



Nripendra Misra,
Principal Secretary to
Modi, quits PMO

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Kamal Nath meets
Sonia amid reports
of a tussle in M.P. unit

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Hong Kong democracy
activists get bail,
protest march banned

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India adopts cautious
approach after
early wickets

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NEARBY



Situation contrary to
Centre's claims: Yechury

NEW DELHI
The ground situation in Kashmir is "completely contrary" to what the Narendra Modi government has been saying, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said after returning from Srinagar where he met his ailing party colleague Yusuf Tarigami. Mr. Yechury refused to give any further details since the Supreme Court had laid down the condition that he should not indulge in politics during his trip.

NEWS

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Delhi court extends CBI
custody of Chidambaram

NEW DELHI
A court for CBI cases here on Friday further extended for three days the CBI custody of former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram in the INX Media case. Extending the remand till September 2, special judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar said: "Given the fact that the record is voluminous and accused needs to be confronted, remand is extended till September 2."

NEWS

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DTF's Ray wins DUTA
polls for a second term

NEW DELHI
The Democratic Teachers' Front candidate Rajib Ray won a second term as president of the Delhi University Teachers' Association in the elections which concluded on Thursday.

CITY

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YASH 2020
UPSC 2020 Prelims
Orientation Batch
► Comprehensive Test Series
► Expert Guidance Sessions
Starting from 4th October
Chanakya Mandal Pariwar, D/N, New Delhi
Registration - 8308637036, 8308637032

10 public sector banks to be merged

Big banks will have enhanced credit capacity and global competitive edge, says Nirmala Sitharaman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In what comes as the second wave of the government's efforts to revive the economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday announced a slew of banking reform measures, including merger of 10 public sector banks into four entities. This would take the number of banks in the country from 27 in 2017 to 12, Ms. Sitharaman said.

These bank mergers, and the ones already carried out, will lead to the creation of big banks with an enhanced capacity to give credit, she said. These big banks, she said, would also be able to compete globally and increase their operational efficiency by reducing their cost of lending.

"We have chosen these banks for the mergers on the basis of ensuring that there is no disruption in the banking



Strength in numbers

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a series of mergers involving public sector banks on Friday. The move cut down the number of such banks from 27 in 2017 to 12. A look at the banks that will be merged:

Banks to be merged	Size of merged entity	Total business
Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank	2nd largest PSB	₹18 lakh cr.
Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank	4th largest PSB	₹15.2 lakh cr.
Union Bank, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank	5th largest PSB	₹14.6 lakh cr.
Indian Bank and Allahabad Bank	7th largest PSB	₹8.08 lakh cr.

services, and that the banks should benefit from increased CASA [current account savings account] and greater reach," Ms. Sitharaman said. "The banks that are being merged with each other run the same or very similar platforms, and so there will be no disruption in their activities."

The largest of the mergers announced is that of Punjab National Bank with Oriental

Bank of Commerce and United Bank. The amalgamated entity – to be called Punjab National Bank – will become the second-largest public sector bank in India, after the State Bank of India. It will also become the second-largest bank in India in terms of its branch network, with a combined total of 11,437 branches.

The second merger announced was that of Canara

Bank and Syndicate Bank, which would render the merged entity the fourth-largest public sector bank. The merger also has the potential to lead to large cost reductions due to network overlaps, Ms. Sitharaman said, adding that the similar business cultures of the two banks would also facilitate a smooth transition.

The third merger is of Union Bank of India with And-

Minister outlines funds allocation

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday outlined a plan to recapitalise public sector banks, providing the approximate allocation breakup for ₹55,000 crore of the ₹70,000 crore promised in the Union Budget.

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hra Bank and Corporation Bank, the Finance Minister said, which would make the merged entity the fifth largest public sector bank. This merger would have the potential to increase the post-merger bank's business by 2-4.5 times, she added.

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'REFORM MEASURES FOR BANKS

ALREADY KICKSTARTED' ► PAGE 15

BIG BANK THEORY ► EDITORIAL

Terror funding case: NIA summons Delhi doctor

He was asked about ties to Yasin Malik

VIJAITA SINGH
BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Senior cardiologist Upendra Kaul was summoned on Friday by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) as a witness in the 2017 terror funding case, a senior official told *The Hindu*.

Dr. Kaul, chairman of Bata Hospital in south Delhi, was asked to appear at 10.30 a.m. He told *The Hindu* that he was questioned for over half-an-hour and asked about his SMS exchange with one of his patients, Kashmir separatist leader Yasin Malik, now lodged in Tihar Jail.

Dr. Kaul said, "I was asked about a message which said INR 2.78. I explained that INR stood for a medical term and not Indian National Rupees 2.78 million, etc. I explained that Yasin Malik is just another patient of mine... Here I would like to add that it is not like Malik is my childhood friend. In fact, in 1996, it was the Government of India which brought him in for treatment for heart ailment and like any other patient he needs follow-up, which I have been doing here or sometimes in Kashmir..."

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A mounting problem



No end in sight: A worker bringing plastic bottles to a junkyard near Chandigarh on Thursday. These bottles are segregated and dispatched for recycling. A nationwide ban will be imposed on plastic bags, cups and straws from October 2.

■ AKHILESH KUMAR

Anxious Assam readies for headcount results

Those excluded need not worry, govt. will help in filing appeals: CM Sonowal

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Five years, four deferred deadlines and ₹1,220 crore later, the outcome of one of India's largest headcount exercises – the Supreme Court-monitored National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam – is scheduled to be published on Saturday. The final list of citizens will be uploaded on the NRC website around 10 a.m. An official statement with the data will also be issued around the same time.

The State has been anxiously awaiting the final NRC that is envisaged to quantify the number of illegal immigrants. The anxiety surrounds the number of people likely to be excluded



On their toes: Security personnel patrol a sensitive area in Morigaon district of Assam on Friday.

