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NEARBY



Centre's nod for NIA probe into Tarn Taran blast case

CHANDIGARH The Central government on Friday accepted Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh government's recommendation to hand over the Tarn Taran blast case to the National Investigation Agency, in view of its national and international ramifications and suspected links of the accused with the Pakistan-backed Sikhs for Justice. A communique to this effect has been received by the Chief Secretary and DGP, Punjab, according to an official spokesperson.

NORTH · PAGE 5

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In a big boost, govt. cuts corporate tax

Centre issues ordinance to amend the Income Tax Act of 1961 and the Finance Act of 2019

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PANAJI

In its boldest gambit yet to stir up the economy, the government on Friday issued an ordinance to reduce the corporate tax rate for domestic firms and new manufacturing units by 10 to 12 percentage points, effectively bringing India's tax rates on a par with its competing Asian peers. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the effective tax rate for domestic corporates, inclusive of surcharges, would fall from 34.94% to 25.17% if they stopped availing themselves of any other tax sops.

Filip to manufacturing For new manufacturing firms set up after October 1, 2019, and commencing operations by March 31, 2023, the effective tax rate will fall from 29.1% to 17%. The slew of measures unveiled by Ms. Sitharaman, including the

Spurring the economy

Some of the announcements made by the Finance Minister on Friday:

- Tax rate to be 22% without exemptions
- Corporate tax rate after surcharge to be 25.17%
- Local companies incorporated after October and whose projects are commissioned before March 31, 2023 will pay tax at the rate of 15%
- Tax rate for new companies will effectively be 17.01%, including cess and surcharge
- Companies enjoying tax holidays can avail themselves of concessional rates after the exemption period
- Minimum alternate tax (MAT) now stands lowered to 15% from 18.5% for companies that avail themselves of exemptions and incentives
- No enhanced surcharge on capital gains by foreign portfolio investors
- Buyback tax on listed companies that had announced buybacks before July 5 exempted from taxation
- Revenue foregone for reduction on corporate tax and other measures pegged at ₹1.45 lakh crore per year



rollback of the enhanced surcharge levied on foreign portfolio investors in the Union Budget and a reduction in the Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) rate from 18.5% to 15% for all businesses, is estimated to cost the exchequer ₹1,45,000 crore a year in foregone revenue.

Ms. Sitharaman said she was conscious of the impact of the package on the government's fiscal arithmetic and the 3.3% fiscal deficit target for the year, but the government was betting on "more investments leading to more jobs and economic activity that would shore up

revenues". "We have issued an ordinance to amend the Income Tax Act of 1961 and the Finance Act of 2019," she said.

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SURCHARGE RELIEF MAY IMPROVE SENTIMENT ▶ PAGE 15
A DEEP CUT ▶ EDITORIAL

Sensex zooms 1,921 points

As the Centre announced steps to boost the economy on Friday, the Sensex gained 2,284 points during intra day trades, before closing at 38,014.62, up 1,921.15 points – the second-highest single-day gain ever after May 18, 2009, when it rose 2,110.79 points. The Nifty registered its second-highest gain while closing at 11,274.20, up 569.40 points. ▶ PAGE 15

Investment may not go up

While corporate India has welcomed the cut in tax rates, economists say a mere reduction in levies will not drive up private sector investments, and the decision will result in fiscal deficit slippage. ▶ PAGE 15

No GST relief for automobiles

Aadhaar link for registration proposed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PANAJI

From October 1, taking the family for a holiday is set to become a more economical affair, but the consumption of energy drinks will become more expensive, following a marathon meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council that lasted nearly nine hours on Friday.

While the tax rates were tweaked up or down for several goods and services, the Council left unchanged the rates on products like automobiles and biscuits that had been clamouring for a rate rationalisation in view of falling sales.

Among many procedural changes, the Council arrived at an 'in-principle decision' to link Aadhaar with registration of taxpayers under GST and examine the possibility of making Aadhaar mandatory for claiming refunds.



