

on Sunday



**'CBI deliberately did not name Sengar in murder of woman's father'**  
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**Manmohan Singh to return to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan**  
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**Kim Jong-un wants to resume nuclear talks, says Trump**  
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**India takes on West Indies in the second ODI today**  
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## NEARBY



**Arun Jaitley stable, say AIIMS doctors**  
NEW DELHI  
Former Union Minister Arun Jaitley is responding to treatment, doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences said on Saturday, a day after he was admitted for complaints of uneasiness and breathlessness.  
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## Man assaulted in U.P. for 'transporting cattle'

NOIDA  
A contractor engaged by Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation was assaulted by a mob in Greater Noida over rumours that he was carrying slaughtered bovine, officials said on Saturday. Five of the accused have been arrested, while a search is on for others, the police said.  
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## Gurugram inspector held for rape and blackmail

GURUGRAM  
A police inspector posted as Station House Officer, Sadar police station in Gurugram, has been arrested for allegedly raping a woman several times over the past one month. The accused, Dalbir Singh, allegedly recorded the act and threatened to make it public.  
CITY ▶ PAGE 5

## DU principal withdraws books, paper for 'review'

NEW DELHI  
Aryabhata College principal Manoj Sinha has withdrawn at least three books and one journal paper for "review" after complaints of plagiarism were lodged against him with the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University. The move comes about a week after *The Hindu's* report on a complaint of plagiarism filed by a whistleblower with the DU V-C on June 18.  
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CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGES 4 & 6

# Certification of seeds to be made mandatory to step up agri output

Barcoding and tracking could hike productivity by 25%, say officials

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI  
More than half of all seeds sold in India are not certified by any proper testing agency, and are often of poor quality. The Centre now hopes to mandate uniform certification by pushing through a replacement to the Seeds Act, 1966, in the winter session of Parliament, and also by barcoding all seeds to ensure their traceability.

This could increase overall agricultural productivity by up to 25%, Agriculture Ministry officials say.

**Definition changed**  
"The existing legislation that was enacted over half a century ago needs to be revised urgently. Technology has changed, farmers' expectations have changed, even the very definition of what is a seed has changed. Planting materials such as cuttings,

grafting and tissue culture – all that must also be brought under the ambit of the law," said a senior official, who did not wish to be named.

The main aim of the new legislation, which is ready for submission to the Cabinet for approval, is to bring uniformity to the process of quality regulation. The 1966 Act starts with these words: "An Act to provide for regulating the quality of certain seeds for sale..."

The new Bill removes the word "certain", and aims to regulate the quality of all seeds sold in the country, as



The legislation will make quality regulation uniform.

well as exported and imported seeds.

"Currently, about 30% of seeds are what the farmer himself saves from his crop.

He may re-plant that or sell it locally," said another senior official. He explained that of the remaining seeds which are bought and sold commercially, 45% come through the ICAR system

## SPECIAL

and have gone through the mandated certification process.

"The other 55% are sold by private companies, most of which are not certified, but rather what we call 'truthful label seeds'. That is, they are simply self-certified by the company. We want to remove that category with the new law and mandate certification through a proper lab process for all seeds," he said.

"Truthful label seeds can be disastrous from the farmers' point of view, and should be removed," says Devinder Sharma, an agriculture and food policy expert. He has been engaging with the revised seeds legislation since it was originally proposed in 2004.

"The Bill has been pending for so long, but it is important that companies be held accountable for the quality of the seeds they sell, and the claims they make. If a seed fails at the germination, flowering or seed-setting process, the company which sold it must be held liable and made to provide compensation," he said.

The new Bill will also raise the stakes by increasing penalties for non-compliance. "Currently, the fine ranges from ₹500 to ₹5,000. We intend to raise that to [a maximum of] ₹5 lakh," said the second official.

Continued on ▶ PAGE 10

# Curbs eased in Srinagar, people throng streets to buy essentials

Banks and ATMs open, govt. employees get advance salary ahead of Eid

VIJAITA SINGH  
SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI  
Authorities in the Kashmir Valley, where a lockdown entered its sixth day on Saturday, said they had eased curbs on the movement of residents in Srinagar.

"Restrictions have been eased in most parts of #Srinagar," Srinagar district magistrate Shahid Choudhary posted on Twitter. "More than 250 ATMs have been made functional in #Srinagar. Bank branches also open. Advance salary on Eid eve being credited today," he tweeted.

With the administration relaxing the restrictions, hundreds of men and women were seen thronging the streets to buy meat and other essential items for the festival. The markets, however, remained shut.

But for the police personnel of Jammu and Kashmir, who have been at the forefront of the lockdown in the Valley, there was little respite as they continued to face angry and cold stares from residents.



Not much cheer: With restrictions relaxed, Srinagar is returning to normality. ■ NISSAR AHMED

With communication lines down and the Internet blocked, any kind of news, information or rumour was being passed around by word of mouth. For the past week, the Valley was abuzz with murmurs that arms had been taken away from J&K police personnel and that the Central forces had taken over police stations.

When this correspondent toured the city on August 8 and 9, most policemen were seen wielding polycarbonate lathis. The policemen were

deployed along with the armed Central Police Reserve Force (CRPF) troops and were guarding lanes ringed with coils of concertina fencing. However, the policemen guarding installations like government buildings and those providing security cover to officials were seen carrying weapons. In the past three years, 60 policemen have been killed in militant attacks.

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Uncertain Climate ▶ PAGE 11

## NC mounts challenge in SC

The National Conference (NC) mounted a challenge in the Supreme Court on Saturday to the changes in the status of Jammu and Kashmir. The changes, it said, had taken away the rights of the citizens without their mandate. It said the legislation approved by Parliament and the orders issued by the President were "unconstitutional".  
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# Congress names Sonia as its interim president

Party says she will hold the post until fresh elections

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Ending months of indecision and speculation, the Congress on Saturday named Sonia Gandhi as the interim president of the party to succeed Rahul Gandhi who had put in his papers before the Congress Working Committee (CWC) on May 25.

The decision on Ms. Gandhi's appointment was announced after a marathon second meeting of the CWC, the party's apex decision making body, that stretched for nearly three hours.

**No schedule announced**  
The party said Ms. Gandhi would continue in the post until there are fresh elections but didn't announce a schedule.

The CWC also adopted a resolution to thank Mr. Gandhi for his leadership and efforts to take on the BJP government.

Asked about Mr. Gandhi's mother replacing him, Con-



Sonia Gandhi coming out of the CWC meeting in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## CWC concerned at J&K situation

The CWC on Saturday passed a resolution expressing serious concern over the situation in J&K. Earlier former president Rahul Gandhi said: "It is very important that the Government of India and the Prime Minister makes it very clear and transparent on what exactly is going on in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir."

gress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said she was the only leader who could steer the party out of the crisis.

"Don't take away our right to decide who should lead us," Mr. Surjewala said at a late night press conference.

There were reports that Ms. Gandhi had reluctantly agreed to lead after a consensus eluded the party on a non-Gandhi candidate.

At the CWC meeting earlier in the day, an overwhelming majority wanted

Mr. Gandhi to continue as the party chief, while some pitched for his sister, Priyanka.

The names of Mukul Wasnik, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot were also reportedly mentioned.

Though the CWC had urged him to continue as the party chief, Mr. Gandhi stayed firm on stepping down.

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Resignations Hit Congress in Assam ▶ PAGE 10

# Rains shore up fortunes of reservoirs in 10 days

Idukki, K.R.Sagar and Srisaillam receive steady inflows

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

The monsoon forecast is for lower intensity rainfall from Sunday, but the very heavy to heavy rain in parts of Gujarat, south Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in recent days has brought healthy storage to many reservoirs in the southern States.

Idukki in Kerala, Karnataka's K.R.Sagar and Srisaillam in Andhra Pradesh received steady inflows on Saturday.

Four days of heavy rainfall in Wayanad – which sends water to the Kabini dam – and in the Karnataka ghats eased fears of a deficit in the Cauvery. On August 6, storage in four reservoirs along the river was just 37% of capacity, but by Saturday morning, storage had doubled to 75%. The inflow into K.R.S. dam exceeded one lakh cusecs, enough to fill it in less than three days.

**4% increase overnight**  
Idukki, Kerala's biggest reservoir, improved storage by 4% overnight, touching 34%, which is 503 million cubic metres (MCM) of water against the maximum of 1,460 MCM. Intense rain along the Western Ghats sent big flows into reservoirs



More flow: Water gushing from the Krishnaraja Sagar reservoir in Karnataka on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## 40 feared buried in Kerala village

Two days after a massive landslide struck the hillside village of Kavalappara in Malappuram district of Kerala and the recovery of nine bodies, the villagers' hope of finding 40 persons alive faded by Saturday. The

rescue was suspended following two fresh landslips in the nearby hills in the afternoon. Muddy debris, tough terrain, continuing rain and lack of sophisticated equipment hindered the search.  
PAGE 8

on the Krishna.

Almatti and Basava Sagar dams on the Krishna had inflow and outflow exceeding five lakh cusecs, or, 45 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) of water daily. This surpassed the previous high of 4.5 lakh cusecs in 2005 when large parts of north Karnataka were flooded, said G.S. Srinivas Reddy, Di-

rector, Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre. "Any rain will lead to increased inflow. We expect it to touch six lakh cusecs in the coming days," he said.

Continued on ▶ PAGE 10  
Rain Toll Rises to 57 in Kerala ▶ PAGE 8  
Navy, Army Step Up Rescue in Maharashtra ▶ PAGE 9

# Haryana CM's comment sparks row

Rahul calls Khattar's remark on Kashmiri girls 'despicable'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, while speaking about the low sex ratio in his State at a function, stoked a controversy with his remark that "a few people have started saying that girls can now be brought from Kashmir".

His remark invited criticism from political quarters. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi

tweeted: "Haryana CM Khattar's comment is despicable and shows what years of RSS training does to the mind of a weak, insecure and pathetic man. Women are not assets to be owned by men."

Mr. Khattar tweeted in response: "Weak, insecure and pathetic are adjectives people use for the president of the Congress party."

At a State-level function on Friday, Mr. Khattar said:

"Haryana was infamous due to low birth rate of daughters... Anyone can understand how there could be crises in future if there are fewer girls than boys. So our Minister O.P. Dhankar ji said, we will have to bring them [girls] from Bihar. Now, a few people have started saying Kashmir has been opened, we will bring them from there."

DCW Seeks FIR ▶ PAGE 3

# State OMCs to buy biodiesel made from used cooking oil

Govt. pushes for green fuel as FSSAI order cracks down on reusing oil

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN  
NEW DELHI

In a bid to encourage the biofuel sector, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday announced that the state-run oil marketing companies would procure the entire supply of biodiesel produced from used cooking oil for a three-year period.

The move, announced on World Biofuel Day, means that biodiesel plants using used cooking oil as their raw material will be assured that

their entire production will be procured by the oil marketing companies to be blended with normal diesel. The scheme is being launched in 100 cities across the country.

**To pay producers**  
Under the scheme, the OMCs – Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum – will pay biodiesel producers ₹51 per litre in the first year, ₹52.7 per litre in the second, and ₹54.5 per litre in the third year. The oil companies will also bear the



The scheme is being launched in 100 cities across the country.

cost of transportation and GST for the first year.

The Minister's announcement comes just a day after the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

(FSSAI) directed Food Safety Commissioners to ensure that Food Business Operators (FBOs), whose consumption of edible oils for frying is more than 50 litres per day, stop reusing the oil more than three times.

Mr. Pradhan also launched a 'Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO)' sticker and a phone app to enable the collection of used cooking oil. Restaurants and hotels interested in supplying used cooking oil can affix the sticker to show availability.

After extending the deadline twice for FBOs consuming more than 50 litres of oil a day for frying to

strictly maintain the usage records and stop reusing the oil more than three times, an August 9 order from the FSSAI has directed Food Safety Commissioners to conduct inspections and ensure that the oil does not enter the food chain again. The order was issued by FSSAI Joint Director (Regulatory Compliance) Pushp Vanam.

The order says all FBOs should compulsorily dispose of their used cooking oil to authorised collection agencies or aggregators and lists eight biodiesel manufacturers enrolled with agency so far.

(With inputs from Afshan Yasmeen in Bengaluru)

# Bringing home closer to jailed foreigners

HC orders arrangement for 'speediest communication' based on amicus curiae report stating that 75% of them struggle to gain access to their embassy

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

For many foreign national prisoners (FNP) lodged in jails across India, a common grievance is that many a time their consulate officer don't come and they have no one to connect them with their family back home.

This state of affair is set to change with the Delhi High Court last month ordering the Ministry of External Affairs and authorities of the Central government to have "speediest communication with the embassy of the respective countries of the foreign inmates who are in jail".

The High Court gave the order based on a report by advocate Ajay Verma who was appointed to assist the court as an amicus curiae in a public interest litigation initiated last year after receiving a letter from the foreign women inmates narrating their plight.

Mr. Verma, who visited all the jails in the Capital and

interacted with all the foreign national inmates, found that 75% of them face struggle in accessing their embassy or consulate concerned after their arrest. As per his report, there were 378 foreign prisoners, including a few convicts, lodged in Delhi prisons. Out of them about 54 were female prisoners.

## Who are FNPs?

FNPs refer to prisoners who do not carry the passport of the country in which they are imprisoned. They are entitled to the basic minimum guarantees as enshrined and carefully set out in the Constitution of India.

As per Prison Statistics of India 2015, there are 6,185 FNPs in India. There are no official data for more recent years.

However, earlier this year, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) published a report titled 'Strangers to Justice', in which they tallied the number of FNPs across 22 States



Several foreign nationals are lodged at the Lampur Detention Facility in Narela. • FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

and 4 Union Territories to 3,908 based on RTI responses.

Mr. Verma said FNPs by virtue of their peculiar status are to be treated with care and caution to avoid any possible discrimination that they may be subjected to during their time in prison.

The report said most foreign nationals who have been apprehended or detained in Delhi, whether upon having committed an offence or for any other just reason, have often and continue to find themselves at

the receiving end of the criminal justice system. They often face a range of difficulties due to differences in language, culture, customs, religion or because of lack of family ties locally and contact with the outside world, it added.

## Feel discriminated

Mr. Verma, in his report, stated that 90% of the foreign prisoners who he interacted with conveyed that they faced difficulty in securing bail merely because of their special status or due to "ever-inherent specific

concern" that they may be difficult to locate if they jump bail.

The report also mentioned that 40%-50% of the FNP population in jails alleged that Indian prisoners are able to secure bail more easily even if they have committed the same offence.

Mr. Verma said that our legal system does not create distinction between Indian nationals and foreign nationals, especially when it comes to grant of bail. He urged the High Court to frame guidelines to guide the trial courts on this issue.

He also requested that in case FNPs are not granted bail their cases may be expedited.

## Intimation upon arrest

The CHRI report had stated that only 5.7% of FNPs in India - 222 out of 3,908 - have ever received consular access.

The Model Police Manual, 2016 prepared by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) provides that when foreign nationals are arrested on major criminal or civil charges,

it is possible that the Foreign Diplomatic/Consular Missions in India may wish to assist the nationals of their countries in regard to their defence before a court of law.

Mr. Verma said as soon as a foreign national is arrested in a major crime, the fact, with a brief description of the offence should be brought to the notice of the MEA through the State government by the DGP/CP concerned.

Mr. Verma suggested that every police officer across NCT of Delhi must be made

aware of the mandatory requirements and the form in which such process would be required to be carried out.

Based upon the request received from inmates, the MEA may request the consulates to visit their nationals to enable them to discharge their duties under Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

## Timely aid

Many FNPs complained that during trial they did not understand the proceedings due to difference in language. In such a situation, Mr. Verma said the FNP concerned is mandatorily provided with a designated certified translator either from their embassy concerned or from the state itself. This, he said, was necessary to provide the FNP with correct information about the grounds of arrest and knowledge of the entailing process.

## Contact with family

Each FNP, just like any other prisoner in India, is entitled to right to communicate with family and friends. Although the jail manuals contain provisions for facilitating contact with family for other prisoners, the same provisions either do not extend to FNPs or are too cumbersome to follow.

