

## Rules eased for Kartarpur pilgrims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday announced that Sikh pilgrims from India would only need a valid ID and not a passport to travel to Kartarpur and no fee would be charged from them on the opening day of the corridor and on Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary.

In a tweet, Mr. Khan also announced that the condition requiring pilgrims to register 10 days before their arrival at the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, the shrine of Guru Nanak Dev in Kartarpur, had been waived. "For Sikhs coming for pilgrimage to Kartarpur from India, I have waived off two requirements: i) they won't need a passport - just a valid ID; ii) they no longer have to register 10 days in advance. Also, no fee to be charged on day of inauguration and on Guruji's 550th birthday," he said.

The Kartarpur Corridor will connect the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Punjab with Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur, four kilometres from the International Border, in Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab province.

# Joblessness rises to 3-year high

The rate for October is at the highest level since August 2016, says CMIE

VARUN B. KRISHNAN CHENNAI

India's unemployment rate in October rose to 8.5%, the highest level since August 2016, according to data released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) on Friday.

According to CMIE, the urban unemployment rate for October 2019 stood at 8.9%, slightly higher than the rural unemployment rate of 8.3%.

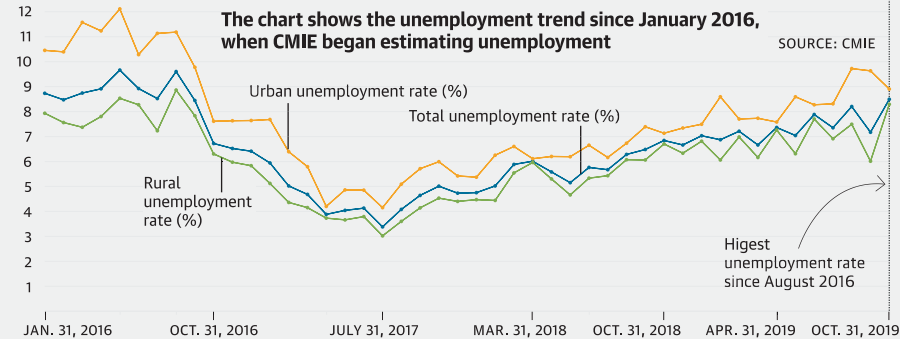
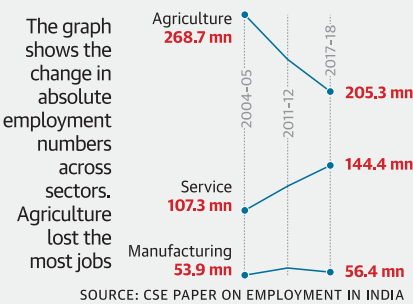
### Over 20% in Tripura

Among States, Tripura and Haryana saw unemployment levels of more than 20% (the highest), while the unemployment was the lowest in Tamil Nadu at 1.1%. Rajasthan saw its unemployment rate double between September and October 2019.

The CMIE's figures are in line with the findings of the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey, which had estimated an unemployment rate of 6.1% between July 2017 and June 2018, the worst in 45 years. The data also comes on the back of other indicators showing a downturn in the economy, including the core sector output in September posting its worst contraction in at least 14 years. Earlier, August's industrial output shrank at its fastest

## Out of work

Following the Periodic Labour Force Survey, which estimated an unemployment rate of 6.1% between July 2017-June 2018, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy on Friday said it had risen further to 8.5% in October 2019



rate in more than six years.

A working paper titled, 'India's Employment Crisis: Rising Education Levels and Falling Non-agricultural Job Growth', by researchers at the Centre for Sustainable Employment estimates that between 2011-12 and 2017-18, employment declined by an unprecedented nine million jobs (a 2% drop), with agricultural employment declining by 11.5%. In the same pe-

riod, employment in the service sector increased by 13.4%, while manufacturing employment dipped by 5.7%.

The data in the paper also shows that while employment has been declining, the number of working age people who are "Not in Labour Force, Education and Training" has continued to increase - from about 84 million in 2011-12, it has now

crossed 100 million. Falling manufacturing employment and decelerating construction employment growth are "bad news for the economy", the paper's authors note, adding, "To sustain the growth of income, improve standard of living, and to reduce poverty, employment opportunities in manufacturing and construction (although a transitory sector) is necessary".