Nirmala Sitharaman at a press conference in Goa on Friday. • ATISH POMBURFEKAR

To factor in the new Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, suitable amendments in the Central GST Act, the Union Territories' GST Act, and the corresponding State GST Acts have been approved, a Finance Ministry statement said after the meeting.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Clean-up call



Seeking immediate action: Extinction Rebellion activists staging a protest in Berlin, Germany, on Friday to demand urgent action to avert an environmental catastrophe. Thousands marched worldwide as part of a strike, inspired by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg. • REUTERS

Chinmayanand held, case filed against student

Former BJP MP has confessed to 'almost all' the allegations made against him: SIT chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT LUCKNOW

The law student from Shahjahanpur, who has accused former Union Minister Swami Chinmayanand of raping and physically exploiting her, was on Friday charged with extortion in a case filed by him, even as the SIT probing the case arrested him.

SIT chief Naveen Arora said the former BJP MP had confessed to "almost all" the allegations made against him, barring rape. Despite the student's complaint, Chinmayanand was not charged with rape but was arrested under Section 376 C

of the IPC, which pertains to misusing authority to seduce or induce a woman to have sexual intercourse.

The complainant is a student of a college run by the former BJP MP in Shahjahanpur. Though the police did not explicitly state that her name was included in the extortion case FIR, the student featured as the fourth name among the accused in the case.

Three persons – Sanjay Singh, Sachin Sengar and Vikram alias Durgesh – allegedly directly associated with her, were arrested on charges of sending extortion messages to Mr. Chinmaya-



Chinmayanand at a hospital on Friday. • PTI

nand demanding ₹5 crore from him. The police said they had confessed to making the extortion calls.

Mr. Arora told journalists in Shahjahanpur that Mr.

Chinmayanand had accepted almost all the allegations against him, including his presence in the controversial videos, receiving body massages by the law student and engaging in vulgar conversation.

'I am ashamed' Asked if Mr. Chinmayanand had confessed to the rape charges, Mr. Arora said, "Not directly, but there are many facts that lead [to it]. And when he (Mr. Chinmayanand) said, 'I don't have anything more to say, I am ashamed of my deeds,' then that is more than enough," said Mr. Arora.

Mr. Chinmayanand was also booked for stalking the law student, criminal intimidation and wrongful confinement.

On the other hand, Mr. Arora said, the SIT had "prima facie" found the "involvement" of the law student in the extortion case. The law student expressed disappointment with the SIT for not booking Mr. Chinmayanand under rape charges.

Refuting the charges of extortion against her, the complainant said, "this new angle was brought up to weaken my case against Chinmayanand."

Draft rules to regulate social media ready: govt.

May be notified soon, Madras HC told

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S. CHENNAI

The Centre on Friday informed the Madras High Court that deliberations on the Draft Information Technology [Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment)] Rules, 2018, which mandate social media companies to cooperate with the police in cracking cybercrimes, had been completed.

A Division Bench of Justices M. Sathyanarayanan and N. Seshasayee was told by the Central government's senior counsel Venkataswamy Babu that the process of notifying the rules was in an

advanced stage. The rules were expected to solve problems faced by the police in obtaining information from social media firms.

Counsel supported the State's stand that the High Court could continue to hear the present case, without transferring it to the Supreme Court. He also made it clear that the Centre was only concerned with cooperation between social media companies and the police and not with the linking of Aadhaar to users' social media accounts.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

J&K court panel to probe charges of illegal detention of children

Supreme Court says petition raises 'substantial issues'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday assigned the Jammu and Kashmir High Court's Juvenile Justice Committee the task of inquiring into the allegations of illegal detention of children – some as young as 10 – by security forces.

The State is undergoing a period of lockdown following the reading down of Article 370.

A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, said it would not make any comment on the allegations for now. However, it

said the petition filed by child rights activists Enakshi Ganguly and Shanta Sinha raised "substantial issues and alleged detention of children".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta objected to the issuance of notice or mention in the order of "detention of children", saying this would have huge and wide repercussions. However, the court did not concede the request and maintained that the panel initiate an inquiry.

