

IN BRIEF



Punjab CM for visa-free entry to Kartarpur... Chandigarh Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh will take up the issue of visa-free entry of pilgrims through the Kartarpur Corridor with the External Affairs Minister, an official statement said on Tuesday.

Army holds simultaneous exercises in Russia, U.S.

Amid tensions with Pakistan, an Indian Army contingent is in Russia for Exercise Tsentr 2019, which began on Tuesday. The Armies of China and Pakistan, besides those of the Central Asian Republics, are taking part.

Hooda granted LoP status in Haryana

Days after being declared as the Congress Legislative Party leader in Haryana, Speaker Kanwar Pal on Tuesday granted Bhupinder Singh Hooda the status of Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly.

Start-up scenario is not rosy: report

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA NEW DELHI

Not everything is good with the start-up ecosystem in the country, according to a report by TIE Delhi-NCR and consulting firm Zinnov released on Tuesday.

The report pointed out that the pace of new start-ups being founded has slowed over the past two years across India.

The trend is also reflected in the new start-ups coming up in Delhi NCR region. From a record 6,679 start-ups founded across India in 2015, the pace slowed to 5875 start-ups in 2016; 3,478 in 2017 and 2036 in 2018.

The start-ups in Delhi-NCR have a very varied mix, TIE Delhi-NCR president Rajan Anandan said. "Unlike other regions, the 10 unicorns that we have in Delhi-NCR, they're not from one particular sector, they are from fin-tech, e-commerce, logistics, food, and energy," Mr. Anandan said.

Centre moves to sell data from Smart Cities project

DAMINI NATH NEW DELHI

Starting with an open data platform for the 100 cities that are a part of its Smart Cities Mission by 2020, the government is planning to make a wide range of data - from health, education, finances to social aspects - of all 4,041 urban local bodies public by 2024 and eventually monetising it.

Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) officials said on Monday that the open data platform for the 100 cities would be expanded to cover 500 cities by 2022 and all urban centres in the country by 2024.

Modi, Oli open cross-border pipeline

India-Nepal relationship will continue to intensify across multiple sectors, says PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The India-Nepal relationship will continue to intensify across multiple sectors, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday during the video-link launch of the Motihari-Amlekhgunj energy pipeline during which he was invited to visit Nepal by Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli.

"Prime Minister Modi said the 69-km Motihari-Amlekhgunj pipeline, having a capacity of 2 million metric ton per annum, will provide cleaner petroleum products at affordable cost to the people of Nepal. He welcomed



Close bond: PM Narendra Modi and Nepalese counterpart K.P. Sharma Oli during the video-link launch of the pipeline.

the announcement made by Prime Minister Oli to reduce the price of petroleum products by ₹2 per litre in Ne-

pale," said a press release from the office of the Prime Minister of India.

The project is one of the

several connectivity schemes that India and Nepal have been planning for years, and was inked in 2015.

A test supply was carried out in July after which both sides agreed to operationalise the energy route, a first time effort in South Asia. Sources say it will help Nepal ensure stable energy supply for its domestic market.

The project is being led by the Indian Oil Corporation and the Nepal Oil Corporation, which built the infrastructure in Amlekhgunj.

Mr. Modi accepted the invitation from his Nepali counterpart to visit Kathmandu.

India, Pak. tensions a bit less heated now: Trump

Willing to help, U.S. President reiterates

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN WASHINGTON DC

American President Donald Trump on Monday again offered to help with the "conflict" between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

"Well, India and Pakistan are having a conflict over Kashmir, as you know. I think it's a little bit less heated right now than it was two weeks ago, and I'm willing to help them. I get along with both countries very well. I'm willing to help them if they want. They know that that is out there," Mr. Trump said to a question, while addressing reporters here.

Mr. Trump had set off a

diplomatic kerfuffle between India and the U.S. when he said Prime Minister Modi had asked him to mediate in the dispute. These comments were made during Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's July visit to the White House, prior to India's abrogation of special status for Kashmir.

Since then Mr. Trump has met Mr. Modi (at the G7 meetings in Biarritz, France) and had telephone calls with him and Mr. Khan. At a joint press interaction prior to the Modi-Trump bilateral, Mr. Modi reiterated that Kashmir was a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan.

CPEC is on our territory, India reminds China

MEA rejects reference to Kashmir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday rejected the reference to Jammu and Kashmir in the latest China-Pakistan joint statement and called on both countries to stop activities related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

"We reject the reference to Jammu and Kashmir in the joint statement issued by China and Pakistan after the recent visit of Chinese Foreign Minister. J&K is an integral part of India. India has consistently expressed concerns to both China and Pakistan on the projects in so-called China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor, which is on the territory of India that has been illegally occupied by Pakistan since 1947," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Pakistan over the weekend and discussed regional issues. China reiterated its support to Pakistan to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"India is resolutely opposed to any actions by other countries to change the status quo in PoK. We call on the parties concerned to cease such actions," said the spokesperson.

Resurrected 'Golden Arrows' to fly Rafale jets

First batch of the aircraft is scheduled to arrive in May 2020

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Tuesday resurrected the Air Force Station (AFS) Ambala-based 17 Squadron 'Golden Arrows', which will operate the first squadron of Rafale fighter jets in the near future.