After the High Court took cognisance of the issue, now all foreigners are being allowed to make calls once in a week for 10 minutes at their own expenses. Mr. Verma said Indian nationals are allowed to speak five minutes a day.

Following the report, the High Court has requested the authorities to consider as to whether they can permit two calls in a week for 10 minutes each to the foreign inmates launched in jails.

## DELHI Timings

SUNDAY, AUG. 11		
RISE	05:48	SET 19:05
RISE	16:07	SET 01:56
MONDAY, AUG. 12		
RISE	05:49	SET 19:04
RISE	17:00	SET 02:45
TUESDAY, AUG. 13		
RISE	05:49	SET 19:03
RISE	17:43	SET 03:37

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	34	27
Safdarjung	34	27
Palam	34	27

**Delhi Palam Today**  
34°C Warm and humid weather with cloudy sky to continue. Patchy light rain will occur at scattered places.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
34°C A cloudy and humid morning turns day warm. Short spell of light rain will affect at some places.

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Air quality of Delhi-NCR	
Delhi	59
Gurgaon	35
Ghaziabad	62
Faridabad	27
Noida	39
Greater Noida	62
Good	0-50
Satisfactory	51-100
Moderate	101-200
Poor	201-300
Very poor	301-400
Severe	>401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

## DELHI TODAY

**Talk:** 24th Prem Bhatia Memorial Lecture 2019: "India's Contemporary Security Challenges" by Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd.), former Chief of Naval Staff, Chair: Ambassador G. Parthasarathy at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), 6.30 p.m.

**Talk:** Swami Prabhudananda will speak on Katho Upanishad at Ramana Kendra, Lodhi Road, 5 p.m.

**Book Discussion:** Sanjay Suri, author of the book, 'A Gandhian Affair - India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema' will read select texts from the book and discuss at India International Centre (IIC), 6 p.m.

**Dance:** The Bharatanatyam Arangeyam of Lipi Chawla, a disciple of Guru Priya Venkataraman at Triveni Auditorium, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205 Tansen Marg, 6 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Confluence...", a solo painting exhibition by Meha Seth at Experimental Art Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Screening:** "Imperial City of Kanchipuram" an English documentary film directed by historian Benoy K Behl will be screening at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

(Mail your listings for this column at cityed@delhi@thehindu.co.in)

# Mob assaults man over rumours of transporting slaughtered cattle

Five, including woman, arrested for attacking contractor; search on to nab others

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**NOIDA**  
A contractor engaged by Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation was assaulted by a mob in Greater Noida over rumours that he was carrying slaughtered bovine, officials said on Saturday.

Five of the accused have been arrested, while a search is on for others, the police said.

The contractor, Mahendra, was carrying carcasses of three cows, two calves and 12 buffalo claves for disposing them when he was attacked around 9 p.m. on Friday near Gaur City roundabout, the police said.

"The contractor was carrying the dead animals with the

**The contractor was carrying the dead animals with the permission from officials concerned and taking them in a vehicle with an attached trolley to the dead animal disposal plant near the Chijarsi river**

A POLICE SPOKESPERSON

permission from officials concerned and taking them in a vehicle with an attached trolley to the dead animal disposal plant near the Chijarsi river," a police spokesperson said.

"Anti-social elements inter-

cepted the vehicle near Gaur City and damaged the vehicle, breaking its windshield and overturned the vehicle. They also attacked the driver," the spokesperson said.

He said two of the cows belonged to an NGO president and a Delhi High Court lawyer, both of whom have told the police that their bovines had died and were being taken for disposal by the contractor through the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation.

"Despite permission, the anti-social elements spread the rumour of animal slaughter and attacked the contractor," the police official said.

When the matter was reported to Bisrakh police station, a team soon reached the

spot and five accused, including a woman, were arrested, he said.

## Booked for rioting

An FIR has been registered against them under Indian Penal Code sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault on public servant to deter them from performing duty), 341 (wrongful restraint), 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), among others.

They have also been booked under provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, he said.

# Ambedkar University assistant professor robbed of valuables

Police registered an e-FIR of theft instead of robbery: victim

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old assistant professor with Ambedkar University was allegedly attacked and robbed by unidentified men at an underpass in Kashmere Gate, said the police on Saturday.

The incident was reported on August 8. The victim alleged that the police had registered an e-FIR of theft, instead of robbery.

The complainant Taposik Banerjee in his police statement mentioned that around 9.30 a.m. he came out of the Red Fort metro station and was walking towards Ambedkar university when the incident happened. When he was pass-

ing through the railway underpass near GPO, he was attacked by three-four men. One of the attackers choked him till he fell unconscious.

"When I gained consciousness I found myself lying on the road. My mobile phone and wallet were missing. I couldn't recall whether the attackers were on a motorcycle or they just ran away. I went to the police booth located nearby where I narrated the incident," said Mr. Banerjee.

Following this, two policemen went to the location where he was robbed. They then generated an e-FIR. Later, when he checked the e-FIR, he found that the poli-

cemen had registered it as a case of theft.

"The crime took place at a location which falls under the high-security zone due to Independence Day celebration," added Mr. Banerjee.

## Suspicion on addicts

The police suspect the role of drug addicts in the case. They have questioned several suspects in connection with this.

DCP (North) Nupur Prasad said that they have added IPC Section 392 (robbery) to the case. "A senior police officer is in touch with the victim. The case is under investigation," said Ms. Prasad.

# Passengers leave for Lahore as Pak. suspends bus service

Bus left from Ambedkar Stadium Terminal

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Two passengers were on-board the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) bus which departed for Lahore from the Capital early on Saturday morning, sources claimed, even as the Pakistan government, later in the day, announced its decision to discontinue the Delhi-Lahore bus service.

In addition to the Delhi-Lahore service, two similar services between Pakistan and Amritsar were also suspended.

The bus departed from the Ambedkar Stadium Terminal here as part of the Delhi Transport Corporation's (DTC) Delhi-Lahore service which commenced in February 1999, but was suspended after the 2001 Parliament attack before being restarted in July, 2003.

According to a Delhi government official, the decision to continue or suspend

the bus service from India's end rested with the Ministry of External Affairs.

"A PTDC bus with two passengers left for Lahore at 6 a.m. from the Ambedkar Stadium Bus Terminal; three passengers were on-board a DTC bus coming from Lahore to Delhi," said a government source.

The bus service between Lahore and Amritsar in addition to the one between Nankana Sahib and Amritsar was also suspended as per Government of Pakistan Ministry of Communication statement.

## Informed telephonically

According to sources, the PTDC had conveyed its decision to suspend the service from its end to the DTC telephonically in addition to informing the authorities concerned about a formal, written communication in this regard which it could expect later in the day.

# 4 dead as autorickshaw crashes into mini truck

Another passenger battling for life

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GURUGRAM

Four people were killed while one more was injured when their autorickshaw crashed into a mini truck after being hit from behind by a speeding dumper, the police said on Saturday. The accident took place on the Vatika flyover on the Jaipur-Delhi NH 8 around 10 p.m. on Friday night, they added.

Sarfaraaj Alam (40), Dhirendra Kumar (27) and Satya Prakash Maurya, residents of Bihar, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh respectively, died on the spot. The driver of the auto also died in the accident but his identity was not yet known, officials said.

Another passenger, Parmanveer Singh from Rajasthan, suffered critical injuries and is battling for life, they added.

"The victims are employed in different companies in IMT Manesar," Sajjan

**The auto driver managed to control his vehicle but driver of the speeding vehicle failed to apply the brakes in time**

SAJJAN SINGH

Sub-inspector

Singh, sub-inspector of Kherki Dhaura police station said. They had boarded a shared auto from IMT Manesar Chowk for Rajiv Chowk, he added.

"Due to light traffic at night, the auto was going at a high speed and a mini truck plying ahead of it was also speeding. The driver of mini truck suddenly applied brakes and the auto driver did the same to avoid an accident. "The auto driver managed to control his vehicle but driver of the speeding dumper failed to apply the brakes in time," Mr. Singh said.

# DU principal withdraws books, paper for 'review'

Aryabhata College's Manoj Sinha was accused of plagiarism

SIDHARTH RAVI  
NEW DELHI

Aryabhata College principal Manoj Sinha has withdrawn at least three books and one journal paper for "review" after complaints of plagiarism were lodged against him with the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University.

Five years after first publishing the books by Coimbatore-based Bonfring Publishers and the Journal Global Journal for Multidisciplinary Studies, link to the publications on the websites of both publishers read: "Withdrawn by Author for Revision at 9th August 2019".

The move comes about a week after *The Hindu's* report on a 242-page complaint of plagiarism filed by a whistleblower with the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University.

on June 18.

The complaint served through a Supreme Court advocate alleged plagiarism among at least 12 works by Mr. Sinha, including counts of self-plagiarism. The complaint also brings to notice an application by Mr. Sinha to the post of Principal of Hindu College in 2017 in which he claimed "Academic Performance Indicator" or API points. A copy of the same report was also provided to the Delhi University Teachers Association (DUTA) which wrote to the V-C demanding an independent inquiry.

## 'Similarity Index'

Out of 12 allegations of plagiarism made by the complainant, at least six instances had been verified after generating Turnitin reports

in July which showed a "Similarity Index" between 50-90%. These included the three books and one journal paper, which have been withdrawn. The publications made available in the whistleblower's complaint were also authenticated with hard copies of the books and soft copies of the paper downloaded from the journal's website. And the text of the works was compared to the sources of plagiarism for a final check.

Nearly two months since filing of the complaint, it is currently unclear what action has been taken by the university so far. While the V-C was unreachable for comment, sources said a committee has been formed to look into the complaints. The committee's report is awaited.

# Fight inside gym leaves 4 hurt; two cross cases filed

The duo was involved in fights earlier

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Four persons were injured when a fight broke out between two groups at a gym in east Delhi's Jyoti Nagar on Friday, the police said on Saturday.

The incident happened when at 8.45 a.m. when a man identified as Harish Choudhary from Gokalpuri Delhi and another, Deepak Rana, who was also from the same area, were at the gym in Jyoti Nagar.

DCP (North-East) Atul Thakur said all of a sudden an argument broke out between the duo when Deepak attacked Harish with an iron rod. "Harish also hit Deepak. Meanwhile, two more persons - Subhash and Devender came in to support Deepak and attacked Harish. The entire incident was recorded in the CCTV cameras installed in the gym," said Mr. Thakur.

A PCR call was received



A CCTV grab of the incident inside the gym.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and the police reached the spot and took injured to GTB Hospital. The investigation officer recorded the statement of both the parties, the police added.

Mr. Thakur said both the parties were rivals and in the past also, they had arguments and fights.

Harish is a civic body contractor while Deepak, Devender and Subhash deal in various businesses. The police have registered two cross cases against Deepak and Harish Choudhary at Jyoti Nagar police station.

# DCW seeks FIR against Khattar, Goel for 'misogynistic' remarks

BJP MP asks commission chief to have 'clean thoughts'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women on Saturday wrote to the police seeking registration of an FIR against Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Khattar and BJP MP Vijay Goel for their alleged misogynistic remarks against Kashmiri women.

## Voice of women

In the letter, it said: "Such statements by those in high constitutional offices reinforce the notions of a patriarchal society and severely undermine the value and voice of women and girls."

The DCW said the notice was issued to the force after the commission took suo motu cognisance of reports pertaining to Mr. Goel using pictures of "Kashmiri girls" on hoardings near his residence and statements



DCW Chairperson Swati Maliwal.

made by Mr. Khattar.

"The commission strongly recommends immediate registration of FIR against the said office-bearers," the letter read while stating that such "actions may end up inciting violence in the already sensitive area of Kashmir."

DCW Chairperson Swati Maliwal said, "At a time when the entire country is standing behind Prime Mi-

nister Narendra Modi for taking steps against Article 370, some men are trying to sabotage his efforts. Through their statements, they are encouraging others to treat women as assets. This needs to stop immediately."

Responding to the letter, Mr. Goel took to Twitter and said Ms. Maliwal should have "clean thoughts."

"Fearing the public of Delhi, they supported the revocation of Article 370 but the discomfort of Mr. Kejriwal's team is clearly visible. These statements symbolise the disappointment palpable among anti-nationals [sic]," read Mr. Goel's tweet.

However, Ms. Maliwal in a tweet responded to Mr. Goel and said "nationalism runs in my blood and my constant work for my country is testimony..."

# Four men arrested for robbing businessman of ₹60,000

Incident happened in Rohini: one accused shot at victim's help

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Four men have been arrested for allegedly robbing a businessman on gunpoint in Rohini's Sector 18, the police said on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Dinesh (30), Lakshay (22), Hardeep (27) and Robin (28), they said. DCP (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said, in July, a man complained of being robbed of ₹60,000 in Rohini.

The complainant the incident happened when he was sitting in his car and his help Pankaj was closing the shutter of his shop. Three men

came to the spot in a car and robbed him of the bag. They also fired at Pankaj before fleeing, the officer said.

During the investigation, around 170 CCTVs were scanned when the car used in the commission of the crime was spotted but the accused could not be seen. They then got a tip-off about the accused and a trap was laid following which they were nabbed.

During interrogation, it was revealed that Robin was the driver and used to supply cold drinks in the area. He had identified the shop for robbery. They have defined

the role of each member during robbery.

## A gold medallist

"Dinesh is the maternal uncle of Robin and was in dire need of money. Lakshay had won a gold medal in Thailand in Indo-Thai Championship in 2017. He had joined the gang out of adventure and is the one, who had fired at the servant," said the DCP, adding, "He used to boast about the influence of his brother-in-law who is a lawyer. He had given assurance to his co-accused that his brother would take care of all legal matter," the DCP added.

# Triple talaq: woman says she, her child were thrown out of house

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

The woman who lodged the first complaint under the new triple talaq law here said her husband, Atir Shamim, and in-laws pushed her out of the house soon after the man pronounced talaq three times.

"I was thrown out of the house with my six-year-old child and was not even allowed to pack my bags. After I came to my parents' home, my in-laws pressured me to perform *iddat* [period observed by a Muslim woman after divorce, during which she cannot marry another man]. I resisted saying that instant triple talaq was not valid under the new law and they started sending the fatwa via WhatsApp and other modes," said Raima Yahya, 29. DCP (North) Nupur Prasad

said a case under Section 4 of The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 was registered and the husband was arrested on Friday. Mr. Shamim managed to secure bail on Saturday.

Under Section 4 of the new Act - passed by Parliament on July 30 - a Muslim husband who pronounces instant triple talaq is liable to be punished by imprisonment up to three years and a fine.

The police said the triple talaq order reads that it shall be deemed to have come into effect from September 19, 2018.

Ms. Yahya, in her complaint, has sought action against Mr. Shamim and his family members under the new law. She has also asked for maintenance for herself and her child.

# 2 criminals nabbed in separate cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GHAZIABAD

Two criminals were held after separate encounters here, said officers on Saturday. Both of them and head con-

stable Pankaj constable

were injured, they said. The first incident took place near Kavi Nagar police station area while the second took place near Loni police

station. The arrested have been identified as Dharmendra and Vakeel, both were carrying a reward of respectively ₹50,000 and ₹25,000 respectively.

## No bullies



A bullock cart on Zakhira Flyover in the city. The maximum temperature in the national capital on Saturday settled at 34.3 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the year, even as high humidity levels caused discomfort to the people. The Met Department has forecast a generally cloudy sky with light rain for Sunday. The maximum and minimum temperatures will hover around 35 degrees Celsius and 28 degrees Celsius respectively. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

# Criminal and his family members attack constables with chilli powder

Policemen had to fire shots in the air to save themselves

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 31-year-old man and his family members have been arrested for allegedly attacking two police constables with chilli powder in Shahdara, the police said on Saturday.

The policemen had gone to arrest the man, Sajjan, when the incident happened. The attack was so violent that the officers had to fire shots in the air to save themselves, they said.

More than 16 criminal cases have been registered against him in the national

**More than 16 criminal cases have been registered against the 31-year-old accused, Sajjan, in the national capital**

POLICE OFFICER

capital, the police said.

On Friday, two constables of Vivek Vihar police station were on patrolling when they came to know that Sajjan was in the city, a senior officer said.

After the attack, the pol-

ice reached the spot and nabbed the accused.