# India, Germany need to fight terror: Kovind

Terror safe havens must be eliminated in every part of the world: President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Underlining that the Indo-German relations are progressing well, President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday said they needed to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism and coordinate their positions at meetings of the Financial Action Task Force, an intergovernmental organisation to combat money laundering.

Welcoming German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is on a two-day visit to India, at

the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Mr. Kovind said both countries were rightful claimants to a permanent membership of a reformed United Nations Security Council. "In this regard, our cooperation as part of G-4 is important," he said.

### Support for trade pact

He said that given the strong commercial ties with Germany, India considers its support important in mobilising efforts within the European Union for early resumption



Sealing a deal: Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar with his German counterpart, Heiko Maas, in New Delhi on Friday. \*R.V. MOORTHY

and conclusion of a balanced EU-India broad-based Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement.

"This will not only send a strong positive signal to business communities on both sides but will also boost bilat-

eral trade and technology collaboration," he said.

The President said both countries should work together to strengthen multilateralism and a multi-polar world order.

### A global threat

"Terrorism is a global threat that must be fought jointly by the world community and terrorist safe havens eliminated in every part of the world. India and Germany need to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism as well as coordinating their positions at the Financial Action Task Force meetings," he said.

# If govt. engaged Israeli agencies to snoop, it's a violation: Priyanka

Congress leader asks Modi regime to respond to charges

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday said if the BJP or the government engaged Israeli agencies to snoop on citizens, then it was a violation of human rights, and called it a scandal.

"If the BJP or the government has engaged Israeli agencies to snoop into the phones of journalists, lawyers, activists and politicians, it is a gross violation of human rights and a scandal with grave ramifications on national security. Waiting for the government's response," she tweeted.

### Plea in court

Her comments came a day after the Congress urged the Supreme Court to take suo motu notice on the revelation made by messaging platform WhatsApp that a software program, Pegasus, developed by an Israeli firm was used to hack into the phones of journalists, acti-



It is a gross violation of human rights and a scandal with grave ramifications ...

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA Congress general secretary

vists, academics and politicians. On Thursday, while the government asked WhatsApp to explain the breach, Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the government was committed to maintaining the privacy of citizens.

Taking a dig at the government, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "The Govt seeking WhatsApp's response on who bought Pegasus to spy on Indian citizens, is like Modi asking Dasgupta who made money on the sale of RAFALE jets to India".

# 'An attack on information infrastructure'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PUNE

Senior Congress leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan said the WhatsApp snooping scandal amounted to an attack on India's critical information infrastructure and urged the Union government to treat the matter seriously and take recourse to U.S. anti-trust laws so as to prevent a privacy breach in future.

"It is clear this sort of high-end software [Pegasus] is the result of government-sponsored research, and it cannot be sold in the black market. If the Israel-based firm, identified as NSO Group, is selling the spyware to security and intelligence agencies worldwide with the ostensible intent of lawful interception and for the purpose of combating terrorism, the hacking of the WhatsApp accounts of individuals proves the contrary," he said.

# Electoral bonds worth ₹232 cr. were sold in October, says ADR

From March 2018 to Oct. 2019, 12,313 bonds have been sold

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Electoral bonds worth ₹232 crore were sold in October, taking the total number of bonds sold from March 2018 till October 2019 to 12,313 and the total value to ₹6,128 crore, according to data shared by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) on Friday.

After the Lok Sabha election in May, bonds worth ₹45 crore and ₹232 crore were sold in July and October, respectively. In the run-up to

the Lok Sabha election, bonds worth ₹822 crore, ₹2,256 crore and ₹1,366 crore were sold in May, April and March, respectively, according to the data shared via a tweet. Bonds worth ₹350 crore, ₹184 crore and ₹402 crore were sold in January 2019, November 2018 and October 2018 respectively, the ADR said.

### Mumbai highest

Mumbai had the highest amount of bonds at ₹1,880 crore, followed by Kolkata at

₹1,440 crore, Delhi at ₹919 crore and Hyderabad at ₹838 crore, while all other cities accounted for ₹1,051 crore from March 2018 till October 2019, the ADR said.