The first batch of Rafale jets is scheduled to be formally handed over to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on October 8 in France, officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The jets are set to arrive in India in May 2020.

The resurrection ceremony was presided over by IAF chief Air Chief Marshal (ACM) B.S. Dhanoa. Incidentally, he had commanded the 17 Squadron during the Kargil conflict in 1999. On December 31, 2011 the squadron was 'number plated' after the Russian Mig-21 jets that it flew were decommissioned.

The 17 Squadron was



Living wings: Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa after reviving the 17 Squadron at the Ambala airbase on Tuesday.

raised at Ambala on October 01, 1951 under the command of Flight Lieutenant D.L. Springett and was initially equipped with the Harvard-II B aircraft.

"By November 1955, Squadron converted fully to De Havilland Vampire and by 1957, Hawker Hunter aircraft were flown by the 'Golden Arrows'. The Squadron converted to the Mig-21 M in 1975," the IAF said in a statement.

Between October 2019 and May 2020, three batches

each comprising eight IAF pilots along with engineers and technicians - would undergo advanced training on the Indian Rafale jets in France, a defence official said. So far, three IAF pilots and two technical officers have trained on the French Air Force's Rafales as per the terms of the contract.

The Indian standard Rafale, incorporating all the India Specific Enhancements (ISEs), would be operationally ready, latest by September 2021.

Rights of citizens will be protected: Smriti

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

The interest and rights of every Indian citizen will be protected and those who have illegally entered the country will be dealt with as per provisions of the law, Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani said here on Tuesday.

Ms. Irani, who was in the

city to highlight the achievements of 100 days work of the Narendra Modi-led government, was responding to questions on the implementation of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in West Bengal.

"The BJP is dedicated to protecting the rights of citizens of India, the BJP articulated its stand against il-

legal infiltration on many platforms," the Union Minister said, adding that Home Minister Amit Shah has said on several occasions that rights of every citizen will be protected.

Ms. Irani's comments comes in the backdrop of a resolution passed by the West Bengal Assembly against NRC in Assam.

Kashmir apples to escape lockdown via Central route

Government to procure produce directly from farmers

PEERZADA ASHIQ SRINAGAR

Kashmir's famed apple is battling to get exported outside the State this year. From suspected militants campaigning against the fruit's export to the government's inability to rope in enough trucks, the Centre's Special Market Intervention Price Scheme (MISP) is now providing much-needed assistance to growers' hopes of salvaging the ₹16,000 crore apple industry amid the continuous lockdown.

Chief Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam announced the government's plan to procure almost 12 lakh metric tonnes of apple this season, under the MISP, with the help of the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India.

"Nearly 60% of the estimated annual apple production will be procured from the apple growers near their door steps," said Mr. Subrahmanyam. "It's expected to enhance growers' income by about ₹2,000 crore," he added.

Kashmir produced 20 lakh metric tonnes of apple in 2018, contributing 73% to



A farmer picks apples in his orchard in Pulwama district, in this file photo.

the total apple production in the country, according to officials. The period of procurement would be for six months, starting September, at a cost of ₹8,000 crore.

This year, the State government failed to rope in enough trucks for apple export after the August decision to revoke J&K's special status, followed by a lockdown and communications blockade. An official said 400 to 700 trucks were plying against the demand of 1,200 trucks per day, up from 120 trucks last month, according to officials. It had resulted in the closure and poor flow of fruit from the main mandis (wholesale market) at Baramulla's So-

pore, Srinagar's Parimpora, Shopian and Anantnag's Batengo.

Gunmen oppose exports

The night-time functioning of the Sopore mandi had also come to a grinding halt after four civilians were shot at on September 6 by suspected militants "for their attempts to revive the export".

The police claim there was a pattern in the threats issued to the fruit growers. According to the police, gunmen destroyed several orchards and beat up several growers in Shopian. "Militants are directing orchardists to stop exporting apple this year in a bid to sever all ties with mainland India," said a police officer.

Caught in the crosshairs, fruit grower Nazeer Ahmad (name changed), told The Hindu that apple should be "a conflict-neutral commodity". "The government's highway ban earlier this year had already dented profits on the early crop. The apple is the mainstay of farmers' incomes. It needs to be protected, otherwise a large population of farmers will slip into penury," he said.

APSRTC Request for proposal (RFP) for selection of bus operator for procurement, operation & maintenance of Fully Built AC Electric buses on Gross Cost Contract Model.

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Delhi Transco Ltd, a Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking, invites tenders for the following works:- 1) Tender No. T19P070206: ICB Tender for Design, Engineering, Manufacturing, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 220/33 kV GIS Sub-station with complete Civil Works & Automation at Rajghat Power House, New Delhi (India) on Turnkey Basis.

DAMODAR VALLEY CORPORATION EOI Notice Expression of Interest (EOI) is invited by Damodar Valley Corporation from eligible bidders for: DVC/HQ/C&M/ CIVIL/NHP/EOI/ Consultancy

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (JIPMER) NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH NOTIFICATION NO.24/2019-RC 1. This Notification is issued for 6 (six) posts in the cadre of District Judge (Entry Level) under Direct Recruitment.

Government of Rajasthan OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT SMS HOSPITAL, JAIPUR (Sawai Man Singh Road, Tonk Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan-302001)