A case under the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code has been registered at Vivek Vihar police station. There are several cases against the accused and his family members registered here in Shahdara district, they added.

On August 2, a policeman fired a round of bullets into the air in south Delhi's Madanpur Khadar after he was allegedly manhandled and chased by a group of suspected bootleggers.

# Delhi CM's PSO dies of heart attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's Personal Security Officer Dhirender Rawat passed away after suffering a heart attack, an official said on Saturday.

A Delhi government official said that Rawat, a Sub-Inspector of Delhi Police, died after suffering a heart attack at his home on Friday night.

The Chief Minister attended the cremation of the personal security officer at Nigam Bodh Ghat.

# Gurugram inspector held for rape, blackmail

Victim furnishes video, photos in support of her allegations

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

A police inspector posted as Station House Officer, Sadar police station in Gurugram, has been arrested for allegedly raping a woman several times over the past one month. The accused, Dalbir Singh, allegedly recorded the act and threatened to make it public.

The officer was arrested by the Jind police on Saturday, a day after he was booked for rape under the Indian Penal Code and Section 67A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

Jind Superintendent of Police Ashwin Shanvi told *The Hindu* that the victim had furnished a video and some photos in support of her allegations. He said prima facie the charges made against the accused seemed true.

**He [police inspector] was produced before the court and remanded in 3-day police custody**

ASHWIN SHANVI  
Jind Superintendent of Police

“He was produced before the court and remanded in police custody for three days,” said Mr. Shanvi.

The 35-year-old complainant alleged that she had come in contact with the accused in May this year at the women police station in Gurugram where she had gone in connection with a case she had filed against her husband. She had approached the Delhi police with her complaint but the matter was transferred to Gurugram.

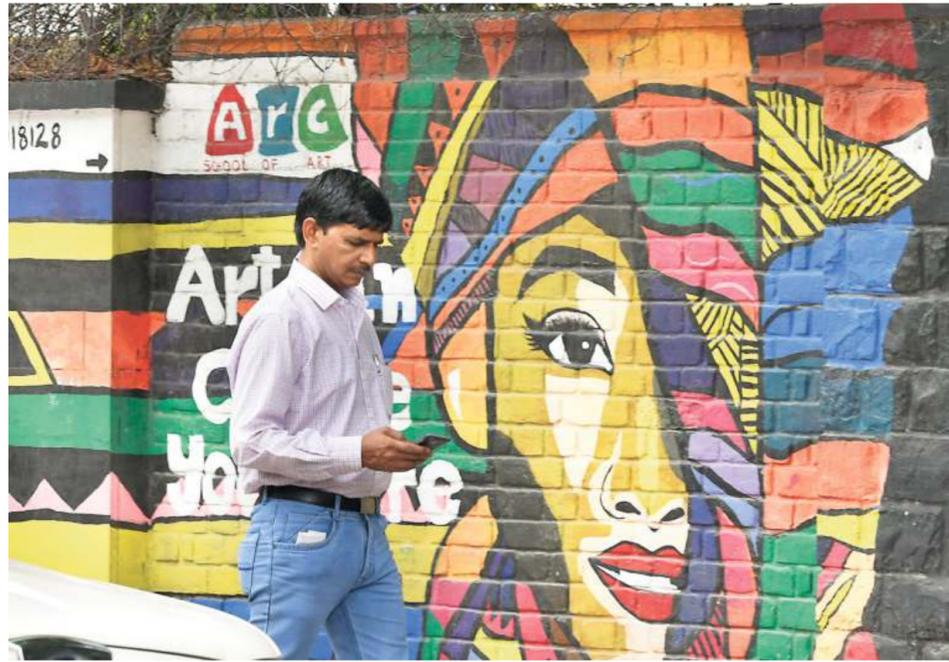
Mr. Singh, a resident of

Pindara in Jind, allegedly offered to help the victim on the pretext that both belonged to the same district. The two exchanged phone numbers and the police officer often called her. He also helped her secure a job at a hotel in Gurugram.

On July 10, Mr. Singh offered her a ride to Gurugram from the Jind bus stand in his car, but pulled over on the outskirts of the city and allegedly raped her inside the vehicle. He then called the woman to his house in Gurugram the next day to “talk it over”. He allegedly spiked her cold drink and again raped her. He also recorded the act and sent the video on her mobile number.

The officer then allegedly raped the woman several times by threatening to make the video public.

## Motion pictures



A man walks past street art done by students at Delhi University's North Campus. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## Sheila Dikshit stood by me in my darkest years: Sonia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi paid a moving tribute to Sheila Dikshit on Saturday, saying the former Delhi Chief Minister stood by her side in her “darkest years” and had also urged her to take up the Congress party’s presidency.

Recalling her association with Dikshit, she said the former had guided her like an elder sister rather than a party colleague. “My association with Sheila is longer than my political career. She stood by my side in my darkest years,” she said.

## ‘Fearing imminent defeat, AAP raking up ballot paper issue’

BJP says Kejriwal looking for excuses ahead of Assembly polls

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party was raking up the issue of paper ballots “apprehending imminent defeat” in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections.

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Vijender Gupta argued that the reiteration by AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh of holding elections through paper ballots showed how “nervous” Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP had started “looking for excuses for the defeat in advance.”

“Even before the Lok Sabha elections, different politi-

cal parties including AAP had complained against the misuse of EVMs in the electoral process. They had complained that the result of the election can be manipulated through tampering of EVMs,” Mr. Gupta argued.

“The Election Commission of India had then challenged all political parties, including AAP, to come and prove their allegations,” Mr. Gupta Both the Election Commission and the Supreme Court have rejected the demand for holding elections with paper ballots instead of EVMs, said Mr.

Gupta.

With technological advancements, he argued, the “nation is moving ahead toward paperless functioning. Even the Delhi Legislative Assembly has initiated steps to become paperless. But on the contrary, AAP was demanding to return to the stone age.”

‘Back to stone age’

“Voters are now well aware of the utility of EVMs and they do not want to go back to Stone Age for voting...it was by virtue of these EVMs only that Aam Aadmi Party got brutal majority by winning 67 out of 70 seats in the last assembly elections,” he said.

## Builder jailed in cheque bounce case

Developer asked to pay ₹9 lakh to complainant

NIRNIMESH KUMAR  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has dismissed an appeal by a builder against his conviction and awarded him a six-month jail term in a cheque bounce case. The builder has also been asked to pay ₹9 lakh to the complainant.

The complainant had booked a plot with the builder’s company, Om Krishna Developers Pvt. Ltd., and paid ₹3.78 lakh for it in

2010. The builder raised a further demand of ₹1.34 lakh for registration in 2012 but the complainant refused to pay as he found out that no development work had been carried out on the plot.

Later, the complainant came to know that the builder did not have any land, so, he demanded his money back.

The builder issued a cheque for ₹5,12,420 in fa-

vour of the complainant but when the latter submitted the payment instrument to the bank concerned for encashment, it was returned as the builder’s accounts did not have sufficient money.

“Complainant examined himself as a witness. He categorically stated that there was no development at the site. This statement has not been rebutted by the appellants,” the judge said.

## Registration for DDA e-auction to begin on Tuesday

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Registrations for the sixth phase of e-auction for vacant plots here will begin on August 13, said Delhi Development Authority officials.

The auctions will take place from September 11-13. Interested stakeholders can get registered till September 6, they said.

Under the sixth phase, the DDA is set to offer 100 residential and industrial plots and 50 institutional plots. Additionally, another 100 vacant plots for the installation of mobile towers, 30 commercial plots, 85 plots for shops and office spaces will also be on offer.

While e-auction for the residential and commercial plots is scheduled on September 11, the one for the institutional and industrial plots will be on September 12. As a first, the DDA has also introduced a reserved category for the e-auctions, which is only applicable to shops. However, for this category, the urban body will conduct a draw, which will be on September 16.

The first phase of the e-auction was launched by the DDA in December last and the e-auctions were held in January this year. In the five phases conducted subsequently, the DDA had collected over ₹2500 crore, officials said. Following a low response to the institutional plots, the DDA had said concessions would be provided for the category to make it “more attractive” to interested stakeholders.

## Alka Lamba protests outside CM residence

Rebel AAP MLA alleged Kejriwal stopped installation of CCTV cameras in her constituency

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Rebel Aam Aadmi Party MLA Alka Lamba on Saturday protested outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s residence stating that the latter has stopped the installation of CCTV cameras in her Assembly constituency.

Protest in 2016

She said she was among the AAP leaders who had earlier gone to protest outside Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal’s residence for installation of the CCTV cameras in 2016.

“It was told that there will be a benefit if we install cameras close to the election. On July 14, 2019, one camera was installed in



AAP MLA Alka Lamba during the protest in New Delhi on Saturday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Chandni Chowk but since then, there has not been any installation. A girl was raped and when asked, it was said that the Chief Mi-

nister has stopped the installation of CCTV cameras here,” she said.

She alleged that this has been done so that people

turn against her. “If voices from my constituency are being muzzled, then let me remind that Delhi elections are not far away,” she said.

## ‘People should be made aware of their rights’

Justice Uday Umesh Lalit says students should come forward to enlighten the poor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MURTHAL

Justice Uday Umesh Lalit of the Supreme Court on Saturday stressed the need to make people aware of and responsibilities.

He was speaking at the ninth annual function of the Student’s Legal Literacy Mission, organised by the Haryana State Legal Services Authority (HALSA) and the School Education Department, at Deen Bandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology in Murthal.

“Besides their rights, people should also be made aware of their responsibilities enshrined in our Constitution so as to make them responsible towards society,” he said. Underlining the significance of legal literacy, he said the knowledge about the rights made a difference to the life of an individual. He advised the students to



be aware of their surroundings besides attaining a complete knowledge of their rights. He said the empowerment came with knowledge, so the students should come forward to enlighten the poor. Speaking on the occasion, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal said legal, moral and education of nationalism should be imparted to students for building a strong and prosperous society.

He said while legal education would help in making people aware of their rights,

moral education would inculcate high values among them, bringing down the number of litigations. He said the education of nationalism assumed a special significance as a large number of people had sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the country.

Article 370

“Had the education of nationalism been imparted earlier, it would not have taken 68 years to revoke provisions under Article 370 of the Constitution with regard to Jammu and Kashmir,” he said. Earlier, the Chief Minister inaugurated a convention centre at Deen Bandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology, which was constructed at ₹42.08 crore.

He also laid the stone of an eco-friendly classroom

complex on the university campus. The complex will come up at ₹14.25 crore. Justice Surya Kant of the Supreme Court described legal literacy as a powerful weapon that enabled people to take the benefit of the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

He said the rights could only be translated into reality if people were made aware of these. If you are fully aware of their rights and obligations, you would not allow any type of discrimination or injustice with your parents, brothers, sisters or neighbours, he said. Krishna Murari, Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court and patron-in-chief, HALSA, said legal knowledge played a vital role in the social transformation and uplift of members of society.

# When Jammu and Kashmir's geography became history

Peerzada Ashiq, *The Hindu's* Srinagar correspondent, recounts the four days when Kashmir was blacked out

His last dispatch from Srinagar came late on August 4, reporting the house arrest of former Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti and other leaders. Soon after, Kashmir was put under lockdown. He could not send any dispatches since then for lack of connectivity. With some ease in restrictions, *The Hindu's* Srinagar Correspondent could recount the gruelling days as Jammu and Kashmir's geography became history — when there was no means to know about the situation in J&K, or outside.

## AUGUST 5: 'Are we citizens or slaves now?'

The previous night, in fact, the whole of August 4 was gruelling for one and all in the Kashmir Valley. Fast changing news cycle — enhancing security grid, panic buying by locals and hyper political activity — kept all the reporters on their toes.

In between filing the dispatches, refuelling my car was the top priority. I managed after waiting in a long queue. Besides, a journalist friend also shared his stock with me.

Now, spending one hour with my expecting wife and two-year-old son became necessary. The first duty was to station my wife close to a hospital well stocked with baby food. It's not easy to keep emergency services going in volatile Kashmir; a

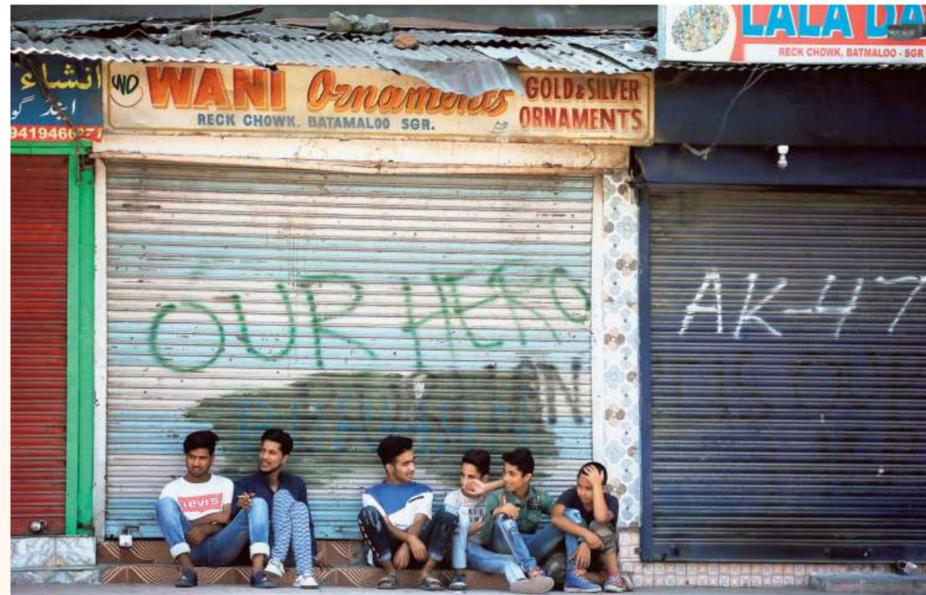
fact taught by the uncertain and volatile times of the past three decades. Rumours by now were turning fast into well-founded fears about what was impending: a change to over 4,000 years of history and geography of Jammu and Kashmir.

As the sun was setting behind the mighty Pir Panjal range and visible from the Dal lake, the anxiety of the impending dark night was never this frightful, not even in the 1990s. A sense of foreboding had engulfed the Valley. The dimension of the change to J&K was unknown though.

The reports of the leaders of the regional parties, like Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, being rounded up in the midnight raids was the last news alert I managed to send across to my office around 12.20 a.m. Another alert: "Let's avoid using the word 'curfew' but 'restrictions' was not delivered because of the phased withdrawal of all means of communication lines in Kashmir, including the Internet, by 12.30 a.m.

Not many slept in Kashmir. People kept calling friends and loved ones, till the lines dropped completely into a dead silence. Many conversations, like mine with my wife, were cut short. We failed to bid the usual goodnight to each other.

The mobile phones turned into torches and



A group of boys sit in front of closed shops during restrictions in Srinagar on August 6. ■ REUTERS

cameras now. All cable channels turned into black screens. There was no means to know about the situation in J&K or outside.

It was unusually hot on Monday morning. The morning bread was available in the colony. However, breakfast was hard to gulp down. There was anxiety to know what has actually happened to J&K. The streets were the only means of communication left now. I stepped out and was spotted by a neighbour, a mechanic, who halted me with a loud proclamation: "Dafah 370 phutrovukh (Article 370 has been broken)."

He had heard it on his

old-fashioned transistor.

There was need to double-check what sounded a fake news on the face of it. I reached a three-way street leading to the main road at Srinagar's Hawal area, where I reside in the old city. A group of four people were sharing bits and pieces of information they gathered since the morning from different sources, including direct-to-home services.

The news, one neighbour said, brought more shame than shock to people in Kashmir, which has witnessed several decades of struggle for more rights to protect its distinct identity,

geographical as well as political. "Are we citizens or slaves now," one neighbour enquired.

## AUGUST 6: Memories of 1953 and the 1990s

It was unusually silent on Tuesday. The milkmen failed to deliver their daily supply. The colony suddenly saw young and old forming circles for a group discussion. While the older ones recalled the episode of 1953, when popular Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah was arrested in August, and its aftermath. The younger ones recalled the 1990s. It seems August 5 has become third major rupture in J&K's

politics, which is for sure going to redefine its politics, people and times for ever.

