



SC issues notice to govt. on pleas against Act to penalise triple talaq

page 9



Asia-Pacific Group puts Pak. on 'blacklist' for no curbs on terror funds

page 13



China to impose new tariffs on \$75 billion of U.S. imports

page 14

Sai Praneeth, Sindhu in World badminton semifinals

page 20



PRINTED AT • CHENNAI • COIMBATORE • BENGALURU • HYDERABAD • MADURAI • NOIDA • VISAKHAPATNAM • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • KOCHI • VIJAYAWADA • MANGALURU • TIRUCHIRAPALLI • KOLKATA • HUBBALLI • MOHALI • MALAPPURAM • MUMBAI • TIRUPATI • LUCKNOW • CUTTACK • PATNA

NEARBY



Commercial vehicles sans RFID tag to face penalty

NEW DELHI
Starting midnight on Friday, commercial vehicles entering Delhi will have to mandatorily bear radio-frequency identification tags to get through toll plazas at 13 border points in the city. Those failing to do so will face strict penalties.

CITY ► PAGE 4

DDA may launch e-auction of plots

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Development Authority is likely to launch a scheme for e-auctioning of vacant plots for group housing projects in the Capital in the first week of September, officials of the urban body said. In a meeting held on August 13, the proposal to dispose residential plots for group housing projects was approved.

CITY ► PAGE 2

Akhilesh dissolves all SP units in U.P.

LUCKNOW
Attempting a course correction in the party after its Lok Sabha poll debacle, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday dissolved all its units in U.P., including the State executive and district and youth wings, sources said.

NEWS ► PAGE 12

Govt. responds to downturn with steps to boost growth

■ Controversial surcharge on Foreign Portfolio Investors withdrawn ■ But increased surcharge will apply to those earning over ₹2 crore a year ■ Violations of CSR rules will not be treated as criminal offences ■ Govt. will front-load ₹70,000 crore of capital infusion in public banks

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The government on Friday came out on the front foot to try to boost private sector sentiments, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcing a slew of measures to reduce the burden on the sector, including withdrawing the controversial surcharge on Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) and reiterating the Prime Minister's statement that the government "respects all wealth creators".

Ms. Sitharaman told a press conference that the government would not treat corporate social responsibility violations as criminal offences, as it had earlier said.

"In order to encourage investment in the capital market, it has been decided to withdraw the enhanced surcharge levied by the Finance (No 2) Act, 2019, on long- and short-term capital gains arising from the transfer of equity shares," the Minister announced. "In other words, the enhanced surcharge on FPIs goes and the pre-Budget position is restored."

She, however, clarified that the increased surcharge announced in the Budget would still apply to high net worth individuals earning more than ₹2 crore a year. This, she said, would be the case till India's 75th Independence Day, when the decision would be reviewed.

When push comes to shove

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced some measures to boost economic growth and promised that there is more to come. Two more press conferences are to be held, one of which will be next week. Here are some highlights:

- Increased surcharge on FPIs scrapped
- CSR violations not to be treated as criminal offences
- Public sector bank infusion of **₹70,000 crore** to be released upfront, in one go
- Banks agree to issue more repo-linked loan products to benefit borrowers
- Additional **₹20,000 crore** liquidity for housing finance companies, which will also benefit borrowers
- Govt. to purchase cars to boost auto demand; higher registration fees put off
- Delayed payments by PSUs to be expedited
- Angel tax withdrawn for registered startups



Nirmala Sitharaman and her deputy Anurag Thakur, left, in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

- To provide protection to honest decision-making by bankers to boost lending
- Pending GST refunds to MSMEs to be paid within 30 days
- Amendment to MSME Act to move towards single definition to be considered
- Issue of IT orders, notices, etc. through a centralised system to cut harassment
- To set up dedicated cell to address problems of start-ups
- To set up an entity for credit enhancement for infrastructure and housing projects
- Task force to finalise pipeline of infrastructure projects
- More action on development of Credit Default Swap markets soon
- Simplification of KYC procedure to improve market access for foreign investors
- Announcement on real estate sector next week

single definition to be considered

■ Issue of IT orders, notices, etc. through a centralised system to cut harassment

