



on Sunday



Sonia clears tie-up with Left Front for Bengal Assembly byelections

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First batch of Rafale jets to arrive in India by end of April next

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Hong Kong police fire tear gas to break up anti-govt. protests

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P. V. Sindhu storms into the World Championship final

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NEARBY



Tejashwi Yadav back in Bihar after 42 days

PATNA
RJD MLA and Leader of the Opposition in Bihar Tejashwi Yadav has returned to the State after an absence of 42 days and plunged headlong into politics amid speculation that all was not well in his family and the party.

NEWS • PAGE 10

Five 'journalists' booked for harassing policemen

NOIDA
Five men, who identified themselves as journalists, have been booked under the Gangsters Act for allegedly pressuring policemen to serve their ends by threatening to circulate "motivated" news stories.

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MAGAZINE • 32 PAGES (TABLOID)

CLASSIFIEDS • PAGE 4 & 6

Opposition delegation turned back from Srinagar airport

12-member team wanted to take stock of situation

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

A delegation of Opposition leaders, led by former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, which landed in Srinagar on Saturday afternoon to take stock of the situation after the suspension of Article 370, was not allowed to enter the city and was sent back to Delhi from the Srinagar airport.

The 12-member delegation was detained and taken to the VIP lounge of the airport as soon as the leaders disembarked from the aircraft.

A video clip, filmed at the VIP lounge and released by



No entry: Rahul Gandhi and other Opposition leaders at the Delhi airport on their return from Srinagar. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

the Congress, showed Mr. Gandhi trying to reason with officials of the Jammu and Kashmir administration to let them out of the airport.

"The government has invited me. The Governor has said I am invited. Now that I

have come, you are telling me I can't go out. The government has said everything is normal. Now, if everything is normal, why am I not allowed out? This is a bit surprising. We want to go to any area and talk to five, ten,

PCI wants to intervene in plea

The Press Council of India wants to present a "just" view in the Supreme Court of how free and fair reporting by the media in the curfew-hit Jammu and Kashmir should strike a balance with "paramount" national interests. It wants to intervene in a petition filed by an editor against media restrictions. ► PAGE 11

15 people," Mr. Gandhi told the officials who read out a government order that the delegation couldn't step out of the airport building.

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J&K WAS ISOLATED: PM ► PAGE 11

BJP veteran Jaitley passes away

President, PM, political leaders condole stalwart's demise

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

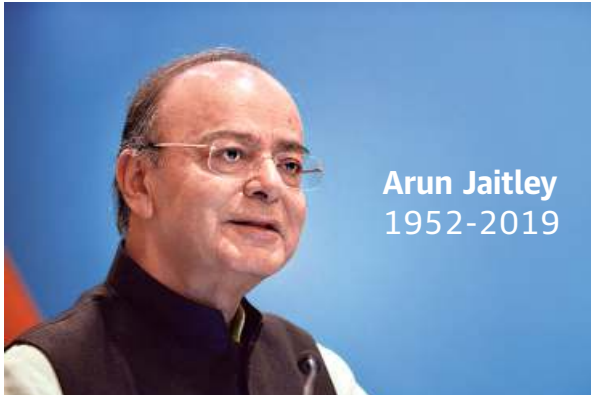
Former Union Finance Minister and senior BJP leader Arun Jaitley passed away on Saturday at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at 12.07 p.m. He was 66 and is survived by wife and two children.

Mr. Jaitley had been admitted on August 9 with complaints of uneasiness and breathlessness and was under the care of a multi-disciplinary team of senior doctors. He was put on prolonged cardiac and respiratory support after his condition deteriorated days after he was admitted.

In a statement, AIIMS said: "It is with profound grief that we inform about the sad demise of Arun Jaitley, former Finance Minister of Government of India, at 12.07 p.m. on August 24."

The former Minister had been unwell for a larger part of the past two years. In 2014, he underwent a bariatric surgery to correct the weight he had gained because of a long-standing diabetic condition. In 2018, he underwent a kidney transplant surgery at AIIMS. Earlier this year, in January, he was diagnosed with a rare form of soft tissue sarcoma, a form of cancer.

Later in the afternoon, Mr. Jaitley's mortal remains were shifted to his Kailash Colony residence where sev-



Arun Jaitley
1952-2019

eral leaders, including BJP president Amit Shah, Union Ministers Harsh Vardhan and Jitendra Singh and party working president J.P. Nadda, offered floral tributes.