On the main road, security forces stood like a wall to disallow any movement, except emergencies such as expectant mothers, cancer patients and funeral ceremonies of relatives. It was not an easy duty for the security personnel, who complained that "no lunch was served on Monday by the authorities". A CRPF jawan said they faced stones in ones and twos. "We hope it ends soon," said a jawan from Andhra Pradesh.

A group of youth tried to encircle five gun-toting security men on Tuesday

evening in Hawal's Firdous Cinema, which closed in 1990 never to screen any movie ever again. The incident took place when the security men were withdrawing around sunset after the day's gruelling duty. It was reinforcements rushed to the spot that saved the men on duty. A few youth suffered pellet injuries in this exchange.

Local mosques also started to arrange special prayers, *Nimazi Taubah* (prayers for forgiveness).

"Allah has put us in the most difficult situation. Prayers are needed like never before," said one.

## AUGUST 7: 'It is an unprecedented betrayal'

The authorities allowed beaming of NDTV on the cable and other entertainment channels. Music is back.

There is a sudden exodus of around 2,000 migrants from our mohalla. Hawal is known to host these skilled and unskilled labourers for three decades now, with separate buildings for them. "Some youth came and asked us to leave. They said 'you may claim the building ownership now'," said Nareh, a labourer. He was carrying bedding and stove on his head.

As details of the amendment to Article 370 and the Union Territory status was getting clear, mosque discussions were getting more agitated.

"Are we slaves that we deserve no Statehood? A civilisation with 5,000 years of history without geography and history now," Bashir-ud-

Din, a colony elder, blurted out in disgust, showing a local daily that continues to be in circulation but mainly carrying reports filed by agencies than staff reporters.

Outside the mosque, the youngsters are more agitated than the older folk. "It is an unprecedented betrayal. It needs an unprecedented response too," said a young engineering graduate.

## AUGUST 8: Silent streets, agitated homes

The attitude of the security forces has changed by now.

Locals riding bikes were allowed to fetch essentials from shops functioning from the houses.

Early morning and late evening are preferred times to escape any stone battles in the old city.

Vegetables no more come from across the Jawahar Tunnel but from the backwaters of the Dal lake, which covers many parts of the old city, making eatables available for now. But with autumn setting next month, it will dry up too. However, cereals are going off the breakfast table. ATMs in our area are either inaccessible due to security arrangements or running dry. "No cash vans are coming to the old city," said Basheer Ahmad, an ATM guard of J&K Bank in Hawal.

Meals are getting simpler. Mutton, a staple diet for locals, is no more available.

The debates on the scrapping of special status are getting more and more animated within families, but streets are silent.

## Taunted by neighbours, minor gang-rape victim kills self in U.P.

She was sexually assaulted by three teenagers on July 13

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KANPUR

A 13-year-old gang-rape victim allegedly killed herself, the police said on Saturday, with her family claiming that the girl was upset that the culprits had not been arrested and that some women in the neighbourhood were taunting her.

The girl was allegedly abducted and raped by three teens on July 13. She was found dead in her room on Friday night.

Her body has been sent for a post-mortem examina-

tion, said Superintendent of Police (East) Raj Kumar Agarwal. No note has been recovered from the room.

An inquiry has been ordered into the matter and senior officials have visited the family, Mr. Agarwal said.

### Four suspended

The SP added that Station House Officer Satya Dev Sharma, Cooperganj police post in-charge Umesh Kumar, Head Constable Urmed Singh and Constable Sanjiv Gautam have been suspended for negligence in

discharging official duties.

He also confirmed that an FIR on charges of abetment of suicide was registered against three neighbours, including two women, who have been arrested.

The day after the girl was sexually assaulted, her family tried to lodge a complaint. An FIR was, however, only registered in July 27.

*Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday, 10 am -7.30 pm*

## Man booked for post against MLA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

A case was registered against a man on Saturday for an alleged objectionable social media post about the daughter of an Uttar Pradesh BJP legislator who had said that party workers can now marry "fair" Kashmiri women.

Acting on a complaint by an aide of MLA Vikram Singh Saini, an FIR was registered against E.R. Rao Azher under Section 67 of the Information Technology Act, Station House Officer Navratan Gautam said.

Mr. Azher, who is from Saharanpur, allegedly posted on Facebook that a Kashmiri boy eloped with the daughter of Mr. Saini, the SHO added.

The post comes after Mr. Saini had stirred a controversy earlier this week by saying party workers could now go to Jammu and Kashmir and marry "fair" women there after the Centre amended Article 370.

Meanwhile, Mr. Saini said on Saturday that his statement on Kashmiri women was "distorted".

## Two criminals killed in police encounters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW

Two criminals were killed in separate police encounters in Uttar Pradesh, the police said on Saturday.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said three policemen were also injured in the encounters that took place in Baghpat and Saharanpur.

In Baghpat, the encounter took place on Saturday morning, in which a criminal, identified as Vikas alias Phoni, was injured. He was taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead. A policeman was also injured.

In Saharanpur, the encounter began when two unidentified criminals started firing at a police team on Friday night. Two policemen were injured and one criminal was killed.

# Assam's indigenous people hit by NRC

The exercise has brought out the inhuman side of many officials, alleges a social activist

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

Lalita Barman is a Koch-Rajbongshi, a community considered indigenous. However, that has not protected her four children - excluded from the draft National Register of Citizens - from alleged harassment in trying to prove their citizenship.

The four were summoned twice in 50 days to places more than 150 km east of their village Masua in western Assam's Barpeta district. The last notice, served on July 28, asked them to report by 9 a.m. on July 30 at an NRC centre in central Assam's Nagaon town, about 180 km from their village.

Ms. Barman, who ekes out a living as a domestic help, and her four children boarded a train early morning on the day of the hearing. The train was scheduled to reach their destination before 9 a.m., but got delayed. "We were turned away for reporting a couple of hours late. The officials at the NRC centre said they had other work to do elsewhere. We spent a lot to go there, but



A child at a Seva Kendra in Barpeta in Assam on Saturday. •PTI

they just did not care," she said.

Barpeta-based social activist Dhanjit Das said the NRC exercise has brought out the inhuman side of many an official.

## 'Legacy data stolen'

"The family has been suffering because someone else had used their legacy data to Nishikanta Barman, the father of Lalita Barman's deceased husband Bhusan Barman. To add to their misery, she had procured birth certificates of her children after the NRC exercise began. Many poor, illiterate villagers do not usually possess such certificates. We helped

her get the certificates legally, but the NRC officials did not accept them as they were issued on the same date," he said.

The NRC officials had on May 30 given Ms. Barman's children 12 days to go for a hearing, but they were called to Raha in central Assam, 150 km from their village. "When they submitted all their documents at that hearing, the authorities should not have called them again at very short notice," Mr. Das said.

Ms. Barman is not sure if her children would be called yet again. "Will they make me a non-citizen for failing to be at the July 30 hearing in

time, though the reason was beyond our control," she asked.

## Similar ordeal

Pradip Kumar Bordoloi of central Assam's Jagiroad faced a similar ordeal due to what is being seen as a clerical error on the part of the NRC authorities. He found it ironical to have been put on the list of 41 lakh people excluded from the NRC, as he had spent a week in jail during the 1979-85 Assam Agitation.

The NRC exercise was undertaken because of an agreement that ended the agitation for removing illegal immigrants from Assam.

## Fatal hearings

The "sudden" summoning of thousands of people belonging to minority communities, mostly Bengal-origin Muslims in Assam, has claimed four lives and injured several. They were served notices for re-verification almost simultaneously on August 3-4 asking them to appear for hearings within 24-48 hours at NRC centres

300-500 km away.

On Monday, 60-year-old Rezia Khatun collapsed and died during her hearing in central Assam's Kaliabor. She had travelled from Daka-chang village 250 km west of Guwahati in Kamrup district the previous night.

The following day, 65-year-old Hanif Ali died after the vehicle he and his family were travelling capsized 10 km from his home in Kamrup district's Asalpara village. They were returning from a hearing in eastern Assam's Charaideo district 350 km away.

Again on Wednesday morning, sisters Joyom Nessa, 32, and Arzina Begum, 14, died after the minibus they were travelling in from Golaghat in eastern Assam met with an accident near their village in Kamrup district.

"Many people have been injured in the accidents. But the NRC has probably killed more people financially and psychologically, leaving them devastated," a leader of the All Assam Minority Students' Union said.

# Farmers' income grew seven times in 13 years in Odisha

State CAGR is highest in the country, claims Naveen Patnaik

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha farmers' incomes grew more than seven times over a span of 13 years, the Naveen Patnaik government has claimed.

The government, in its recently released draft Agriculture Policy 2019, says an average Odisha farmer earned around ₹7,731 per month, or around ₹92,772 per year.

## Draft policy

"In 2002-03, his average monthly income was ₹1,062, which means that in the 13 years between 2002-03 and 2015-16, Odisha farmers' incomes grew more than seven times or at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 16.5% in nominal terms and 8.4% in real terms," it states.

The draft policy states that comparing the CAGR with other Indian States, Odisha's growth rate emerges as the highest in the country during that period.



A farmer carries paddy saplings for replanting in his field on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. •BISWARANJAN ROUT

"During the same period, average Indian farmer's income grew from ₹2,115 to ₹8,931 which is at a CAGR of 11.7% in nominal and 3.7% in real terms. Odisha is fast catching up with other Indian States. Odisha's farmer incomes grew much faster than even the rate at which its own agricultural GDP grew," it says.

According to the draft policy, between 2002-03 and 2015-16, Odisha's agricultural GDP grew at a CAGR of 3.7% and its farmer incomes grew at more than

double that rate at 8.4%.

Odisha is largely a rural-agrarian economy. Close to 83% of its people live in rural areas and about 61.8% of its 17.5 million work-force is employed in agriculture.

In the 16 years since the beginning of this century (2000-01 to 2016-17), Odisha's agricultural GDP nearly doubled in real terms, clocking an average annual growth rate of about 4.5%, higher than the India average of 3.1%.

The State accounts for 3% of India's agricultural GDP.

# Salt Lake gets a new mayor

Krishna Chakraborty becomes first woman mayor of BMC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA

The chairman of the Bidhanagar Municipal Corporation (Salt Lake), Krishna Chakraborty, was sworn in as mayor of the corporation on Saturday.

The post of mayor has been lying vacant after Sabyasachi Dutta, the first mayor of the corporation which was formed in 2015, resigned from the post on July 18, following differences with the party leadership and a majority of the councillors expressing no confidence against him.

## 'Will work for masses'

Ms. Chakraborty said that she was happy that the party leadership had reposed faith in her and that she would do her best to live up to the ex-



Sabyasachi Dutta had resigned due to differences with TMC leadership. •FILE PHOTO

pectations of the people. "Our party chief Mamata Banerjee says that we need to work for the masses. The chair doesn't matter, what matters is what we are doing for the people," she said after being sworn in.

According to a TMC councillor of the BMC, the party leadership had zeroed in on Ms. Chakraborty as the next mayor after Mr. Dutta resigned from the post. On Saturday, during a meeting of the party councillors she was officially elected the leader of the party in the corporation and was sworn in as the first woman mayor of the BMC.

Mr. Dutta was in the eye of a political storm after he participated in an agitation against the West Bengal's power department and slammed the TMC government for not fulfilling the employees' demands for increasing their salaries. The party leadership was also annoyed with Mr. Dutta over his meetings with senior BJP leader Mukul Roy.

# Dalits demand public road after 58 years

Some villagers had blocked their path with wire fencing, boulders last month

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

Dalits living in Jaipur district's Sundarpura village since 1961 have sought the construction of a public road to their locality after their influential neighbours blocked their way with wire fencing and boulders last month.

Having been cut off from the main link road, the Dalit residents of Rangaura Basti are confined to their locality.

## PIL in High Court

Four persons from the locality, who are landless and daily wage workers, have filed a public interest litigation in the Rajasthan High Court seeking directions to the State government to acquire private land in the vicinity of Rangaura Basti and con-

struct a road to give them a "life with dignity". The petitioners also sought a compensation of ₹10 lakh each to the 88 households in the locality for the failure of the government authorities to give them the right of way and access to public road for the last 58 years.

A Division Bench of the High Court asked the petitioners to approach the Jaipur Collector and directed him to have their grievances examined by deputing a Sub-

Divisional Officer or Tehsildar. The court directed the Collector to take a decision on the Dalit residents' representation in accordance with the law within three months.

The labourers - Kailash Chand Arya, Santosh Kumar, Rich Pal and Ram Niwas Arya - pointed out that the Dalit families were first allotted the land in Kotputli tehsil's Sundarpura village in 1961 and subsequently several times till 2017.

In the absence of a road to their locality, Dalits have been using *pagdandis* (tracks) through the agricultural land in the vicinity. The owners of these plots of land blocked the tracks last month.

The village panchayat had passed resolutions several

times to get the new way through private land of those in the neighbourhood, but no action was taken. A government primary school running in Rangaura Basti since 1999, an anganwadi centre and a community centre have been facing difficulty because of the lack of road.

Petitioners' counsel Satish Kumar said the PIL had invoked the principle of "eminent domain", involving the power of government to take private property and convert it into public use, to seek the construction of road which will be used by all the villagers and not only the Dalits.

The private land for the purpose could be acquired under the Land Acquisition Act of 2013, he said.

# New formula to cut water supply cost

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

The Congress government in Rajasthan has introduced a "positive engineering" formula to save revenue and energy in the water supply infrastructure through technical measures at the pumping stations with a high load factor. Energy planning and conservation at the points with the load of more than 200 KVA is set to help reduce the costs significantly. Water Resources Minister B.D. Kalla said here on Saturday that the new formula would make use of power factor incentive offered by the discoms by rationalising the contract demand with the power consumption.

# Refusing ride to cost cab drivers ₹1,000 in M.P.

Vehicle licence will be made mandatory, says Transport dept. official

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has framed rules to impose a fine of ₹1,000 on drivers of cabs, including mobile app-based services, in case they cancel a ride request after accepting it.

"Once the rules come into effect, cab drivers will have to take a licence from the government after paying a certain amount as fee and fulfil some obligations," said State Transport Department Deputy Secretary Niyaz Ahmed Khan.

## 'No exploitation'

Stating that the rules had been sent to the Law Department and were expected to be notified this month, he added, "The government will have control over drivers so that passengers are not exploited and are given proper services."

Mr. Khan explained that the government would have access to the digital records of a cab service, and impose a fine on drivers or seize their licences in case they cancel a ride or break rules.

Even, travel fares will be regulated by the government so that the passengers are not fleeced.

## GPS-enabled

And in case a GPS-enabled cab stops midway a ride or travels in a different direction, the police will get an alert.

Hailing the framing of



The Kamal Nath government is trying to reign in cab drivers. •FILE PHOTO

rules, Bhopal Travels Association secretary Rajkumar Kanojia, representing regular cab services, said, "Although travel operators and not drivers cancel rides in our case, it's a positive decision. If a booking has been made and the operator cancels the ride at the last minute, they should be held accountable."

## Other reasons

But, Rajesh Ginnare, a driver with an app-based service in Bhopal, felt drivers cancel rides only for some pressing reasons. "If the pick-up location is far away, we have to cancel a ride. It happens several times that a rider awaits the cab at a location different from the one entered in the application, so we have to cancel the ride. We also have to cancel a ride if the road leading to a pick-up location is too narrow or congested," he said.

"We get a cancellation fee only if the rider doesn't turn up at the pick-up location even after five minutes. Sometimes, we don't even get that," he added. The application lowers his rating if he cancels a ride request within a 4 km radius.

## IN BRIEF



## Traders observe bandh against Walmart entry

**VIZIANAGARAM**  
Nearly 1,700 shops and establishments in Andhra Pradesh remained closed on Saturday following the trade bandh call given by the Vizianagaram Chamber of Commerce, opposing the proposed entry of Walmart into the town. MLA Kolagatta Veerabhadra Swamy, who extended support to the protesting traders, said that he would bring the issue to the notice of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

## Hyderabad youth dies in paragliding accident

**HYDERABAD**  
A 25-year-old man from Hyderabad L. Chandrasekhar Reddy reportedly died in a paragliding accident in Shanag, Manali, Himachal Pradesh, on Saturday afternoon. The paraglider pilot who crash-landed it escaped with injuries. The adventure activity was taken up in violation of orders as Kullu Superintendent of Police Gaurav Singh said that adventure activities such as paragliding and rafting are prohibited from July 15 to September 15 by the district administration.

