



Satya Pal Malik regrets asking militants to go after corrupt politicians

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M.M. Naravane appointed as the next Vice-Chief of the Army Staff

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May chairs meeting of emergency response panel over ship seizure

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Harmeet, Ayhika crowned Commonwealth table tennis champions

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NEARBY



Notice to poll panel over Nirbhaya convict's photo

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Commission for Women on Monday issued a notice to the Election Commission over a Punjab district poll panel allegedly putting the photograph of a death row convict in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case on a hoarding. An EC official said that a report has been sought from the Punjab Chief Electoral Officer by Tuesday morning.

CITY PAGE 3

I would love to be a mediator on Kashmir: Donald Trump

U.S. President says PM Modi sought his help during their recent meeting in Japan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday offered to be a "mediator" between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue as he met Prime Minister Imran Khan at the White House.

"If I can help, I would love to be a mediator. If I can do anything to help, let me know," Mr. Trump said. He said Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi broached the subject during their meeting in Osaka, Japan, last month. "I was with



Offering help: U.S. President Donald Trump with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in the Oval Office on Monday. • AP

Prime Minister Modi two weeks ago, and talking of the subject, and he said, 'Would

you like to be a mediator? And I asked where, and he said Kashmir. I said if I could

mediate, I will help... I would love to help on Kashmir."

In New Delhi, the government denied Mr. Modi had requested Mr. Trump to mediate. "We have seen [Mr. Trump's] remarks that he is ready to mediate, if requested by India & Pakistan, on the Kashmir issue. No such request has been made by Mr. Modi to the U.S. President," said MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar.

(With inputs from PTI & IANS)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

90 rescued from fire in Mumbai

MTNL employees were stranded for 3 hours on terrace

TANVI DESHPANDE
SAKSHI SHIVPURI
MUMBAI

The fire brigade rescued around 90 to 100 people after a major fire broke out at the nine-storey MTNL building at Bandra here on Monday afternoon.

Anxious MTNL employees stood on the terrace for close to three hours before they were rescued with ladders. The fire brigade de-



Firefighters using a crane to rescue a trapped MTNL employee in Mumbai on Monday. • AFP

ployed a team of officers and firemen and 14 fire engines for the challenging operation. The fire-fighting systems had been shut as the

building was reportedly undergoing repairs for the last six months.

The fire broke out on the third and fourth floors around 3 p.m.

The flames were confined to the two floors while the smoke engulfed the entire building. While people on floors below the two ran out of the building, the ones above got trapped due to smoke. Most people then ran to the building's terrace and balconies, from where they called out for help.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Water sector success needs people's movement: Minister

NISTULA HEBBAR
PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

To ensure that States implement the Centre's ambitious scheme to recharge groundwater and provide piped drinking water to all households by 2024, there must be pressure from both above and below, says Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

There must be a people's movement while the Centre will provide funding incentives, with better performing States getting more mo-

ney, he told The Hindu in an exclusive interview on Monday. "Now it's a competition. If you do more work, you will get more funds," he said. Mr. Shekhawat said putting water on the concurrent list in order to bring State governments on board is no solution; success in the water sector needs people's participation.

He also emphasised the role of Central incentives and about taking a district-wise approach.

INTERVIEW ON PAGE 13

Reaching for the moon

The GSLV rocket blasted off from Sriharikota on Monday and safely placed the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft in earth's orbit, successfully completing the first step of a 48-day journey. It is expected to land on the moon on September 7, 2019

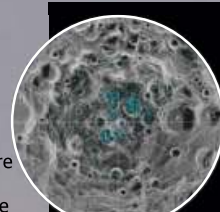


The launch comes barely a week after the 50th anniversary of man's first steps on the moon in 1969

If successful, scientists can carry out studies on the presence of water at the moon's south pole, unexplored by any nation before. ISRO suspects the region to contain water



China, Russia and the U.S. are the only other nations to have sent missions to the moon. Chandrayaan-2 will be the year's third bid at a moon landing, following China's successful launch of a lunar probe and the Israeli spacecraft that crashed on the moon in April



Surface ice distribution at the poles as detected by NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper instrument aboard India's Chandrayaan-1 lunar spacecraft



India has also announced plans for a manned space mission with a targeted flight in December 2021, besides proposing missions to study Venus and the sun

The GSLV Mark III, carrying Chandrayaan 2, blasts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on Monday. • S. R. RAGHUNATHAN

REPORTS ON PAGE 9; SOARING TO THE MOON: EDITORIAL

Perfect launch for Chandrayaan-2

T.K. ROHIT
SRIHARIKOTA

India's second lunar journey and its first-ever interplanetary mission to be spearheaded by two women, Project Director M. Vanitha and Mission Director Ritu Kharidhal, got a boost after the ambitious Chandrayaan-2 mission, headed to the moon's South Pole region, and achieved an orbit 6,000 km more than what was targeted.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) put behind last week's setback and achieved a perfect launch at 2.43 p.m. on Monday from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR, in what was the GSLV-MKIII's first operational flight.

From the scientists at the Mission Control to those at the Viewing Gallery, the media centre, and millions watching on television across the nation, the launch seemed like a nail-biting sports match. The cheers, whistles and claps every time a launch objective was achieved, at the Viewing Gallery and the Media Centre, gave the launch a semblance of the reception normally given to film stars or excellent sports persons.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

In deep water



A child makes the most of a waterlogged G.T. Karnal Road after heavy rain in New Delhi on Monday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA (SEE ALSO PAGE 2)

Karnataka trust vote put off again

Speaker sets 6 p.m. Tuesday deadline for vote after debates go on till close to midnight

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Five days after the motion of confidence was moved by Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, a vote in the Assembly was yet again deferred by a day after a heated debate continued till close to midnight on Monday.

Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar set 6 p.m. on Tuesday as the deadline to complete the voting, amid angry objections by the BJP.

Through the day, leaders of the ruling Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) coalition sought a postponement of the vote till the Supreme Court heard the pending petitions and the Speaker decided on the resignation and disqualification of the rebel MLAs.

Earlier in the evening, the Speaker served notice on the 15 rebel MLAs, asking them to



No solution yet: Members of the ruling coalition request the Speaker to postpone the proceedings. • K. MURALI KUMAR

appear before him on Tuesday in connection with the disqualification petitions.

The Supreme Court, which refused to hear a petition by two Independent MLAs seeking a direction for a floor test by the end of the day, posted the case for Tuesday. Former Minister H.K. Patil argued it would not be proper to take up voting when the court was seized of the matter.

The coalition leaders also argued that the Speaker's ruling, on a point of order raised by CLP leader Siddaramaiah, that the legislature parties had a right to issue whip to its members, had to be taken into account now.

Though BJP leaders insisted that the motion be put to vote without any delay as the CM and Mr. Siddaramaiah had promised on Friday that they would not hinder the process on Monday, the

Mr Gowda said this was part of a larger "design" of the saffron party which has engineered defections in states such as Goa and West Bengal. He said that the BJP "had blood on its hands."

'DECIDE ON REBELS' PAGE 8

245 deaths in 14 months: Delhi zoo orders analysis

Single document detailing deaths to be prepared for more effective corrective measures

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

The National Zoological Park, better known as Delhi zoo, has undertaken an analysis into deaths of 245 animals over 14 months from April 2018 to June 2019.

"We were also surprised by the high number of deaths and the analysis was ordered to prepare a single document in tabular format to understand whether there are any particular reasons leading to the deaths," a zoo official told *The Hindu*.

Currently, though post-mortems are done when animals die, they are maintained as different documents and there has been no proper cross-analysis.

"After preparing the document which will have details of each animal that died, its age and cause of



A zoo official said that the deaths were mainly due to old age and infighting among animals. • FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

death, we will analyse it and take corrective measures if needed," the official said, adding that a similar report would be made every month from now on to make sure that there is no death due to negligence. The official said that the deaths were mainly due to old age and infighting among animals.

Multiple irregularities in the zoo, including false post-mortem reports of

animals during the tenure of the previous zoo Director, were found in a 2016 report by D.N. Singh, then Member Secretary of Central Zoo Authority.

In June 2019, following a High Court order, the zoo had submitted an inventory report to the court after conducting a census of the animals. The court issued the order while hearing a petition by animal rights

activist Gauri Maulekhi on alleged "abnormal mortality rate" of animals in the Delhi zoo and "criminal conspiracy by the zoo officials".

Though two tiger cubs born in the zoo died in August 2018, they were not part of the birth and death table in the inventory report submitted to the court.

"Three cubs were born in total. One was stillborn, another lived only for a day and the third died before even opening its eyes. Such births and deaths are noted in a separate register," said a senior zoo official.

"It's a scam. The census was ordered by the court and the separate register was not part of the submission made in the court. Now they (zoo authorities) claim that there is an additional register, but it's simply not possible," claimed Ms. Maulekhi.

Male white tiger latest addition

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi zoo on Monday got a male white tiger in an exchange programme with Lucknow zoo. The Delhi zoo will now initiate the process to transfer a female white tiger, Geeta, to Lucknow.

The white tiger, Vijay, about three years old, reached the zoo on Monday night. Before the exchange, the Delhi zoo had seven white tigers: five females and two males. "We opted for the swap as most of the white tigers we had were siblings and the survival rate of a cub is less if they mate. Now we have a new bloodline and it will help in breeding," said a zoo official.

The zoo had initiated the process for the exchange about seven months ago.

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Twenty-three years after 14 persons were killed and 37 injured in a bomb blast in a roadways bus near Samleti village in Dausa district, the Rajasthan High Court on Monday acquitted six persons, including five residents of Jammu and Kashmir, who were sentenced to life imprisonment by a lower court in the case. The court upheld death penalty and life sentence pronounced to two convicts in 2014.

The blast took place in a Rajasthan Roadways bus headed from Agra to Bikaner on the Agra-Jaipur national highway on May 22, 1996, a day after Delhi's Lajpat Nagar bomb blast which had led to the death of 13 persons.

A sessions court in Dausa district's Bandikui town had convicted six of the eight accused of murder, conspiracy, damage to public property and violation of Explosives

Act and one of them only of conspiracy, while accepting the claim made in the chargesheet that the J&K residents were associated with the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

Abdul Hamid, a medical doctor and native of Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh, was sentenced to death as the prime accused.

Two stay guilty
A Division Bench comprising Justice Sabina and Justice Goverdhan Bardhar ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove any connection of the six persons with the conspiracy to carry out the Samleti blast. Those acquitted were Javed Khan, Abdul Ghani, Latif Ahmed, Mohammed Ali Bhat, Mirza Nisar Hussain (all from J&K) and Raees Baig, a resident of Agra.

All of them spent the last 23 years in jail without getting bail or parole. The court maintained

death sentence awarded to Hamid and life imprisonment awarded to Salim alias Pappu, while giving credence to the evidence of the bus driver and two policemen, travelling in the same bus, who had identified the prime accused.

Syed Shahid Hasan, counsel for the J&K residents who had filed an appeal against the September 29, 2014 judgment of the sessions court, said he had contended that there was no evidence to link his clients with the incident and no explosive material was recovered from them.

'Branded militants'
"Despite their innocence, they were branded Kashmiri militants and they spent 23 years behind bars, a period longer than life imprisonment," he said.

The case was investigated by the Criminal Investigation Department (Crime Branch) of Rajasthan Police.