Mr. Jaitley will be cremated on Sunday afternoon at the Nigambodh Ghat, BJP leader Sudhanshu Mittal said.

'Valuable friend'

In a tribute to Mr. Jaitley, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described him as a "valued friend" whose insights and nuanced understanding of matters had "very few parallels". Mr. Modi, who is in the UAE on an official tour, said the former Finance Minister was full of life, blessed with wit, a great sense of humour and charisma.

In a series of tweets, Mr. Modi said Mr. Jaitley was admired by people across all sections of society, adding that he was multi-faceted,

and had impeccable knowledge of India's Constitution, history, public policy, governance and administration. "With the demise of Arun Jaitley Ji, I have lost a valued friend, whom I have had the honour of knowing for decades," Mr. Modi said.

The BJP lost several of its leaders, including former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar and Union Minister Ananth Kumar, in the past one year. Mr. Jaitley died 18 days after Sushma Swaraj.

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'ABLE AND RESPECTED' CRICKET ADMINISTRATOR ► PAGE 17

A GREAT LOSS FOR THE NATION ► PAGE 3

U.S.-China trade war likely to dominate Modi-Trump talks

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump will meet in Biarritz, France, on Sunday, where India is a special invitee to the G-7 summit. The meeting comes ahead of the one-on-one meeting between the two leaders on

Monday, where trade issues are expected to overshadow proceedings.

While the impact of the growing U.S.-China trade war will take centre stage, New Delhi is closely watching a special meeting at the G-7 on how to reform the World Trade Organisation (WTO), where U.S. trade offi-

cials have indicated that Mr. Trump could bring a proposal to stop India and China from availing themselves of special rights as developing countries.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi's primary mission is to put trade talks between India and the U.S., which stalled last November, back on

track. Despite an agreement by the two leaders to restart the talks when they last met in June, top trade representatives of the two countries haven't scheduled a meeting yet. During a 30-minute telephone conversation with Mr. Trump on August 19, Mr. Modi had "expressed the hope" that Commerce Minister Piy-

ush Goyal and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer would "meet at an early date". While Mr. Goyal is expected to travel to Washington early next month, a Ministry official said that no date has been set as yet.

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TRUMP MEETS MACRON ► PAGE 12

Minority students' group threatens stir over final NRC

AAMSU cautions against excluding genuine citizens, including foreigners

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) has threatened to launch an "intense agitation" if any genuine Indian citizen is excluded and a "single foreigner" included in the final National Register of Citizens to be published on August 31.

The threat follows the general apprehension that the final NRC would not be error-free.

The students' body has also warned against any move to change or amend Clause 6 of the Assam Accord of 1985 that seeks to provide "constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards" and "protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people".

The accord also fixed March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date for detection and depor-



The final National Register of Citizens is to be published on August 31. ■ FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

tation of all illegal immigrants irrespective of their religion.

"A force is trying to derail the NRC process and there are speculations that many illegal immigrants have been included while genuine Indians have been left out. We will be compelled to launch a democratic movement against the NRC authority if we find any discrepancies," AAMSU adviser Azizur Rahman told media persons on Saturday.

He questioned the "mo-

tive" behind forcing thousands of people already included in the NRC to reverify their documents ahead of the publication of the citizens' list. "The NRC authority would be solely responsible for any untoward incident that might happen," he added.

'Deliberate exclusion'

"The religious and linguistic minorities of Assam have cooperated in the exercise monitored by the Supreme Court. No one disputes the

cut-off date, and the apex court has often told State NRC Coordinator Prateek Hajela to ensure nobody with valid citizenship documents is harassed," AAMSU general secretary Abdur Rahman Biswas said on Saturday. "But deliberately excluding people with citizenship documents prior to March 25, 1971 or including foreigners who came to Assam after that date will not be tolerated."

The AAMSU advised against provocative statements and asked the government to crack down on forces that might try to create communal tension.

The minority students' body welcomed the constitution of a high-level committee for the implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord. But it asked the committee to not be partisan and go by the Assam Accord cut-off date while preparing its report.

Savarkar bust removed from DU campus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Confusion prevailed on Saturday over the overnight removal of busts of Veer Savarkar, Bhagat Singh and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose from outside the Arts Faculty of Delhi University's North Campus.

While the RSS-affiliated ABVP, in a statement, claimed it was removed by the Delhi University Students' Union, the student outfit's member and outgoing president Shakti Singh accused the DU administration of removing the busts.