## Steps initiated to close illicit liquor shops

**ANANTAPUR**  
The Anantapur police in the past one month have been able to destroy 4,263 illicit liquor brewing points. By working in close coordination with local people and other Andhra Pradesh government departments, they have been effectively curbing the running of belt shops (illicit liquor shops). Superintendent of Police B. Satya Yesu Babu said on Saturday that police personnel needed to check the flow of illicit liquor in a more effective way by closing all illicit outlets in villages.



A team of volunteers shifting people from a flood affected area in Shivamogga on Saturday. ■VAIDYA

## Karnataka pegs flood loss at ₹6,000 crore

CM calls it 'worst calamity in 45 years'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU**

The Karnataka government has estimated the damage to crop and public/private infrastructure by heavy rain and floods at ₹6,000 crore and has decided to seek immediate relief of ₹3,000 crore from the Centre.

The death toll from various rain-related incidents across the State has touched 24.

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa termed this the "biggest calamity in 45 years" and said that a memorandum would be submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking immediate relief of ₹3,000 crore to provide compensation for families facing distress due to crop loss and damage to their houses.

Life has been badly affected owing to submergence of villages and landslips on rail routes and roads in 16 districts of northern and southern parts of the State.

A sum of ₹100 crore has been released to each of the flood-affected district, he said.

The Chief Minister, who is

## RSS volunteers sing bhajans at relief centre

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BELAGAVI**

In an incident that has left many surprised, a group of volunteers from the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, an RSS-inspired nationalist women's organisation, conducted Sri Ram bhajans, which went on for hours, in the government relief centre on the Shankarling Kalyanamantap premises in Sankeshwar on Saturday.

the lone man in the Cabinet, claimed that "all BJP MLAs have been working as *mantris* (Ministers)" and monitoring relief operations in their respective constituencies. Mr. Yediyurappa was on a tour of North Karnataka. He said officials and legislators of the Opposition have been visiting flood-affected areas.

## Death toll in Kerala rain rises to 57

About 1.65 lakh people are evacuated to 1,318 relief camps; red alert for Wayanad, Kannur, Kasaragod

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KERALA BUREAU**

Diminished rainfall offered some respite to central Kerala districts on Saturday, but the overall situation continued to be grim, prompting government agencies to maintain high alert levels.

The death toll in rain-related calamities climbed to 57 at the time of filing this report. Over the past three days, 19 deaths have been reported in Malappuram, 14 in Kozhikode and 10 in Wayanad, a government update at 7 p.m. said.

More than 1.65 lakh people (46,400 families) have been evacuated to 1,318 relief camps so far, the government said.

At the landslide site at Puthumala, Meppadi, in Wayanad one more body was recovered on Saturday. Nine bodies have been retrieved from the area so far. Inletment weather forced rescue workers to halt the search operations temporarily by noon.

One spillway shutter of the Banasurashar reservoir, maintained by the Kerala State Electricity Board, in Wayanad was opened 10 cm as a precautionary measure.

**80 landslips in two days**  
North Kerala districts can expect heavy rainfall on Sunday also. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued red alerts for Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, addressing the media after a review of the situation, said 80 landslips have struck eight flood-hit districts over the past two days. "Landslips are occurring in the most unexpected places. Rescue operations are in progress in all the affected districts," he said.



**Nature's fury:** Only nine bodies of the 40 people who were caught in the landslide in Kavalappara, Malappuram, have been recovered. The rescue mission has been suspended midway following two fresh landslips. ■SAKEER HUSSAIN

## 40 suspected buried in Kavalappara

Rescue attempts stopped following fresh landslips in a nearby hill

**MITHOSH JOSEPH  
KOZHIKODE**

Two days after a massive landslide struck the hillside village of Kavalappara in Malappuram and the retrieval of nine bodies, the villagers' hope of finding some 40 persons alive faded by sundown on Saturday.

The rescue mission was suspended midway following two fresh landslips in the nearby hills in the afternoon. Muddy debris, tough terrain, continuing rain and lack of sophisticated equipment hindered the search operations. Some 48 hours after the landslide, which devastated several houses and over 100 acres of land, the search was halted.

Kavalappara is a Western

Ghats village and is close to the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. Though the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and about 150 voluntary organisation members were present at the spot looking for the missing persons, they could not make any headway. Attempts to use spades and shovels to manually remove debris yielded no result even after a six-hour-long effort. Only nine bodies were recovered so far from the spot.

An eyewitness said the rescue operators were forced to flee after a second landslide hit the neighbouring hill around 4 p.m. on Saturday. After this, no one was allowed to go to the area. Two bridges had been

submerged in floodwaters, making the terrain totally inaccessible for the rescue teams.

## 'Narrow escape'

"All I remember is a shuddering sound with an unusual tremor around 8 p.m. on Thursday. Soon we ran for cover. All these happened within a few seconds and there were 18 families under the debris when we came back," said P.K. Abdul Salam, a resident of Kavalappara. Though local people attempted to go near some of the partly buried houses after hearing cries, they could not help the victims, he told *The Hindu*.

The site, located about 60 km from Malappuram, was one of the landslide-

prone areas earlier identified by the Disaster Management Authority in Kerala. The authority had also issued warning to the residents, which was reportedly ignored by many. Only 17 families had been relocated to safer locations in advance following the authority's directive.

Local people alleged that last year's attempt by a planter to raise a rubber plantation atop the neighbouring Muthappankunnu hill using earth removers was the main cause for the landslide.

The Malappuram district administration is still clueless about the actual number of persons missing. Officials said the search could resume on Sunday.

## 101 cows die in Andhra Pradesh shelter

Government orders investigation; Minister, officials visit the premises

**STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA**

In a shocking incident, as many as 101 cows were found dead on Saturday under suspicious circumstances in a gosala (cow shelter) run by Sri Vijayawada Gosamrakshana Sangam in Kothur Tadepalli village on the outskirts of Vijayawada.

Officials put the toll at 86 and said that 15 were battling for life. The police did not register any case saying that 'natural death of cattle' will not attract any section under IPC.

Endowments Minister Velampalli Srinivas Rao, MLAs Vasantha Krishna Prasad and Malladi Vishnu, Collector A. Md. Imtiaz, Animal Husbandry Joint Director Bharat Ramesh and other officials who visited the gosala said that an inquiry had been ordered.

Contrary to official state-



Sick cows being shifted to hospital from the Gosala near Vijayawada on Saturday. ■CH. VIJAYA BHASKAR

ments, Two Town Circle Inspector Md. Umar said the Vijayawada Gosamrakshana Sangam members have not expressed any doubts on the death of cows, and nobody lodged any complaint alleging that the death of cows was suspicious and hence no case was registered.

According to Sangam secretary Saboo, the cows died one after the other in the wee hours of Saturday after

consuming grass. The Sangam lodged a complaint with the police immediately.

"We brought seven tonnes of green grass from Addanki in Prakasam district on Friday, and served the same to the cattle in the sheds," the secretary said.

Minister Srinivas Rao expressed concern over the death of cows and said that an inquiry would be conducted into the circumstances that led to the tragedy.

Responding to the incident, Animal Husbandry Minister Mopidevi Venkatarama said that an inquiry would be conducted to find out whether the deaths occurred due to negligence or any conspiracy.

Krishna District Collector said the deaths might have occurred due to over-consumption of fodder or the feed being laced with some

poison. As many as 86 cows died, 10 recovered and the condition of five continued to be critical, Mr. Imtiaz said.

## Post-mortem

Animal Husbandry Joint Director Bharat Ramesh said that post-mortem was being done on the gosala premises and the viscera samples would be sent to Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) to ascertain the cause of deaths. "Along with viscera samples, the fodder and water samples served to the cattle last night are being sent to FSL," Mr. Imtiaz told *The Hindu*.

In all, there are 1,450 cows in sheds in the gosala. About 10 cows reportedly died under mysterious circumstances a few days ago and this was the second incident in the gosala, in the last one month.

## India ready to face any threat, says Kishan Reddy

Pak. trying to drive wedge between people, says Minister

**STAFF REPORTER  
HYDERABAD**

Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy on Saturday said all precautions are being taken to safeguard Indian borders.

"We are prepared to face any kind of situation that arises in India," Mr. Reddy said on the sidelines of a seminar on 'Cyber Security and Image Processing' organised by the Institution of Engineers. On Thursday, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan had tweeted: "The whole world is waiting to see what happens to oppressed Kashmiris in IOK when curfew is lifted. Does the BJP govt. think by using greater military force against Kashmiris in IOK, it will stop the freedom movement? Chances are it will gain momentum."

Responding to the remarks, Mr. Reddy said the people [of India] were united and that a few parties and people from Pakistan are trying to drive a wedge between them.

Speaking on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Reddy said Section 144 (CrPC) had been lifted in many parts. He requested people to be united and celebrate Bakrid with happiness.

Mr. Reddy said precautionary measures were taken as Pakistan is trying to instigate people by making irresponsible statements, while some parties are looking at it from perspective of politics rather than national interest.

"At times, there were curfews in Jammu and Kashmir for 30 to 40 days at a stretch. Now there are no more curfews, there are no difficulties there. In Jammu and Kashmir, as you saw on TV, people and youth are happy. They wish for a change in their lives," he said.

The Minister said the people of Jammu and Kashmir



Minister G. Kishan Reddy inaugurating the seminar on cyber security in Hyderabad on Saturday. ■K.V.S. GIRI

## 'Database of terrorists being prepared'

**STAFF REPORTER  
HYDERABAD**

Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy on Saturday said a database of individuals, who are declared as terrorists, was being prepared.

On August 2, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019, which empowers the Union Home Ministry to designate individuals as terrorists, was passed in the Rajya Sabha.

## Sexual abusers

"Recently, an Act was formed in Parliament.

Individuals can be declared as terrorists. A database of people who are declared as terrorists is being prepared with the United Nations. In the same way, we are creating database of sexual abusers. They will not get jobs in coming days. Banks will not give loans to people who commit crimes. We are preparing the database using technology," Mr. Reddy said. Crime and criminals tracking network is being constantly upgraded. He said the government has taken steps to prevent cyber crime against women.

had been suppressed for the past 70 years with Article 370. By revoking the law, there is chance of people joining mainstream, he added.

## Smart fencing

Mr. Reddy said 'smart fencing' on the Indo-Pak international border in Jammu

and Kashmir had started. "These projects have got a hi-technical surveillance system that create an invisible electronic barrier on land, water, air, and underground — and help the border guarding force to detect and foil infiltration bids in most difficult terrains," Mr. Reddy said.

## TTD planning cow tourism project

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUMALA**

Presiding over a high-level review meeting with the TTD authorities, Special Chief Secretary Manmohan Singh said the TTD intended to develop a state-of-the-art dairy farm at Palamaner town in Chittoor district. The previous board had sanctioned ₹40 crore for taking up various developmental works at the farm, which is coming up in 450 acres.

At present, there were about 39 indigenous cow breeds in the country. In order to emphasise the importance of each breed and educate the devotees with regard to their grandness, the management was also contemplating a cow tourism project in near future, he said.

## Witness says he saw IAS officer at the wheel

Architect testifies against Venkitaraman in the Kerala journalist accident case

**G. ANAND  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

More evidence emerged on Saturday that IAS officer Sri Ram Venkitaraman was at the wheel of the car involved in the road accident that killed journalist K.M. Basheer early on August 3, according to State police officers.

Basheer was working with the Malayalam daily *Siraj*. A 28-year-old architect has told the police that he had witnessed the collision and that Mr. Venkitaraman was driving the car.

He was returning home after a late night movie when he saw the car crash into Basheer's motorbike in front of the Public Office complex opposite to the Museum grounds.

The journalist had pulled to the side of the road and was in the process of dis-



Sriram Venkitaraman

mounting from the motorbike when the car mowed him down.

## Statement recorded

Investigators said the witness had stated that he suspected Mr. Venkitaraman was under the influence of alcohol.

"The witness said he could smell alcohol in the suspect's breath," an officer said. Police have recorded the architect's statement.

However, Mr. Venkitaraman has consistently denied that he was drunk at the time of the accident. He had told the police on Friday that the incident was not culpable homicide caused by alcohol-impaired reckless driving as was made out by a section of the Press.

## No medical evidence

Moreover, police had no medical evidence to prove the bureaucrat was inebriated at the time of the accident. The failure on the part of the crash investigators to initiate a medical test to verify whether Mr. Venkitaraman was drunk at the time had caused a gap in the probe and elicited wide-

spread public criticism.

The police were investigating two of their officers on the charge of conspiring to help the accused evade the law by delaying the mandatory test.

## Medical records

They said they would subpoena Mr. Venkitaraman's medical records from the private hospital which treated him and examine the integrity of the blood sample submitted for the alcohol impairment test at the Chief Chemical Examiner's laboratory nearly 10 hours after the accident.

Police would also verify the allegation that doctors had administered the suspect drugs or put him through some procedure to suppress or remove the presence of alcohol in the bloodstream.

IN BRIEF



**Two SpiceJet pilots suspended for a year**

**NEW DELHI**  
DGCA on Saturday suspended two SpiceJet pilots for a year as their Boeing-737 aircraft made a late touchdown at the Mumbai airport overshooting the runway on July 2, sources said. P11

**Vaiko rejects Modi's claim on Article 370**

**CHENNAI**  
MDMK general secretary Vaiko on Saturday rejected Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim that the abrogation of Article 370 was the dream of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and contended that the former PM had never considered such a move.

**Two booked for abetting GoAir employee's suicide**

**NAGPUR**  
Two staffers of GoAir have been booked for allegedly abetting the suicide of a 19-year-old employee of the airline here, city police said. Manthan Chavan, who worked as a trainee ramp officer at Nagpur airport, had allegedly committed suicide at his home on May 30, police said. He was constantly pressurised to join for duty despite being on sick leave. P11

**IOC to supply aviation fuel by pipeline**

**CHENNAI**  
By early next year, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC) will start supplying aviation turbine fuel to airports in Madurai, Coimbatore and Tiruchi by pipeline. The work is expected to be completed by March 2020. So far, the fuel was being sent by rail from its Chennai terminal to Sankari in Salem, and from there by road to the airports.

**Congress leader held for sharing obscene video**

**BHOPAL**  
The police have arrested a Congress leader from Bilaspur for sharing an obscene video on a WhatsApp group. Pawan Dubey, Joint Secretary of the party's district unit, had shared a porn video on the group along with an accompanying message. He was arrested following a complaint from the women members of the group.

**Two Assam doctors charged for negligence**

**GUWAHATI**  
The Medical Council of India has found two doctors in Delhi guilty of negligence that led to the death of an assistant professor of the Assam university four years ago. The patient's husband had filed a case against the two doctors for alleged medical negligence leading to her death.

# Navy, Army step up rescue in flood-hit areas of Maharashtra

15 teams from Visakhapatnam join relief work in Kolhapur and Sangli

SHARAD VYAS  
MUMBAI

Intensifying relief operations in the flood-hit parts of Maharashtra, the Navy on Saturday airlifted 15 teams from Visakhapatnam deploying them in the severely-affected areas of Shirol in Kolhapur and Sangli, while the Army is operating nine relief and 12 engineer teams.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said a team of 100 doctors had been despatched to the region even as thousands of stranded people were rescued from the submerged areas, including 1,016 persons from the Maharashtra-Karnataka border. Rescue work by the Goa Naval Area is under way in Kolhapur and Uttar Kannada (Karnataka) district and so far 602 women and 193 children had been rescued. In another operation by the



**All-time high:** Sangli has already received 758% rainfall over the long period average. In 2005, the area recorded only 217% over the course of 31 days. ■ JIGNESH MISTRY

special teams of the Bombay Sappers of the Army, 4,800 persons were evacuated from Kolhapur and Sangli. "We have asked for more rescue teams from Punjab, Odisha, Gujarat and Goa. Another 15 teams of the Navy

are reaching today. As many as 95 boats have been deployed for rescue operations," Mr. Fadnavis said after a tour of the regions. The toll from across the State this week stood at 30, officials said.