■ To set up dedicated cell to address problems of start-ups

■ To set up an entity for credit enhancement for infrastructure and housing projects

■ Task force to finalise pipeline of infrastructure projects

■ More action on development of Credit Default Swap markets soon

■ Simplification of KYC procedure to improve market access for foreign investors

■ Announcement on real estate sector next week

The government also decided to front-load the ₹70,000 crore of capital infusion in public sector banks that was announced in the Budget, a move that is further aimed at increasing private investment by facilitating greater credit disbursal by the banks. According to the government, this ₹70,000 crore will lead to about ₹5 lakh crore of fresh liquidity that can be loaned out.

In what amounts to a

short-term bailout of the auto industry, Ms. Sitharaman announced that the government had rescinded its ban on the purchase of new vehicles by its departments to replace old ones. Vehicles bought till March 31, 2020, will also be eligible for an additional 15% depreciation. The proposal to enhance registration fees for new vehicles will be kept on hold till June 2020.

The government has also

significantly reined in the discretionary powers of the tax authorities. Ms. Sitharaman announced that from October 1, all notices and summons by the Income Tax Department would be generated by a centralised computer and would carry a unique code.

Any notices not carrying these codes would be considered invalid, and all pending notices would either have to be disposed of by October

BSF officer, wife declared 'foreigners' in Assam

Rahman is currently posted in Punjab

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI**

An assistant sub-inspector of the Border Security Force (BSF) and his wife have been declared "foreigners" by a Foreigners' Tribunal in eastern Assam's Jorhat town.

The citizenship of the officer's parents and his siblings are, however, not in doubt. The family is based in Golaghat district's Udaypur-Mikirpatty close to the Assam-Nagaland border.

The tribunal declared Muzibur Rahman and his wife as non-Indians in an ex parte judgment in July.

'Drunkard's account'

Mr. Rahman, currently posted in Punjab, came to know of the judgment against him when he came home on leave in July last

week. He said the Assam police's border wing had relied on a 'drunkard's account' to submit a report to the tribunal against him.

The border wing, established in 1962 to initially prevent infiltration of Pakistanis, is tasked with detection and deportation of foreigners. Currently, 100 Foreigners' Tribunals decide the fate of such "foreigners" referred by this wing. "We have land documents of 1923. It is a pity that a genuine Indian citizen has been made a foreigner on the basis of a drunkard's feedback. My family did not receive the tribunal's notice. The chief of our village also did not inform me," Mr. Rahman said, adding that he had approached the Gauhati High Court.

The Hong Kong Way



Silent power: Demonstrators gather at the Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront in Hong Kong on Friday as part of a 40-km-long human chain to highlight their protest. They said they were inspired by the 'Baltic Way', when people in the Baltic states joined hands 30 years ago to protest Soviet control. ■ AP

Chidambaram gets SC relief in ED case

Protection from arrest till Aug. 26

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Friday protected former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram from arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) till August 26, the next date of hearing.

The ED is investigating the charges of money laundering against him in connection with the INX Media case.

"He already had the benefit of interim bail in the ED matter. He was also questioned in this case. He will continue to get protection," Justice R. Banumathi, leading a Bench comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna, observed.

The interim protection was granted, despite repeated exhortations from Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to

the Bench that "Your Lordships' conscience should be satisfied before giving him any protection."

Mr. Mehta even voiced the apprehension that the interim relief would be "misused" in the remand proceedings due on Monday in the CBI court against Mr. Chidambaram.

The court refused to take a sealed envelope proffered by Mr. Mehta, appearing for the CBI and the ED, which he said contained crucial evidence against Mr. Chidambaram.

