



3 dead after helicopter carrying relief material crashes in Uttarkashi

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Our guards had become our jailors, says Cong. leader Salman Soz

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With new sovereign council, Sudan moves towards civilian rule

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Kohli's men look to start well in the first Test against the West Indies

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Water level in Yamuna river starts receding

NEW DELHI
The water level in the Yamuna has started receding and is expected to fall below the danger mark in the early hours of Thursday. About 21,000 people living in the low-lying areas have been evacuated since Sunday night. The government has erected around 4,000 tents for them, according to officials.

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Homebuyers surrender 4,000 DDA flats

NEW DELHI
Out of the approximately 8,000 flats allotted by the Delhi Development Authority, around 4,000 of them have been surrendered by the allottees, officials said on Wednesday. They said most of the flats surrendered were in the low-income group in Narela. A draw of lots for the housing scheme 2019 was conducted in July where around 10,000 flats were put on offer.

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Chidambaram arrested in INX Media case after high drama

He was held from his residence after making surprise appearance at press meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Wednesday arrested former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram soon after he held a press conference at the Congress headquarters refuting all charges against him in the INX Media case.

“He has been arrested on an arrest warrant issued by a competent court,” said CBI spokesperson Nitin Wakankar.

After his arrest, doctors from the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital conducted a medical examination on him at the CBI headquarters, sources said.

Mr. Chidambaram has been kept in suite No. 5 of the CBI Guest House on the ground floor of the agency headquarters, they said.

He will be produced before a special CBI court on Thursday, where the agency will seek his remand.

Earlier, high drama unfolded outside Mr. Chidambaram's residence following his arrival after the press conference around 8.15 p.m.

A CBI team, which had earlier reached the Congress headquarters, jumped over the wall of the premises to enter Mr. Chidambaram's house. An ED team, led by a Joint Director-level officer,



CBI officials taking away Congress leader P. Chidambaram in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ANI

also entered the residence.

Mr. Chidambaram's supporters soon gathered outside, shouting slogans against the investigating agencies and the Central government.

After completing the formalities, the CBI team took custody of Mr. Chidambaram around 9.30 p.m. and drove away in a car to the CBI headquarters.

Bail denied

The CBI and the ED teams had started looking for Mr. Chidambaram after his plea for anticipatory bail was denied by the Delhi High Court

on Tuesday, and his appeal was not immediately listed for hearing by the Supreme Court.

Several teams of the two agencies attempted to track him down, but he could not be traced till he appeared for the press conference.

In a twist to the daylong drama with news channels and the ruling government questioning Mr. Chidambaram's alleged attempts at “evading” arrest, he appeared at the Congress headquarters at 8 p.m. to address the media.

“In the INX Media case, I have not been accused of

any offence. Nor has anyone else, including any member of my family, been accused of any offence. In fact, there is no chargesheet by either the CBI or the ED filed before a competent court,” he said.

He also said that the FIR did not accuse him of any wrongdoing. “Yes, there is a widespread impression that grave offences have been committed, and my son and I have committed those offences. Nothing can be farther from truth. These are lies spread by pathological liars.”

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Trump: Kashmir situation complicated by religion

Will do my best to mediate in the issue, says U.S. President

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday said he would do his best to mediate or help somehow with the tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

Mr. Trump drew attention to the fact that he had spoken to the Prime Ministers of both countries on Monday and that he would be meeting Prime Minister Modi in Biarritz, France, for the G7 summit over the weekend. However, he stopped short of directly saying that he would raise the Kashmir issue with Mr. Modi over the weekend.

Will meet Modi

“I get along really well with both of them. As you know, Prime Minister Khan was here just recently. And I was with — I'm going to be with Prime Minister Modi. I'll be with him over the weekend in France,” Mr. Trump said.

“I think we're helping the situation. But there's [sic] tremendous problems between those two countries, as you know. And I will do the best I can to mediate or do something,” Mr. Trump said, speaking at the Oval Office in the presence of Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, prior to their bilateral meeting.