Several National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams carried out a rescue mission in Hasur and Nrusinhwadi, in Kolhapur district to evacuate four pregnant women, who were later sent to the hospital.

## Single male service personnel can avail Child Care Leave

The scheme is currently restricted to female officers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the extension of benefits of Child Care Leave (CCL) to single male service personnel and certain relaxations of CCL provisions in case of women officers of defence forces, the Defence Ministry said on Saturday.

This is in line with a recent Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) order extending similar

benefits of CCL to civilian employees. Presently, CCL is granted to woman officers in defence forces.

"Single male service personnel and women officers of defence forces will also be able to avail CCL in respect of child with 40% disability without any restriction of age limit of the child," the statement said. Further, the minimum period of CCL that can be availed in each spell has been reduced to five days from the earlier limit of

15 days, the Ministry said. Recently, the DoPT made certain amendments for grant of CCL to civilian employees, extending the benefit to single male government servants as well. Further, the age limit of 22 years prescribed earlier in the case of a child with 40% disability has been removed for the purpose of availing CCL. Further, the minimum period of CCL that can be availed at a time has been reduced to 5 days instead of 15.

## 'CBI deliberately did not link Sengar to murder'

No 'mala fide' intention, says agency

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The counsel for the Unnao rape survivor told a court here on Saturday that the Central Bureau of Investigation had "deliberately" not named expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar and his brother as accused in the murder case of the woman's father.

The submissions were made before District Judge Dharmesh Sharma, who held a special hearing on a court holiday with the Delhi High Court's permission to

## Eight dead as heavy rain batters Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

At least four people died and several others were feared trapped after a three-storey building collapsed in Gujarat's Nadiad as heavy rain battered the State, disrupting normal life.

The incident took place after extremely heavy rain lashed central Gujarat in the last 48 hours. Rescue operations were immediately launched at the site.

According to State officials, four people died and five were seriously injured in the building collapse. National Disaster Response Force and fire brigade teams from Ahmedabad were rushed to help.

In a separate incident, four people died in Ahmedabad when a wall collapsed in the city's Bopal area on the outskirts.

The wall collapsed owing to heavy rainfall overnight.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Sunday:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely over Saurashtra, Kutch, ghat areas of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Mahe, Karnataka, Goa, central Maharashtra, Lakshadweep, Uttarakhnad, Gujarat, West Bengal, Odisha, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala.....	35.6	26.4	23.0	Kozhikode.....	134.6	26.0	23.0
Ahmedabad....	108.7	26.9	24.4	Kurnool.....	35.0	25.7	26.7
Aizawl.....	31.5	22.3	26.7	Lucknow.....	34.2	26.5	26.6
Allahabad....	36.3	27.0	22.0	Madurai.....	36.2	26.5	26.6
Bengaluru....	25.8	19.8	22.0	Mangaluru....	58.8	26.2	22.0
Bhopal.....	7.4	29.9	23.4	Mumbai.....	2.9	30.1	26.6
Bhubaneswar..	34.2	25.1	19.4	Mysuru.....	26.7	19.4	27.2
Chandigarh... 3.2	34.0	27.4	New Delhi.....	0.9	34.3	27.2	
Chennai.....	34.7	28.8	27.4	Patna.....	4.4	35.6	27.4
Coimbatore... 15.8	27.3	21.4	Port Blair....	38.1	27.3	23.7	
Dehradun....	10.9	32.7	25.6	Puducherry... 35.0	25.4	22.3	22.3
Gangtok.....	6.6	23.8	17.8	Pune.....	5.2	27.8	22.3
Goa.....	18.8	30.2	25.8	Rajpur.....	1.2	33.1	24.2
Guwahati....	36.5	27.0	22.5	Ranchi.....	33.4	22.5	17.0
Hubballi....	24.0	21.0	17.1	Shillong.....	2.9	23.0	17.1
Hyderabad... 30.8	24.2	23.1	Srinagar.....	2.9	23.0	17.1	
Imphal.....	27.8	23.1	21.7	Thiruvananthapuram	100.7	29.0	21.7
Jaipur.....	18.4	30.7	24.2	Tiruchirappalli	35.3	26.4	25.4
Kochi.....	39.8	24.6	22.4	Vijayawada....	35.1	25.4	26.9
Kohima.....	2.0	27.5	18.6	Visakhapatnam	31.2	26.9	26.9
Kolkata.....	35.4	27.4					

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad....	58	57	70	42	50	Good
Bengaluru....	9	60	71	82	82	Good
Chennai.....	25	32	39	72	72	Good
Delhi.....	18	40	8	30	179	Poor
Hyderabad....	41	38	18	20	51	Moderate
Kolkata.....	37	55	11	101	113	Moderate
Lucknow.....	10	40	101	64	64	Moderate
Mumbai.....	10	18	103	29	55	Moderate
Pune.....	74	8	67	42	42	Moderate
Visakhapatnam	21	48	48	56	96	Moderate

**Air Quality Code:** ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.  
**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.  
**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

# U.P., Delhi, Rajasthan among worst performers in breastfeeding

Mother's milk is one of the most cost-effective interventions to save children, says official



**Saving lives:** Counselling and practical support to women are key to promoting breastfeeding. ■ GETTY IMAGES

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttarakhnad and Punjab fare the worst when it comes to the practice of breastfeeding, according to a report-card released recently by the Union Health Ministry. The World Health Organisation says that if breastfeeding was scaled up to near-universal levels, lives of about 8,20,000 children could be saved every year.

The ministry report notes that these states have the

lowest rate of breastfeeding within one hour of birth, exclusive breast feeding for six months and complementary breastfeeding from six to nine months.

**'Huge burden'**  
 "Inadequate breastfeeding puts a huge burden on our health system and we understand that there is an urgent need to ensure a conducive environment for all mothers to practice breastfeeding at home, outside homes and workplaces," said Union

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.

States that top the report card include Mizoram, Sikkim, Odisha and Manipur.

These regions also show good indicators in terms of the other parameters where children are breast fed exclusively for six months etc.

The districts in Uttar Pradesh (the state at the bottom of the list) which fared the worst for breastfeeding within one hour of child birth include Meerut, Bijnor, Shahjahanpur, Gautam Buddha

Nagar, Gonda, Etawah and Mahamaya Nagar.

Globally, only 40% infants are exclusively breastfed for the first six months.

Speaking about the importance of breastfeeding and the need to accelerate the popularity of the practice, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said: "Breastfeeding is one of the most cost-effective intervention which addresses both survival and growth of the child. Studies have highlighted how breastfeeding, if universalised, could prevent

diseases and deaths of children and future breast and ovarian cancer in mothers. Early initiation of breastfeeding within an hour of birth can prevent neonatal mortality; whereas exclusive breastfeeding for six months can reduce under-five deaths significantly."

He noted that skilled counselling and practical support to women both during the time of birth and later linking them to community workers, are key to promoting breastfeeding.

## Low-cost handheld device to help detect bacteria developed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology - Guwahati (IIT-G) have developed a low-cost handheld biocompatible sensor that can detect bacteria almost instantaneously – without cell culture and microbiological assays.

The device will enable rapid detection of bacteria, which is important not only in healthcare but also in anti-bioterrorism measures and environmental monitoring applications, lead researchers Parameswar K. Iyer and Siddhartha S. Ghosh said.

Prof. Iyer and Prof. Ghosh are professors in IIT-G's Department of Chemistry and Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering respectively.

"Bacterial infection is a common cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide and despite the development of a range of antibiotics, the challenge continues to lie in detecting and diagnosing bacterial infection early on," Prof. Iyer said in a statement issued by IIT-G.

The new device does not require cell culture and microbiological analyses, and it distinguishes between gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria almost immediately, he added.

At present, the detection of bacteria in body fluids is done in laboratories. The cells that are derived from the patient are initially cultured or grown so that enough of the bacterial cells are available for microbiological analysis.

Prof. Iyer said the need to administer emergency treatment fuelled the development of the device, which is faster and easier than conventional methods.

FROM PAGE ONE

## Curbs eased in Srinagar, people throng streets

"We are under the blanket, have had no communication with our family," shouted a J&K police sub-inspector from a bunker to a query. "Do you know how a mule works, it has to go up and come down the same path with same baggage on its back; this is the condition of the police," said the elderly policeman on condition of anonymity.

Another police official said that in 2016 after Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani was killed, he couldn't go home for six months. "The uniforms were soiled due to continuous wear but we were not allowed to leave our posts. Then also we didn't have access to phones but were able to make calls whenever necessary. We do not know how long the restrictions would continue this time, we are in for a long haul," he

said. Another suggested it was good that the State had been downgraded to a Union Territory. "We will get better pay and benefits like the Central forces," he hopefully added.

Dharmendra, an Assistant Commandant with the CRPF, said he had been posted in Srinagar for two years. "We work with J&K police shoulder to shoulder. The reports of CRPF taking over their responsibilities is not correct," Mr. Dharmendra asserted.

On August 5, Home Minister Amit Shah was photographed carrying a file inside Parliament which mentioned the "possibility of violent disobedience in sections of uniformed personnel" as a possible fallout from the passage of legislation reading down Article 370 that gave special status to the State.

## Congress names Sonia as interim president

As reported by *The Hindu* on Saturday, the Congress party had formed five groups of members of Parliament, State unit chiefs, All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretaries to select on a name to replace Mr Gandhi.

The Gandhis were included in the groups but they refused themselves from the process of consultations.

"The process to choose the president has started. Rahulji and I are not part of this process. It was obviously a mistake," Ms. Gandhi told reporters as they left the meeting after making an initial appearance.

### Resolution on J&K

In its resolution on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the CWC expressed serious concern over the situation there, including reports of a

clampdown and news blackout. It also called for permitting a delegation of Opposition parties to visit the Union Territory.

"The CWC also expressed serious concern about the arrest and detention of entire political leadership in Jammu and Kashmir," the resolution said.

Earlier Mr. Gandhi said some reports had come in from Jammu and Kashmir about violence there and Prime Minister Narendra Modi must assuage concerns over the matter in a "transparent" manner. "It's very important that the Government of India and the Prime Minister make it very clear and transparent on what exactly is the situation in the Union Territory," he said. "We are extremely concerned about the reports that are coming."

## Rains shore up fortunes of reservoirs in 10 days

While the two dams have a combined capacity of 145.6 tmc ft, authorities have kept the current storage at 96.94 tmc ft. Due to the large inflows, some headroom was retained in both dams to avoid flooding. On August 1, authorities lowered storage in the dams by 31.12 tmc ft to absorb excess flows from Maharashtra.

The Godavari and Krishna rivers continued to be in spate in Andhra Pradesh.

The Srisaalam reservoir on the Krishna was receiving 4,13,479 cusecs at 11 a.m. and the outflow from 10 out of 12 gates was 1,79,546 cusecs aided by flood discharge from Narayanpur dam in Karnataka.

The Vamsadhara in Srikakulam district and Thotapalli reservoir in neighbouring Vizianagaram were also receiving large inflows: 20,448 cusecs and 11,927 cusecs respectively.

In Tamil Nadu, Mettur, a major dam, was receiving good inflow from Karnataka. On Saturday evening, it stood at nearly 75,000 cusecs. This was expected to increase to one lakh cusecs by Sunday. The dam had a storage of 23 tmc ft against its capacity of 93 tmc ft.

With steady inflow, it could reach its full capacity in 8-9 days, an official said. Besides irrigating Cauvery delta districts, the Mettur surplus is diverted to Veeranam tank, which augments water supply to Chennai.

Smaller dams in Kerala also received notable inflows. Malampuzha in Palakkad recorded an inflow of 6,095.31 cusecs, Kallada 3,678.38 cusecs and Kuttiyadi 16,181.18 cusecs. The Pamba reservoir was 35% full on Saturday.

(With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai and Vijayawada)

## Certification of seeds to be made mandatory

The Centre also hopes to roll out a software to barcode seeds in order to ensure transparency and traceability.

"The National Informatics Centre has been collaborating with the Agriculture Ministry for this project and the first prototype will be ready by the end of the month. If we can use this to weed out poor quality seeds sold by some fly-by-night operators, it could increase productivity by 20 to 25%," said the official.

"We are in discussion with State governments to begin rolling out in two to three months. About 5,000

private seed companies have agreed to come on board if we can assure them that data on their seeds is not shared with their competitors."

The software system will be able to track seeds through the testing, certification and manufacturing process. By connecting to a dealer licensing system, seeds will be tracked through the distribution process as well.

"Once it is all in place in about two years or so, we will even be able to say how much of which seed is sold in which area," said the senior official.

# J&K Bill posed big challenge: Om Birla

Speaker says Lok Sabha had the most productive session since 1952, lauds commitment of members

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

"The day the Central government introduced the J&K Reorganisation Bill, 2019 was the most challenging day of the recently concluded first session of the 17th Lok Sabha," Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla told *The Hindu* on Saturday on the sidelines of his press conference about the various initiatives that he proposes to bring in.

Elaborating on how he dealt with this "challenging day", the Speaker said: "The House functioned smoothly that day with the members of the House having confidence in the Chair that adequate time would be given to everyone and that no voice, opinion, argument or discussion on the subject would go unheard."



OM BIRLA  
LOK SABHA SPEAKER

"The House, which has had the most productive session since 1952, was able to function smoothly because of the commitment and discipline that was shown by the members and we had many occasions where people set their party differences aside to agree on very important matters. Running the House needs the cooperation of each member, and we are proud to tell the nation that this time around we did our very best," the Speaker said.

"Discipline a must" Asked about the incident where Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan had to apologise in the Lok Sabha for making "sexist" remarks against BJP MP Rama Devi, the Speaker said: "Discipline is vital

while running this temple of democracy. Our aim is to run this House in the best way possible and make it the best in the world. We are committed to this."

Giving details of the work conducted during the first session of the 17th Lok Sabha, he said that work began on June 17 and was to conclude on July 26, but it was extended till August 7. The session had 37 sittings of a total 280 hours and saw the passage of 35 Bills. The House sat for 75 hours late in the evening to transact business. As many as 1,086 issues were raised by members, mostly first-timers, during the Zero Hour.

Out of the 265 first-time members, 229 got a chance to speak during the Zero Hour, while 42 out of 46 wo-

men MPs also spoke during the same period.

"Besides trying to go paperless in the next session and having hour-long routine briefing for MPs on the Bills being introduced in the House, we have requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to include the expansion and modernisation of the Parliament building in his resolution for "New India", marking the completion of 75 years of Independence in 2022," the Speaker said.

On the suggestion for construction of a new building for Parliament which had been mooted during the tenure of former Speaker Meira Kumar, Mr. Birla said: "We will invite suggestions on this matter and then finalise this."

## Roys stopped for speaking against Centre: daughter

'Neither CBI nor court imposed curbs'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Accusing the government of harassing her parents - NDTV's founders Radhika and Prannoy Roy - by preventing them from travelling abroad on Friday, independent filmmaker Shonali Bose said the Centre's failure to follow due process in their case was part of a wider pattern.

"When a government DOES NOT follow due process and can do whatever it wants to its citizens - the times are dark and scary. Whether it is revoking our entire history where a State is concerned and betraying a section of OUR people or it is attacking individual liberty and freedom," she wrote in a post on Facebook late on Friday night, linking the current situation in Kashmir with her parents' case and hashtagged #NOTMYINDIA. Stating that her parents had been fully cooperating



Prannoy Roy

with the CBI in a case against NDTV regarding an ICICI Bank loan, Ms. Bose noted that neither the CBI nor the court had informed the couple that they could not travel.

Ms. Bose alleged that the action taken against her parents was because they "dared to speak up against the government [and] to teach a strong lesson to anyone in the media - that they better fall in line or else."

## Unnao rape survivor and lawyer critical

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Unnao rape survivor, who was brought to the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here earlier this week, continues to be in a critical state and is on advanced life support systems. Her lawyer Mahendra Singh too continues to be critical, said a senior doctor at AIIMS.

Both the patients are undergoing treatment under a multidisciplinary team of doctors from the Critical Care, Orthopaedics, Trauma Surgery and Pulmonary Medicine departments.

The victim was brought to the AIIMS Trauma Centre on Monday from KGMC Lucknow in a critical state while her lawyer was shifted on Tuesday.