A senior functionary of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad said the outfit wants that the busts should be installed with due permission and with pomp and show and not silently.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 2

Modi honoured



Royal reception: Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, after being honoured with the Order of Zayed, the UAE's highest civilian award, in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. ■ PTI (REPORT: PAGE 10)

Five Maoists killed in Chhattisgarh

Two jawans also injured in the gunfight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RAIPUR

Five Maoists were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh on Saturday, police said.

Two jawans of the District Reserve Guard were also injured in the gun battle, they said.

"The exchange of fire took place around 6 a.m. in the forest near Dhurbada village, located around 20 km away from Orchha police station in the district. It occurred when a DRG team was out on a counter-insurgency operation," said Director General of Police D.M. Awasthi.

Acting on a specific intelligence input about the location of a Maoist training camp in the interior forest

of Orchha, about 350 km from Raipur, a team of DRG raided the place, he said.

The gunfight lasted for around one and a half hours, following which the ultras disappeared into the dense forest, he said.

Huge cache of weapons

"During search operations, bodies of five Maoists were recovered from the spot. Besides, a huge cache of weapons was also seized from there," the officer said.

Efforts were on to move the two DRG personnel who sustained injuries in the gunfight from the forests.

Further details will be known once the patrolling team returns to its camp, Mr. Awasthi said.

Villagers sit on dharna outside Vedanta refinery

Prohibitory orders imposed in Lanjigarh

PRAFULLA DAS
BHUBANESWAR

Tension prevailed in the Lanjigarh area of Kalahandi district on Saturday after a large number of residents sat on a dharna outside the main gate of the Vedanta alumina refinery demanding compensation of ₹10 lakh for the death of a fellow villager in judicial custody.

Patnaik Harijan, a resident of Rengapalli village under Lanjigarh block, died early on Saturday at a government hospital in Burla where he was admitted by the Kalahandi jail authorities a day earlier.

The agitating villagers had kept Harijan's body at the dharna site. To avoid any untoward incident, the local administration imposed prohibitory orders in the area.

Harijan (45) was arrested in March, along with 28 others, following a clash between villagers and personnel of Odisha Industrial Security Force outside the refinery main gate. Dani Batra, a villager, and Sujit Minz, an OISF constable, were killed in the clash which broke out when the villagers were staging a protest demanding employment for locals in the refinery.

A group of citizens and organisations demanded a judicial probe into Harijan's death. In a statement, as many as 23 activists, writers and lawyers demanded punishment for all erring officers, withdrawal of cases against those who are still in jail, a probe into the death of Batra and pull-out of CRPF men from the Niyamgiri region.

Walling off the sea to save Sunderbans temple

Geotube shield to save 2,300 metres of the coast along the Kapil Muni shrine

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
SAGAR ISLAND (SUNDERBANS)

The Kapil Muni temple on Sagar Island in the Sunderbans, where a large number of devotees gather every year during the Gangasagar fair, is facing the threat of rising seas and will be submerged in the next few years.

Bankim Hazra, the local MLA and Gangasagar Bakkhali Development Authority (GBDA) chairperson, is campaigning to save the temple located 400 metres from the sea.

"The sea is advancing at the rate of 15 metres a year. If the trend continues, there will be a need to relocate the temple," Mr. Hazra said, to a group of journalists at a media workshop on climate change in the Bay of Bengal



Closing in: The temple is facing the threat of submersion in the next few years. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

region, organised by The Third Pole and the Earth Journalism Network.

The West Bengal government is taking steps to prevent further erosion of the coast. "The Finance Department has given in principle approval for the construction of sea walls using offshore submerged geotubes (sand-like material

filled into geo-textile tube). The cost is ₹77 crore. The design is being made by IIT-Madras and the project will be implemented by Mackintosh Burn," he said.

GBDA officials said the work would be completed in two phases.

The project involves a comprehensive plan for "beach protection and

coastal erosion protection for 2,300 metres along the stretch of the Kapil Muni temple and the Gangasagar mela ground".

This is not the first time that the temple is facing the problem of rising seas. It is believed that the existing temple is the seventh at the site, after six structures built earlier went into the sea. According to legend, King Bhagirath, after a long penance, brought the Ganga down from the Himalayas to liberate his ancestors, who were burnt to ashes in front of the Kapil Muni temple on Sagar Island. It is also believed that the temple is located at the point where the river meets the sea.

(The writer was in Sagar Island as part of a trip arranged by The Third Pole)