“Great relationship with



Ready to help: U.S. President Donald Trump speaking outside the White House in Washington, DC. ■AFP

‘Be wary of U.S.-Pak. deal’

India should be wary about a possible U.S.-Pakistan “deal” on Afghanistan, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai said. Mr. Karzai was in Delhi to meet PM Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. ► PAGE 13

both of them [Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Imran Khan], but they are not exactly friends at this moment. Complicated situation. A lot has to do with religion. Religion is a complicated subject,” Mr. Trump added.

The U.S. President's comments on Kashmir also included his version of a history of the region.

“Well, they've been having this — these talks for hundreds of years, even under different names. But this is — but it's Kashmir. And Kashmir is a very complicated place. You have the Hindus and you have the Muslims, and I wouldn't say they get along so great. And that's what you have right now,” Mr. Trump said, calling the situation “very explosive”.

The U.S. has been concerned about the risk of a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan — concerns that have especially been stressed since the terror attack in Pulwama on February 14 and the ensuing hostilities between the two countries. Washington is also seeking Pakistan's cooperation in ensuring that a peace deal is struck with the Taliban and the U.S. can begin withdrawing from Afghanistan.

Dalit protest turns violent in the Capital

Bhim Army chief along with 50 others detained for protesting temple demolition

HEMANI BHANDARI
NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

A protest by Dalit organisations against the demolition of a Guru Ravidas temple in the Tughlakabad forest area turned violent in south-east Delhi's Govindpuri on Wednesday evening, with the police detaining over 50 protesters, including Bhim Army chief Chandrashekar Azad.

DCP (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal said more people could be detained as several police teams were monitoring the situation following a clash between the protesters and the police.

Thousands of protesters from various Dalit organisations, led by the Bhim Army chief, took to the streets on Wednesday and marched from Ramliha Maidan to the site where the Guru Ravidas



Police personnel baton charge activists of the Bhim Army during a rally in Delhi on Wednesday. ■PTI

temple was demolished earlier this month by the Delhi Development Authority.

‘Attacked with stones’

The police claimed the protesters turned violent and attacked officers with sticks and stones. “Mild and reasonable force had to be used to disperse the unruly mob.

Some policemen have sustained injuries in the incident. Some members of the unruly mob have been detained. Appropriate legal action is being taken in this matter,” said Mr. Biswal, adding that over 800 policemen were deployed in the area. Sources said the protesters also vandalised a few

vehicles and set them on fire. The road leading to the temple was blocked after the violence, the sources added.

The protesters, however, claimed that the police started the lathi charge to stop their march. Satish Kumar, 43, a BSP worker from Najafgarh, said the police used force when some of the protesters tried to go inside the site of the demolished temple. “We were peaceful, but some people wanted to go inside the temple and the police used water canon and lathis to stop us.”

Kailash Nirmal, 38, a member of Samyakk Buddhivihar, C-Block Mongolpuri, said they fled the spot as soon as the police started lathi charge and lobbed tear gas shells at them. “I am yet to find the others who came with me,” he said.

SEE ASLO ► PAGE 3

No plan to curb social media: HC

‘Aadhaar linkage never considered’

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Wednesday made it clear that it was absolutely not interested, at any point of time, in addressing a plea made by two public interest litigation (PIL) petitioners to link Aadhaar or any other government authorised identity proof with social media accounts held by individuals.

Justices S. Manikumar and Subramonium Prasad clarified that they had expanded the scope of the two PIL petitions long back and had issued notices to Facebook, YouTube, Google, WhatsApp, Twitter and a few others only to make them share information with the police in cases in-

volving cyber crimes.

The judges agreed with the submissions of Advocate General Vijay Narayan and Additional Government Pleader E. Manoharan that much water had flowed ever since the court expanded the scope of the case in August last year and the social media giants too had been participating in the proceedings for long.

However, some of them had moved the Supreme Court on Tuesday with a plea to transfer the two cases pending in Madras High Court, as well as similar cases pending in other High Courts, to the top court in order to avoid contradictory verdicts.

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Cleaning services on trains will be hit

Southern Railway facing fund crunch

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

With no sign of funds coming in from the Railway Ministry despite an SOS, Southern Railway has decided to suspend onboard housekeeping services (OBHS) on 86 long-distance trains, mostly originating from Tamil Nadu and Kerala, with effect from September 1.