■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

from the 3.29 crore applicants. More than 41 lakh people were excluded from the draft NRC in two phases, of whom 3.61 lakh did not reply for inclusion.

The unease is more

among people of Bengali origin. While international organisations and rights groups have panned the government for targeting migrant Muslims, Home Department officials said the

exclusion list could have more Hindus.

'Propaganda'

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said certain forces were carrying out propaganda. "The exercise under the supervision of the Supreme Court will soon reach a conclusion, and I am sure everything will be peaceful. I want to assure those who will be left out that they should not worry. The government will provide help [to file appeals], and if there is any issue, they can get in touch through the district administration," he said.

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'SITUATION NORMAL' ► PAGE 12

Cong. leader appears before ED

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress leader D.K. Shivakumar on Friday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate to record his statement in a money laundering case.

The ED summoned him again after the Karnataka High Court on Thursday dismissed his plea against the earlier summons.

The ED had opened its probe in September last year based on a chargesheet filed by the Income Tax Department alleging tax evasion and hawala transactions.

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West Bengal passes Bill to prevent, punish mob lynching

High time Centre, other States followed suit, says Mamata

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

The West Bengal Legislative Assembly on Friday passed a Bill to prevent and punish incidents of mob assaults and lynching. The West Bengal (Prevention of Lynching) Bill, 2019, was tabled, discussed and passed in the House during the day with legislators of the Left parties and the Congress joining the members of Treasury benches in support.

The legislation also states that "nodal officers" will be appointed who shall "monitor and coordinate prevention of lynching". It proposes a jail term from three years to life for those involved in assaulting and injuring a person. In the event of the victim's death, the perpetrators

verments to bring similar legislations. "The Central government should have brought a law against it [mob lynching]. But they are yet to do so. So we are bringing this law in our State to fight against this social evil," the Chief Minister said.

The legislation also states that "nodal officers" will be appointed who shall "monitor and coordinate prevention of lynching". It proposes a jail term from three years to life for those involved in assaulting and injuring a person. In the event of the victim's death, the perpetrators

can be punished with death sentence or rigorous life imprisonment. The Bill, while defining terms like "lynching" and "mob", also says that a West Bengal Lynching Compensation Scheme may be framed under this legislation. Congress MLA and Leader of the Opposition Abdul Mannan termed the Bill "revolutionary".

Representing the BJP, party MLA Swadhin Sarkar said: "We fear this law will be used to target the Opposition parties. Even normal political clashes will be termed lynching using this law."

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'MODI-MADE DISASTER' ► PAGE 12

Law student can stay in Delhi, says Supreme Court

The woman, who was traced in Rajasthan, had alleged sexual harassment by ex-BJP MP Chinmayanand

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to the wishes of a woman law student, who had disappeared after levelling charges of sexual harassment against ex-BJP MP Swami Chinmayanand only to be traced in Rajasthan, to stay back in Delhi.

After a closed-door session with the woman, Justices R. Banumathi and A.S. Bopanna also directed the Delhi police to safely bring her parents too to Delhi from their native Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

The court asked the Regis-

trar to keep the woman and her parents incommunicado till the court takes up the matter again on Monday.

The court had suo motu taken up a letter from a group of women Supreme Court lawyers anxious about the safety of the woman. They had sought her production before the apex court.

On Monday, the Uttar Pradesh government counsel informed the Bench that the woman had been found in Rajasthan and was being taken to Shahjahanpur. The lawyer said the police convoy bringing the woman had already reached Fatehpur Sikri.



Swami Chinmayanand

But the Bench insisted that the woman be produced before the Supreme Court during the course of the day.

The government counsel, after consulting with the State police officers, returned to the Bench, saying the woman

could be brought here in under three hours.

Justice Banumathi said the Bench would wait for the woman to reach the court in order to interact with her in-camera. The interaction happened late in the evening.

The Shahjahanpur police had on Tuesday lodged an FIR against Mr. Chinmayanand after the student went missing following her allegation in a video clip that he had been harassing her. The woman also spoke about threats to her and her family's life in the video clip.

Her father had filed a complaint with the police, accus-

ing Mr. Chinmayanand of sexually harassing his daughter, a charge refuted by the BJP leader's lawyer, who claimed it was a "conspiracy" to blackmail him.

The woman's father had alleged that she went missing at the behest of the 72-year-old BJP leader, who heads the Mumukshu ashram. She is a postgraduate student in one of the colleges run by the ashram.

U.P. Director General of Police O.P. Singh on Friday said necessary legal action was being taken.

(With inputs from Omar Rashid)

Canal completed in 42 years, washed away in 24 hours

Jharkhand administration probe blames rodents for breach

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
RANCHI

It took 42 years to build a Jharkhand irrigation project, and then within 24 hours of its inauguration, the canal meant to provide water to 85 villages across Giridih, Hazaribagh and Bokaro districts was washed away.

The State administration has found rodents to pin the blame on.

The irrigation project in Giridih district was dedicated to the people by Chief Mi-

nister Raghubar Das on Wednesday. By Thursday, a major breach developed in the canal, causing extensive flooding in several villages.

"The initial probe suspected 'rat holes' causing damage to the canal," said a government statement released on Friday.

Arun Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary of Water Resources Department, tweeted that following the breach in the canal and damage caused to the crops,

a high-level team, led by chief engineer of advanced projects in the department, has been constituted. The reports are to be submitted within 24 hours. The repair works are on.

In 1978, the then Governor of undivided Bihar, Jagannath Kaushal, had laid the foundation of the project, but due to several reasons the project got delayed. The cost of the project also escalated from ₹12 crore in 1978 to ₹2,500 crore.