parichaya, Prathamik, Madhyama, Rashtabhasha,

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