The step, which comes amid Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Swachh Bharat mission, follows acute paucity of funds to pay dues to OBHS contractors.

Contracts to end

Southern Railway is planning to withdraw contracts for linen supply, pest control and bio-toilet maintenance on these trains.

Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Shubranshu has written to senior officials in Chennai, Madurai, Palghat, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchi and Salem Divisions asking them to issue notices to contractors to suspend OBHS operations.

24 expresses spared

However, out of the 110 long-distance trains, OBHS will be retained on 24 trains, including Tamil Nadu Express, Grand Trunk Express, Kerala Express and Navajeevan Express.

“A conscious decision has been taken to keep operation of OBHS contract in abeyance,” Mr. Shubranshu said.

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Militant killed in Baramulla encounter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR/ NEW DELHI

A Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant and a police officer were killed in an encounter in North Kashmir's Baramulla district early on Wednesday.

“LeT militant Momin Gojri from Baramulla's Syed Kareem, was killed in Ganie-Hamam area, where an operation was launched on Tuesday evening,” said Deputy Inspector General of Police V.K. Birdi.

Special Police Officer Bilal Ahmad succumbed to injuries sustained during the encounter, the first since Article 370 was annulled and the State bifurcated on August 5.

Sub-inspector A. Parihar, who was injured in the operation was rushed to the Army hospital, officials added.

Fossils show Kutch desert was once a forest

‘It likely had giraffes, rhinos, elephants and giant crocodiles in the Miocene period’

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The hot arid desert of Kutch was once a humid sub-tropical forest with a variety of birds, freshwater fish and possibly giraffes and rhinos, a team of Indian and French researchers has said.

Their conclusions are based on the discovery of a tranche of vertebrate fossils from nearly 14 million years ago in a geological period known as the Miocene. After the discovery, they took nearly 12 years for analysis.

The fossils, consisting mostly of ribs, and parts of teeth and bones, were unearthed from Palasava village of Rapar taluk in Kutch, Gujarat.

“Overall, the fossil finds from Palasava suggest that a rich diversity of fauna and flora sustained in warm,



Mammoth find: An upper molar of an elephant-like mammal (Gomphotherium) at Palasava in Kutch. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

humid/wet, tropical to sub-tropical environmental conditions during the Middle Miocene (about 14 Mya),” the research team of Vivesh V. Kapur, Martin Pickford, Gaurav Chauhan and M.G. Thakkar reported in the peer-reviewed journal *Historical Biology*.

The bulk of fossils

unearthed in Kutch have so far been mainly marine organisms, due to their proximity to the Arabian Sea. Geological changes eventually closed off the salt-flats' connection to the sea and the region turned into a large lake, eventually becoming salty wetlands.

The findings point to

clues on how mammals dispersed between Africa and the Indian subcontinent when part of India was in the Gondwanaland supercontinent that existed nearly 300 million years ago.

“It is surprising that Kutch had giraffes, rhinos, elephants and giant crocodiles in a closed basin in the Miocene,” M.G. Thakkar, a senior scientist at the K.S.K.V. Kachchh University told *The Hindu*.

Palaeontologist G.V.R. Prasad of Delhi University said that the finds were significant because they showed Kutch to be a potential treasure trove of mammal fossils with possible continuity to vertebrate fossils in the Siwalik, spanning Pakistan to Nepal.

In Hyderabad, Amazon opens its biggest ever campus

Have not seen any slowdown, says its country head

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Amazon on Wednesday inaugurated a three-million sq ft campus building on 9.5 acres within Hyderabad's financial district, the largest such facility for the e-commerce giant globally.

The opening of what is the company's first owned office building outside the U.S. and the single-largest building globally, comes in the backdrop of a growing significance of India as a market as well as intensifying competition in the space.

Country head Amit Agarwal told the media, in an interaction at the inauguration event, that Amazon was



The Amazon's new office facility at Gachibowli in Hyderabad is spread over 9.5 acres. ■NAGARA GOPAL

both focused on and committed long term to India.

Not attaching undue importance to either the competition in the country or the effects of an economic slowdown on the business

plans, he said, “We haven't seen any slowdown yet.” One reason could be the small share of e-commerce in retail consumption.

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