The Bench was hearing two separate appeals filed by Mr. Chidambaram on August 20, within hours of the Delhi High Court refusing him anticipatory bail.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

LETTERS SENT ► PAGE 12

Coimbatore under a security blanket

Six Lashkar-e-Taiba suspects believed to have intruded into Tamil Nadu

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE**

Massive surveillance has been mounted across Tamil Nadu, especially in Coimbatore, following an intelligence input that six suspected terrorists of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), including five Tamil Muslims from Sri Lanka and a possible Pakistan national, have intruded into Tamil Nadu.

The coastal areas, too, came under heightened surveillance with the police asking fishermen to tip them off on the movement of suspicious persons.

Last seen on August 21

The suspected terrorists were reportedly last seen in Coimbatore on the evening of August 21, the alert said, adding that one of them had been identified as Illyas Anwar, believed to be of Pakis-



Alert sounded: Coastal Security Group personnel patrolling the waters off Thoothukudi on Friday. ■ N. RAJESH

tan origin. The LeT operatives were assisted by a native of Kerala, employed in Bahrain but untraceable. A resident of Thrissur, the suspect was helping them with logistics and creating a base.

A senior government official in New Delhi said they had zeroed in on the suspect. It is not clear whether

he has been arrested.

"The specific information came from intelligence agencies here; we are working on the leads," said the official.

Though initially a photo of the suspected Kerala man was circulated on mobile messaging platforms by some police personnel, Director General of Police J.K. Tripathy, talking to journal-

ists in Chennai, denied any such photograph had been released officially.

Additional DGP (Law and Order) Jayanth Murali arrived in Coimbatore on Friday morning to take stock of the security situation and held discussions with senior police officers. *The Hindu* had on Friday reported on the intelligence alert and the heightened security in Coimbatore.

The intelligence communication listed five possible targets for attacks: the Velankanni shrine in Nagapattinam; the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) in Wellington; Udhagamandalam; the Air Force Station in Surul, Coimbatore; the Sabarimala shrine in Kerala; and "any other communally sensitive" target.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

Centre steps in to control onion prices

Rain in onion-growing States causes concern about hike in prices

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

With onion supplies falling prey to hoarders and profiteers at entry points to Delhi, the Union government has asked the police from all the neighbouring States to take action to prevent artificial shortage in the Capital.

The issue was raised at a meeting called to review the prices of essential commodities such as onions, pulses and oilseeds under the chairmanship of Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash K. Srivastava here on Friday. Officials from the Intelligence Bureau and the Enforcement Directorate attended the meeting, along with police representatives from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana, Ministry officials said.

"We have already taken action to increase the supply of onions in the market, but



Action has been taken to increase supply, an official said. ■ FILE PHOTO

we have received reports that supplies are being held up at the border by certain traders, hoarders and profiteers," a senior official told *The Hindu*. "As this is an inter-State issue, we have asked police officers from all neighbouring States to create a common database for more effective enforcement."

Police from all neighbouring States have been asked to hold regular meetings with each other and ensure seamless checks on hoarding both

within the Capital and in other States, as well as at entry points along the border, said an official statement.

Heavy rain in key onion-growing States such as Maharashtra and Karnataka have caused concerns about a hike in prices of the kitchen staple.

On Wednesday, the Consumer Affairs Department had directed Mother Dairy to put a ₹23.90 per kg cap on onion prices at its Safal shops and took efforts to increase supply of the vegetable in the market.

On Friday, the committee decided to further increase the daily supply of onions from the government buffer stock and directed NAFED to release stock from the Price Stabilisation Fund into the market to ensure improved availability at reasonable rates.

Delhi scores lowest on water management

**JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI**

Delhi has finished at the bottom of the Composite Water Management Index, an assessment by the Niti Aayog on how States and Union Territories manage their water.

The assessment pans nine themes, each having an attached weight, and assesses how well States have done on criteria such as groundwater and surface water restoration, implementing major and medium irrigation projects, watershed development, participatory irrigation management, on-farm water use, rural and urban water supply, and policy and governance. These indicators were broken down into 28 objective indicators.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 4