At the previous hearing, the court asked the Chief Justice of the Jammu & Kashmir

High Court to file a report on a statement by the petitioners' lawyer and senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi that it was next to impossible to access the High Court because of the lockdown.

The CJI said the report filed by the Chief Justice did not support his statement. "But we have conflicting reports too. However, since the issue is about the alleged detention of children, we will ask the High Court's Juvenile Justice Committee to inquire," he said.

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Two-year-old killed as ambulance rams truck

Attendant also succumbs to injuries



The ambulance which hit a truck on the DND flyway on Friday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

HEMANI BHANDARI NEW DELHI

A two-year-old boy on ventilator support and a nursing attendant were killed when the ambulance taking them to Safdarjung Hospital rammed a truck from behind on the DND flyway in the early hours of Friday.

Family members of the deceased child, Subhash – father Suresh Pal, mother Manno Devi and four-year-old brother Shubham – were grievously injured in the accident and are undergoing treatment at the AIIMS Trauma Centre. The ambulance driver, Vipin, is also admitted there, the police said.

Attendant identified Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Jasmeet Singh said the nursing attendant has been identified as Sunil Kumar, who worked for a private ambulance service. Sunil succumbed to his injuries at Lal Bahadur Shas-

tri Hospital. The accident happened around 3.15 a.m. after which a PCR call was made. When the police reached the spot, they found the ambulance completely damaged from the front. The truck and its driver were missing.

"The two-year-old boy, his elder brother, mother and the nursing attendant were at the back, while the father was sitting next to the driver. The boy was already on ventilator support, it appeared," said a police officer who inspected the accident spot.

An officer who spoke to Subhash's parents at AIIMS said they had initially rushed the child to a hospital in Greater Noida after he complained of breathlessness. The doctors there detected water in the two-year-old's windpipe and asked the family to take him to Safdarjung Hospital.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

SC modifies recommendation on Kureshi

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium has modified its May 10 recommendation to appoint Justice A.A. Kureshi as the Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh, after the government sent two consecutive letters asking it to reconsider the proposal.

In a resolution dated September 5 and published on Friday, the Collegium led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, has now recommended the appointment of Justice Kureshi as the Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court. Justice Kureshi is the senior most judge of the Gujarat High Court.

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Talks fail, U.P. farmers to march to Delhi

ANUJ KUMAR NOIDA

Hundreds of farmers will march to Kisan Ghat in Delhi on Saturday after talks between members of the Bhartiya Kisan Sangathan and representatives of the Agriculture Ministry failed in Noida.

Holding the BJP governments at the Centre and the State responsible for the poor state of the farm sector, the BKS had made 15 demands.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 5

Not all is music to our ears, say researchers

Team in IIT, Hyderabad, tracks listening patterns as an indicator of mental health

SYED MOHAMMED HYDERABAD

What does it mean to 'hide' behind music? What could listening to music on loop indicate if it makes the listener feel worse? And could the answers to these questions be connected to mental health?

A team of music psychology researchers from the International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad, has been working on music listening patterns as indicators of



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

comprising students Rajat Agarwal and Ravinder Singh, interacted with 300 respondents, including young adults and workers in the IT sector, as a part of the project.

The team used the 'Healthy and Unhealthy Music Scale' (HUMS), which asks respondents 13 questions on their engagement with music.

"Music helps me to relax" is a 'healthy association'. There are five such 'healthy associations' and eight are 'unhealthy associations'. It

was found that the higher the respondents score on the 'unhealthy' items, the higher they score on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (if one's score is above a threshold, the higher the risk of developing mental health issues)," Prof. Alluri said.

However, she was quick to clarify that this does not mean that music is bad for the listener. On the contrary, how one uses music indicates one's current mental state.

The researchers also used machine learning to predict

where respondents stand on the Kessler scale. Data was collected from a music streaming service which allows mining of information on what artists or artists the user listens to and when, over a period of time.

"After taking consent, we have users' HUMS, Kessler measures to identify who is at high risk. We are now analysing data. Also, we know that music is beneficial in many ways. But you have to know how to regulate it if you are high risk. This is an ongoing work," Prof. Alluri says.