## Peace deal inked with last NLFT faction

SYED SAJJAD ALI  
AGARTALA

Four years after the initiation of dialogue, the Centre on Saturday signed a Memorandum of Settlement with the last remaining faction of the National Liberation Front of Twipra (NLFT).

Under the terms of the agreement, 88 cadres of the outlawed group are expected to surrender and receive benefits of the surrender-cum-rehabilitation scheme announced last year.

The NLFT, formed in 1989, had waged an armed insurgency for over two decades, demanding a separate tribal homeland.

## Coastal security set-up on high alert, says Navy

'Samudri jihad by Pak.-based terror groups is a known fact'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The country's coastal security set-up is on high alert due to perceived terrorist threats, said the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral M.S. Pawar, on Saturday when asked about reports of a possible terror threat from the sea by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) following the development in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We will deter them, prevent them and defeat them... It is very well known that 'samudri jihad' is being practised by Pakistan-based terrorist groups. There is a threat and we are vigilant. We keep our eyes and ears open. We have a coastal security mechanism to prevent that," the Vice-Admiral said.



Vice-Admiral M.S. Pawar

He was speaking to the media on the sidelines of the Global Policy Dialogue organised by the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies with other partners.

### Infiltration worries

Army sources had already said that they expected infiltration and ceasefire violations to go up along the Line of Control (LoC) in the com-

ing days following the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir. An Army source had stated that the Pakistan Army had to do something to show solidarity with the people of Kashmir and so they would engage in some action on the LoC.

### Flood rescue

On the Navy's flood relief efforts in Maharashtra, the Vice-Admiral said rescue efforts in Kolhapur had been hampered by incessant rain and the Navy teams had now reached the area via Pune by road and were then airlifted to Kolhapur. Diving teams were airborne in helicopters at least three times but had to come back due to the rain. "Another 15 teams are on their way from Visakhapatnam to Kolhapur and would be airlifted," he said.

## Shah visits Chennai for the first time after LS polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived on Saturday night for an official programme in the city. The city police has tightened security in view of the high profile visit.

He is visiting the city for the first time after taking charge as Home Minister. Mr. Shah is likely to meet leaders of the BJP State unit and chalk out a strategy to strengthen the party organisation. He arrived at Chennai airport from New Delhi in a special flight and would be staying in Raj Bhavan. Around 3,000 police personnel were deputed for bandobust, police sources said.

Mr. Shah will release a book chronicling the first two years of M. Venkaiah Naidu's Vice-Presidency.

The event is to be held at Kalavaanar Arangam on Sunday and is hosted by Pra-

## Jaitley stable, say AIIMS doctors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister Arun Jaitley is responding to treatment, doctors at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) said on Saturday, a day after he was admitted there for complaints of uneasiness and breathlessness.

Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu visited Mr. Jaitley and met his doctors and family members.

On Friday night, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visited the hospital to enquire about his health.

## Manmohan to return to Rajya Sabha

Former PM will file nomination from Rajasthan, where Cong. enjoys a majority

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

Veteran Congress leader and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, whose tenure as a Rajya Sabha member ended in June, is likely to return to the Upper House of Parliament from Rajasthan. Dr. Singh, who earlier represented Assam in the Rajya Sabha, will file his nomination papers here on August 13.

According to Congress

sources, the party has decided to nominate Dr. Singh for the Rajya Sabha byelection in Rajasthan. The seat fell vacant on June 24 after the death of BJP State president Madan Lal Saini, who was elected to the House last year.

Dr. Singh is likely to win the election as the Congress has a majority in the 200-member Assembly and has the support of the Bahujan Samaj Party and some Inde-

pendent MLAs. The former Prime Minister was a Rajya Sabha member from Assam for five consecutive terms between 1991 and 2019. By the schedule announced by the Election Commission for filling the Rajya Sabha vacancy, the notification was issued on August 7 and the last date for filing of nominations is August 14.

The election will be held on August 26 and the results declared the same day.



Manmohan Singh

## Resignations hit Congress in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

A day after the its former Chief Whip in the Rajya Sabha Bhubaneswar Kalita joined the BJP, the Congress in Assam suffered a setback with Rajya Sabha member Santiusse Kujur and former Minister Gautam Roy quitting on Saturday. Both are

expected to join the BJP in the next few days.

"With regret I would like to inform you that I am tendering my resignation from the membership of the party and all other portfolios given by the Congress with immediate effect. This is purely my personal decision," wrote Mr. Kujur in his resignation letter addressed to the Congress president.

Mr. Roy, often considered the party's backbone in southern Assam's Barak Valley, said: "I resigned as I was not happy to see where the Congress has reached today. However, I have no grudge against any leader of the party."

He said he was "impressed" by the BJP's performance across the country under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

There is speculation that several other Assam Congress stalwarts, including former Lok Sabha members and ex-MLAs, would be joining the BJP.

## Pakistan formally suspends trade ties

Cabinet clears decisions of National Security Committee, Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has formally suspended trade relations with India after New Delhi revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

On Friday, the Federal Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Imran Khan, endorsed the decisions taken by the National Security Committee and the joint session of Parliament, including suspension of trade ties, *The Dawn* reported.

Trade relations had already been strained by the Pulwama terror attack, with India having imposed a 200%



Red signal: A file photo of trucks from Pakistan moving towards the trade facilitation centre near Uri. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

customs duty on all goods from Pakistan. Imports from Pakistan declined by 92% to \$2.84 million in March this year, as against \$34.61 mil-

lion in March 2018, according to data from the Commerce Ministry.

Two notifications were issued soon after the Cabinet

meeting to implement the decision to suspend trade with immediate effect and until further orders, the report said. One notification suspends all exports to India and the other bans import of goods of Indian origin or those imported from it.

According to data from the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, the total exports from India to Pakistan during the 2018-19 fiscal were around \$2 billion. The major items exported include chemical products and textiles. The imported items include mineral products.

## Sikh outfit wants U.S. to intervene

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Endorsing the "right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people", radical Sikh outfit Dal Khalsa has urged the U.S. to intervene to resolve the prolonged dispute with the help of the U.N. in the Security Council and tripartite mediation at the political level among India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris.

In an open letter to U.S. President Donald Trump, the outfit has expressed concern regarding the political status of Kashmir.



**IN BRIEF**

**FCA unveils new Jeep Wrangler at ₹64 lakh**  
MUMBAI  
Automaker FCA India has introduced the New Generation Jeep Wrangler in India with an all India ex-showroom price of ₹63.94 lakh. The four-wheel drive Jeep Wrangler has gone in for sale in 10 Jeep outlets across India. Cricketer legend Kapil Dev has been appointed brand ambassador.

**HP Chromebook x360 launched at ₹44,990**  
NEW DELHI  
HP Inc. has launched HP Chromebook x360 at a price tag of ₹44,990 onwards. The PC will offer all benefits of Google's Chrome OS along with Android application. "The HP Chromebook is optimised for PC users who depend on Google for computational work, including content creation and consumption, multiple app usage and more," it said.

# Tata Steel to go slow on capex

Want to run a cash-positive business, says MD and CEO Narendran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Tata Steel will 'recalibrate' its capital expenditure this fiscal by postponing some of its planned expenditure in Europe and splitting expenses in India in phases.

TV. Narendran, MD and CEO, Tata Steel Ltd. (TSL), said that about ₹4,000-crore capital expenditure of the ₹12,000 crore proposed for this fiscal would be 'recalibrated'. "We want to run a cash positive business," he said. The exercise is being done in line with market conditions and lower cash flows.

Tata Steel ended the first quarter with higher production at 7.2 million tonnes, a marginally-higher consolidated revenue of ₹35,947 crore and a lower PAT of ₹702 crore.

The 'postponement' would be effected equally across TSL's Europe and India operations, where its main spend is on its Kalinganagar plant in Odisha.

He said domestically, TSL would re-prioritise its investments. A 5 million tonne per



**Steeley resolve:** The exercise is in line with market conditions and lower cash flows, says Mr. Narendran. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

annum (mtpa) expansion is under way at Kalinganagar, where the commissioning of the cold rolling mill and the pellet plant is being prioritised.

"We hope the second half would be better as the government is taking steps to ease the situation and is regularly engaging with the industry," he said.

On the global front steel, prices were under pressure on demand concerns, affecting steel spreads across re-

gions, while in India, steel margins were under pressure with decline in average realisation and higher input costs.

**Fewer subsidiaries**

To a query on reorganisation of TSL's structure, Mr. Narendran said that the aim was to simplify the corporate structure by cutting down on the number of subsidiaries, many of which were over 100 years old.

TSL has over 200 subsidi-

aries, besides direct and indirect associate companies.

Mr. Narendran was here to relaunch 'steel junction', a retail store for steel products of TSL and other vendors. The store has been relocated to a central place from the eastern fringes.

He said that TSL was focussing on the branded consumer business to insulate itself from cyclicity.

On recent developments regarding the 'falling through' of the proposed deal with HBIS, he said that while HBIS was keen, clearances did not come through.

Following the termination of the definitive agreement with HBIS Group to divest 70% stake in its southeast Asia business, Tata Steel has executed a Memorandum of Understanding to divest 70% of its shareholding in Tata Steel Thailand to Synergy Metals and Mining Fund.

As the next step, Synergy will carry out due diligence and both parties shall engage to complete the definitive agreements in an expeditious manner.

# 'Time' is up for watches, they are more of a style statement

Market for smart watches is warming up globally: Titan CEO

MINI TEJASWI  
BENGALURU

Watches may be getting old-fashioned as basic time-showing devices, but as fashion accessories, designer utilities and style statements, their market is expected to tick globally on a faster pace.

Buoyed by a positive market outlook, Titan Company Ltd., India's lead player in the watch industry and also the fifth-largest time machine manufacturer in the world, said it aims to sell more than 25 million watches a year, in the next five years, from the current 16.8 million. Ravi Kant, CEO, Watches & Accessories, Titan Company, told *The Hindu* that after growing at a CAGR of 3-4% in the last three-and-a-half years, the last fiscal was a milestone year for the company with a double-digit growth in terms of value and volumes.

"We were under 15 million watches three years ago and now we are touching 17



Ravi Kant

million. Last year, we sold 16.8 million watches worth ₹4,000 crore in terms of consumer prices. We had double-digit growth in value, more importantly, we reported more than double-digit growth in volume, clearly indicating a turnaround in industry," he said.

According to Mr. Kant, watches have been transforming from mere time devices to fashion accessories and functional products, and that's when the markets started seeing the emergence of smart watches.

"The market for smart watches is warming up globally. Being the leader, Titan has been launching smart watches across all our brands Titan, Fastrack and Sonata. We have also introduced a sub brand called Reflex for activity trackers and fitness trackers. Our target is to play a lead role in all segments of the value chain," he said.

Titan forayed into the space three years ago and since then has launched several smart watches in association with HP, Intel and other companies, including a start-up. Titan is now all set to launch its in-house smart movement.

The global watch market was pegged at \$90 billion in 2018, of which smart watches, wearables, wrist bands, activity trackers and hybrids accounted for \$22 billion, a 24% of the total market. Similarly in India, the wearables have reached about 17% of the total market of ₹8,000 crore.

# 'Draft policy on logistics ignores express industry'

Bring ATF under GST, says association

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The draft National Logistics Policy, released by the government earlier this year, has overlooked the role of the express industry (courier and parcel) and air cargo sectors in the multimodal transport mix for faster and cost effective movement of cargo, Express Industry Council of India (EIC) said.

"We note that the policy document does not focus on the express industry and air cargo sectors, which are integral parts of the logistics network. The air express has also been overlooked in the multimodal mix even though air is an essential segment of the movement of goods," Vijay Kumar, chief operating officer, EICI, said in a statement.

He said in developing countries such as India, an efficient air express infrastructure could contribute directly to global competitiveness of the country by ensuring just-in-time deliveries and reducing clear-

ance dwell time.

The government had issued the draft national logistics policy with a target to bring down logistics costs from 13-14% of GDP to 10% "in line with best-in-class global standards."

For the air cargo sector, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) is the single largest component of direct operating cost with a share of 40%.

Excise duty and value-added tax, charged by central and State governments on ATF, add another 30-35% to the cost.

Making the matter worse, the GST regime disallows input credit on ATF, increasing the tax burden on express cargo airlines further, EICI said.

"The government should permit express cargo airlines to avail input credit of excise duty as was done before the GST regime. ATF should be brought under GST and input credit on GST paid on ATF should be made available to express cargo airlines," Mr. Kumar added.

# Ethiad skips Jet bidding, 3 Eols received

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

The lenders of Jet Airways have received only three Eols for sale of the grounded airline's stake, with equity partner Ethiad Airways not submitting bid on the last day of the extended bidding process on Saturday.

Ethiad Airways holds 24% stake in Jet Airways.

Sources told PTI that the banks received Expressions of Interest (Eols) from three entities of which two are financial players and another is a player in the global aviation space. "Three bids have been received...but Ethiad Airways did not submit bids this time around," a bank source said. Industry sources said the deep-pocketed Hinduja group, which had shown interest earlier also did not turn up this time.

Panama-based fund Avantulo Group is one of the three entities which have submitted Eols, said another source.

# Vistara to have London, Tokyo on itinerary after Boeing 787-9's entry

U.S., Australia routes to follow in next phase, says CEO Thng

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Full-service carrier Vistara is likely to launch non-stop flights to London and Japan next year when wide-body Boeing 787-9 aircraft join its fleet.

Last week, the airline launched its maiden international flight between Delhi and Singapore. It has also announced flights to Bangkok and Dubai, which will commence operations later this month.

"In the first phase of our international expansion, we will connect destinations in Asia and Europe with non-stop flights. In the second phase, we plan to connect the U.S. and Australia," Vistara CEO Leslie Thng told reporters at an event held to mark the launch of its first international flight. He added that the airline was seriously looking at operating flights to London Heathrow and Tokyo.

The airline will first connect destinations where it al-



**Doubling up:** The airline will expand its fleet twofold to reach 41 aircraft by the end of this calendar year. ■ PRASHANT WAYDANDE

ready has codeshare partnerships with other carriers such as Japan Airlines and British Airways.

Over time, it plans to connect passengers to 44 destinations in 10 countries through codeshare. With 22 aircraft until March 2019, Vistara will expand its fleet twofold to reach 41 aircraft by the end of 2019. This includes nine Boeing 737-800 NG, previously leased by Jet Airways, and 10 A321neos.

Vistara will take delivery of nine A320neos between September and December,

which will allow it to fly up to Hong Kong and southern Europe. A Boeing 787-9 each will join the fleet in March and April 2020 and will enable the airline to fly up to 11 hours. In five years, Vistara aims to deploy 50% of its total capacity on international routes.

On whether it would participate in Air India's stake sale, Mr. Thng said Vistara was now focussed on growing organically.

(The writer was in Singapore at the invitation of Vistara)

# Minda sees auto sector revival in festive season

Parts maker expects govt. package

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA  
NEW DELHI

Minda Industries, which registered a 24% decline in consolidated net profit for the April-June 2019 quarter, said it was bullish on the automobile industry in the long term despite the current slowdown.

"There are multiple reasons for the current slowdown in the sector... NBFC crisis, insurance price increase etc. negatively impacting the market sentiment. Also, there is no clarity for electric vehicles. People are waiting [as to] when they will come... But all this is short-term. Not just me, but the entire industry is bullish... Our per capita car is 27 compared to 145 in China and 400 in Germany. The auto industry will continue to grow," N.K. Minda, CMD, Uno Minda Group, said.

Asked about loss of jobs, he said: "Across industry, there are some losses and some people have stopped recruiting. In our case, new

jobs have been frozen. We have not resorted to job cuts yet. But, day by day, the situation is getting worse... If the slowdown lasts for long, unemployment will be an issue in the sector."

**Pre-buying, before BS VI**

Asked by when he sees recovery in the sector, Mr. Minda said: "It is anybody's guess. We are hopeful for the festive season which is about to begin. If the festive season doesn't go well, then it's open to guesses... some say the slowdown will last for a year, some say more, some say six months."

He, however, added that the government seems "serious about helping the industry... We expect some kind of stimulation package should come to help us."