Notified in January 2018, the scheme has been offered in 12 tranches from March 2018 till October 2019.

The bonds are sold by the State Bank of India and can be bought by Indian citizens or companies. Political parties can then redeem the bonds, which work as anonymous donations.

# RSS not to 'celebrate' Supreme Court's Ayodhya verdict

SUVOJIT BAGCHI KOLKATA

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has no plans to celebrate the "victory" if the Supreme Court's decision on the Ayodhya land dispute, expected later this month, goes "in favour of the Hindus".

The restraint will be in line with the "tradition of the RSS", senior functionaries told *The Hindu*. It is also expected that the construction of the Ram temple will start in early 2020,

in case of a favourable verdict.

The verdict will "not be projected as a victory for the Hindus and defeat for Muslims," a top official of the Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) also reiterated, following a two-day meeting of Sangh Parivar organisations recently. A senior RSS official also approved the observation on condition of anonymity.

"The Sangh never celebrates victories. Have you seen us celebrating after [withdrawal of] Article 370? We do not assess

anything as a victory or defeat and this will be a court verdict [so] there is no question of victory or a defeat...it can be interpreted as victory of justice," the official said.

"We have many more works left. We need to work to eradicate various forms of discrimination, including caste-based ones. We need to cultivate a feeling of nationalism and develop the idea of 'one nation'...so a lot of work is left," he said.

While there was no official

statement from the Sangh Parivar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent message to maintain peace is considered the "official line" by the RSS.

Work on the construction of the Ram temple is "expected to commence from the day of *Makar Sankranti*". "The possibility is that the construction will commence on *Makar Sankranti* [January 2020] and end on the same day in 2024," the official said. However, he said the various committees of "sants

(ascetics) and *mahants* (priests), who are the petitioners in the case, would decide the timeline" of temple construction, in case of a favourable judgment.

In the run-up to the verdict, many of the Sangh's programmes have been postponed. The internal training of *pracharaks* at Haridwar, to be attended by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, was set to be the most elaborate national programme but has been put off.

# India caucus co-chair's statement to U.S. Congressional Record supports Modi

Indian officials lobby Capitol Hill after last week's hearing on J&K

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN WASHINGTON DC

A little over a week after India was scrutinised at a U.S. House of Representatives hearing on human rights in South Asia, the co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, George Holding, submitted a statement to the Congressional Record in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Parliament for the recent actions on Kashmir.

Article 370 was temporary and it "might have worked well for those with political connections, but denied economic opportunities for the people", Mr. Holding said, adding that the statute created a "polarising environment" and was "exploited politically".

"Several groups based in Pakistan were able to conduct cross-border terrorism that wreaked havoc on individuals and families, and led to a morbid economy," the statement said and pointed to terror-related incidents in the past few weeks.

"These militant groups have also attacked migrant workers and those who are involved in the apple business, which is the chief



George Holding. \*TWITTER

India's position. Mr. Shringla, who was in India while the hearing was on, has returned to Washington and resumed his meetings with U.S. lawmakers.

The Embassy's Twitter account posted photos of these meetings on October 29 and 30 with Mr. Holding, Ranking Member of the Asia Subcommittee Ted Yoho, Texas Republican Pete Olson, Illinois Democrat Raja Krishnamoorthi, Senators Cory Gardner and Sharrod Brown and others.

Deputy Ambassador Amit Kumar and other Indian diplomats have also met lawmakers and their senior staff members, an Indian official told *The Hindu*.

"The relationship between India and the United States is an important strategic partnership and one that we need to constantly work at...to keep it at levels that are desirable," Mr. Shringla told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

"In this context, it is extremely important to keep Members of Congress briefed on the relationship and to not allow issues that could divert us from the larger purpose of this relationship," he said.

crop of Kashmir," Mr. Holding said, adding that the steps taken by Mr. Modi and Parliament need to be "applauded".

India's actions in Kashmir were severely scrutinised last week at a hearing in the House.

India's U.S. Ambassador Harsh Shringla had explained the Indian position to Members of Congress at a briefing on October 16, days before the hearing.

### 'Salutary impact'

A senior Indian official said the briefing had a "salutary impact". However, Indian officials have been concerned about the narrative on Kashmir in Capitol Hill and a lack of adequate support for