He added that the second half of the year may see growth on the back of festive season as well as pre-buying by some consumers before new BS VI norms kick in, which will make vehicles more expensive.

# 'Pak. move not to impact textile sector'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
COIMBATORE

Pakistan's move to stop import of products from India or of Indian origin is not expected to have much impact on the Indian textile industry, said Siddhartha Rajagopal, executive director of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council.

Pakistan imports mainly yarn and cotton from India. However, in recent years, Indian exporters have slowed down their supply to Pakistan. Between April and June this year, \$38 million worth of cotton yarn was exported to Pakistan as against \$42 million for the same period last year. The annual yarn exports to Pakistan are about \$100 million and it was mostly the low count yarns, Mr. Rajagopal said.

The Indian exporters, who are already facing a drop in cotton yarn exports, will have to look at other markets.

Chairman of the Cotton Association of India Atul Ganatra said India exported only four lakh bales of cotton to Pakistan this year as Indian cotton prices were relatively higher. Pakistan purchased mainly from the U.S. this year.

While direct exports to Pakistan (of cotton) has stopped, indirect exports might continue, he said.

# Lexus targets high-networth buyers for growth in India

Luxury carmaker gears up to unveil luxury coupe

LALATENDU MISHRA  
MUMBAI

Lexus, the luxury brand from the stable of Japan's Toyota, is targeting high networth individuals (HNIs) to grow its base in India.

Lexus, which has been positioned as a crafted luxury vehicle, 'designed and manufactured with passion', is being offered as a completely differentiated product to gain a foothold in India's small, but potentially important luxury car market. The key differentiation is that the Lexus vehicles are self-charging, hybrid electric vehicles that contribute to reduction in emissions.

"Lexus is not just a vehicle. A lot of emotion goes into building it. This vehicle is more about experience and is a product of art. HNIs are our customer base," said P.B. Venugopal, president, Lexus India.

Having started its Indian operations in 2017, Lexus has expanded its base to three Lexus Experience Centres in Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru. It has authorised service centres in Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Chandigarh.

Currently, the company is selling six models in India and is gearing up to introduce LC 500, a luxury sports



**Poetry in motion:** Luxury cars account for only 1.2% of the passenger car market in India. ■ BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

coupe in early 2020 in the Indian market.

**Two-door LC 500**

The two-door LC 500, globally launched in 2017, is already available in 68 countries and India now joins the list, top executives said. By June 2019, the company had sold a cumulative volume of 12,000 units globally.

Lexus is looking at India in the medium- to long-term perspective. "HNIs are growing in India and the market for luxury cars will grow in the medium to long term. We are also getting strong support from the Toyota family of customers who are upgrading to luxury vehicles," Mr. Venugopal said. He said 78% of the cus-

tomers in India are from the Toyota stable.

About the firm's performance, Mr. Venugopal said, "We are doing better than anticipated and there is a huge potential for Lexus in the medium to long term."

He said Lexus, as the first Japanese luxury car brand, will help grow the luxury car market, which is only 1.2% of the total passenger car segment in India.

In developed markets, this ratio is 4-5% and India has the potential to go to that level, he added.

(The writer was in Fukuoka, Japan, at the invitation of Lexus and visited the Toyota Motor Kyushu plant where Lexus vehicles are produced).

# Volvo Trucks sets up Uptime Centres

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Volvo Trucks India has set up 12 'Uptime Centres' in India, including a Command Centre in Bengaluru, to support its customers to help improve the efficiency of trucks for better usage and profitability. The objective is to keep the fleet operational for over 20 hours a day in mining applications.

Started as a pilot project in January this year, the 'Uptime Centre', digitally linked to 11 regional centres, has gone online to benefit customers, top executives said. "The Uptime Centre will be an important part of Volvo India's Uptime journey with plans to introduce more services in the future," said V. Venkateswarlu, vice-president, Aftermarket, VolvoTrucks India, VE Commercial Vehicles Ltd.

"Whether it is maximising the productivity of the fleet, or getting most out of every drop of fuel, we are committed to making the Volvo fleet ownership as successful as it can be," he said. "The new Uptime Centre not only showcases our innovative capabilities, but also underscores how serious we are about making our customers' operations more profitable than ever before," he added.

## IN BRIEF



### Denied a Jaguar, man pushes BMW into river

CHANDIGARH  
Gifted a BMW by his parents instead of a Jaguar that he was demanding, a young man from Haryana's Yamunanagar on Friday pushed his new car into a river in a fit of anger, police said. Later, he was seen trying to get the car out of the river with the help of local divers. IANS



### Taj Palace art auction raises ₹2.8 crore

NEW DELHI  
An auction of Indian art, curated from the collection of gallery DAG, was organised by the Taj Group on Friday. Forty percent of the proceeds will go towards charity. An untitled graphite-on-paper by Amrita Sher-Gil went under the hammer for ₹70 lakh. IANS



### Quavo to make animated series on hip hop

LOS ANGELES  
Rapper Quavo has decided to turn TV producer with an animated series based on the hip hop scene of his Atlanta stomping grounds. The untitled Marginal Mediaworks series will be targeted towards children from the ages of eight to 12. PTI



### Giant panda twins born at Belgian zoo

BRUSSELS  
Giant panda twins born at a zoo in Belgium on Thursday face a precarious first few days but the "extremely rare" birth still bodes well for the vulnerable species, the Pairi Daiza zoo has said. The male twin weighs 160 gm and the female 150 gm. REUTERS

## Cost is key: Chinese space firm revs up for reusable rocket race

The global boom in satellite deployment calls for frequent launches

REUTERS  
BEIJING

Chinese startup LinkSpace on Saturday completed its third test of a reusable rocket in five months, stepping up the pace in the race to develop a technology key to cheap space launches in an expected global boom in satellite deployment.

LinkSpace's RLV-T5 rocket blasted off in a desert in western Qinghai province. It flew as high as 300 metres before returning to the launchpad on its own after 50 seconds, said CEO Hu Zhenyu.

The Beijing-based company aims to launch its next-generation RLV-T16 next year that will be capable of reaching an altitude of up to 150 kilometres, Mr. Hu said.

The RLV-T5 previously hovered 20 metres and 40 metres above the ground in



At the cutting-edge: Illustration of the prototype of a LinkSpace reusable rocket. •@LINKSPACE\_CHINA/TWITTER

two tests in March and April respectively.

China envisions constellations of commercial satellites that can offer services ranging from high-speed Internet for aircraft and rural areas to tracking coal shipments and commuter traffic.

Reliable, low-cost and frequent launches will be key, with recoverable or partially recoverable rockets like the

Falcon 9 from Elon Musk's SpaceX one way to eventually affordable satellite deployment missions.

SpaceX has already used recoverable rockets on a number of orbital missions since a historic launch early in 2017, spurring Europe, Russia, Japan and China to speed up their own research into the technology or at least consider studying it.

LinkSpace's test flight on Saturday came on the heels of a historic delivery of a satellite into orbit last month by privately owned Chinese firm iSpace.

Beijing-based iSpace said last week that it was also planning to launch a recoverable rocket, in 2021.

The reusable design of its next-generation rocket could lead to a predicted cost reduction of 70%, iSpace estimated.

LinkSpace said it hoped to charge no more than 30 million yuan (\$4.25 million) per reusable launch.

That's a fraction of the \$25 million to \$30 million needed for a launch on a Northrop Grumman Innovation Systems Pegasus, a commonly used small rocket. The Pegasus is launched from a high-altitude aircraft and is not reusable.

## Newly discovered lake in Nepal may be the world's highest

Kajin Sara is said to have formed from Himalayan meltwater

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
LAMJUNG

The recently discovered Kajin Sara lake in Manang district of Nepal is likely to earn the distinction of the world's highest lake, taking the title from Tilicho lake (also in Manang).

The *Himalayan Times* reported that the lake is located at a height of 5,200 metres at Singarkharka in Chame rural municipality.

According to Chame rural municipality chairman Lokendra Ghale, the lake was discovered about a few months ago by a team of mountaineers.

"As per the measurement of the lake by the team, it is located at an altitude of 5,200 metres, which is yet to be officially verified. It's estimated to be 1,500 metres long and 600 metres wide," said Mr. Ghale. He said if the official inspection confirms



A view of Kajin Sara lake. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the altitude, it would be the world's highest.

The lake, called Singar locally, is said to have formed out of the water melted from the Himalayas. It can be reached after an 18-hour trek from Chame, the Manang district headquarters.

The lake shores offer a panoramic view of about a dozen peaks towards the north. The lake has Mt. Manaslu to the east, Mt. Dhaulagiri to the west, Mt. Annapurna and Mt. Lamjung to the south, and Mt. Peri to the north.

## Hollywood star Richard Gere speaks out to support migrants

Actor urges Italy to accept 160 people waiting in rescue ship

REUTERS  
LAMPEDUSA

Hollywood star Richard Gere on Saturday called on the Italian government to stop "demonising people" and instead help migrants who have been stranded on a Spanish charity boat in the Mediterranean for more than a week.

Mr. Gere, who visited the *Open Arms* ship in a show of support on Friday, joined a news conference in the Italian island of Lampedusa to call for the 160 migrants stuck on the boat to be allowed to disembark.

He compared the political situation in Italy, where League leader and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini has repeatedly refused requests by migrant ships to dock, to that of the U.S. administration of Donald Trump.

"We have our problems with refugees coming from Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico... It's very si-



Lending a hand: Actor Richard Gere, right, talking with migrants aboard the *Open Arms*. •AP

imilar to what you are going through here," he said, accusing politicians in both Italy and the United States of demonising migrants.

"This has to stop everywhere on this planet now. And it will stop if we say stop," he asserted.

Stand-offs with non-governmental organisation (NGO) boats have become common in the last year as

European nations are at odds over who should be responsible for accepting migrants.

The *Open Arms* said it had rescued 39 more people on Saturday, bringing the earlier count of 121 to 160.

This week, the European Union's executive called on member States to show solidarity and find a solution for the boat.

## Tackling poachers across borders

DNA forensics is being used by India and Nepal to analyse wildlife crimes

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

In July last year, officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized six pieces of ivory weighing nine kg at Siliguri in West Bengal's Darjeeling district. Two persons were arrested for smuggling the ivory, which was suspected to have been sourced from an elephant killed in the Budhbare area of Nepal's Jhapa district a few weeks earlier.

The DRI officials sent the ivory for analysis to scientists at the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in Kolkata.

After intelligence from India about the possible smuggling was shared with Nepal, samples from the carcass – a small piece of ivory (about 12 gm) and its flesh – were obtained and handed over to the ZSI.

By studying the samples using DNA forensics, Mukesh Thakur and his team at the ZSI deduced that the samples did not match.

"We concluded that samples collected from India



A pair of elephant tusks seized in West Bengal in July 2018. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and Nepal were from different elephants," the researchers wrote in a study titled "Resolving the trans-boundary dispute of elephant poaching between India and Nepal".

The study, published in the *Forensic Science International: Synergy* journal in July has been co-authored by a representative each from the DRI, India, and the Ministry of Forests and Environment,

Nepal. However, the more pressing issue of illegal trade has not been resolved.

Over the past few years, several kilos of ivory have been seized by different agencies, including the DRI and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau in north Bengal.

The region falls under what is termed the 'Kanchenjunga landscape', an area shared by India, Nepal and Bhutan.

"In Nepal, we don't have many elephants," said Mr. Bhattarai. "It is the elephants from India that migrate to southern and eastern region. We must coordinate with India for conservation of wildlife," he said.

The paper's authors have also stressed on compiling a genetic database in the landscape. "The present study proposes an initiative to have a combined effort by India, Nepal and Bhutan to establish the genetic data to assign the source of the confiscated material and understand the biology of an elephant," they wrote.

wildlife crime in the country.

Gopal Prakash Bhattarai, deputy director general, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal, told *The Hindu* that the country had seen only retaliatory killing of elephants by locals.

However, of late, there had been at least two killings where poaching for ivory could be suspected.

"We must coordinate with India for conservation of wildlife," he said.

The paper's authors have also stressed on compiling a genetic database in the landscape. "The present study proposes an initiative to have a combined effort by India, Nepal and Bhutan to establish the genetic data to assign the source of the confiscated material and understand the biology of an elephant," they wrote.

## Top Italian chef mixes it up with flavours from tiny island

She has the words garlic and oil tattooed on her arm

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SALINA

Award-winning young Italian chef Martina Caruso's love of food is in her blood – and she has the tattoos to prove it.

At just 29, Ms. Caruso has become a hit in the world of haute cuisine by using the sunshine flavours of her tiny volcanic island of Salina and giving a modern twist to traditional recipes.

Earlier this year, she was named Italy's female chef of 2019 – just three years after she became the youngest Italian to win a Michelin star at the family-run Signum restaurant and hotel on Salina.

The flavours from the idyllic island infuse Ms. Caruso's dishes and her favourite ingredients are even tattooed on her arm: garlic, oil, hot pepper, octopus and the sea. When she was little, she watched her father Michele, who as Signum's chef was devoted to traditional recipes.

"At first, my father did not give me any room, he did not want me to become a chef, a tiring job," Ms. Caruso says.

But she flew the nest for three years to train at a cookery school near Sicily's capital Palermo.

Ms. Caruso later took her place as a chef in the family restaurant, where she



Martina Caruso

which she cooks on embers in her garden. The delicate white fish is scarcely eaten on the island today but she is keen to continue using the traditional ingredient.

### Local dishes

Another local speciality is her "mezzi paccheri", short tube-shaped pasta with an intense squid sauce, based on a recipe made by fishermen's families.

"French cuisine is very much based on technique, the marriage of flavours. To think up a dish, Italian chefs may be more traditional, and that's what I do by listening to the country's elders," Ms. Caruso says.

However, Ms. Caruso's mother, Clara, the Mayor of the small town of Malfa, has never even cooked an egg.

Instead of the kitchen, Clara turned her attention over the course of 30 years to transforming a number of old pastel-coloured properties into what has become a boutique hotel in Salina.

She has also tried to increase tourism on the island by inviting artists into a former palace that has been turned into a cultural centre.

At the restaurant, Ms. Caruso's father still takes care of ingredients in the early morning and her brother Luca works as a manager.

## Colours of life



Turning heads: Transgender models pose backstage before a fashion show organized by the GPSGAY social network for the LGBT community in Bogota, Colombia. •AFP

## Employees would rather lose job to robots than people: study

Researchers look at impact of technology

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
LONDON

Most people find the idea of workers being replaced by robots or software worse than if the jobs are taken over by other workers. But when their own job is at stake, people prefer to be re-

placed by robots than by another employee, says a study.

Published in the journal *Nature Human Behaviour*, the study aims to analyse how workers react to being replaced by technology.

For this, researchers conducted 11 scenario studies and surveys with over 2,000 persons from several countries in Europe and North America.

"Even when unemploy-

ment results from the introduction of new technologies, people still judge it in a social context," said study researcher Christoph Fuchs, professor at the Technical University of Munich, Germany.

"It is important to understand these psychological effects when trying to manage the massive changes in the working world to minimise disruptions in society," he said.

The study shows that most people view it more favourably when workers are replaced by other people than by robots or intelligent software. This preference reverses, however, when it refers to people's own jobs. When this is the case, the majority of workers find it less upsetting to see their own jobs go to robots than to other employees.

In the long term, however, the same people see ma-

chines as more threatening to their future role in the workforce.

The researchers were also able to identify the causes behind these seemingly paradoxical results.

They said that people tend to compare themselves less with machines than with other people.

Consequently, being replaced by a robot or a software poses less of a threat to their feeling of self-worth.

## Spacecraft in orbit operate on steam

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
WASHINGTON

In a first, NASA has demonstrated the first coordinated manoeuvre between two water-powered spacecraft in the low Earth orbit.

The twin spacecraft were orbiting Earth about 9 km from one another, Universe Today reported.

The two spacecraft established a radio frequency communication cross-link to "talk" with each other.

One spacecraft issued a command to the second to activate its thruster and close the gap between the two. The fuel tanks on both the spacecraft were filled with water. During this propulsive manoeuvre, the water was converted into steam by the thrusters to propel the spacecraft. The exercise was a part of NASA's Optical Communications and Sensor Demonstration mission.