IN BRIEF



Prasad tells BSNL, MTNL to proceed with VRS

NEW DELHI Union Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has directed BSNL and MTNL to implement voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) guidelines quickly and initiate proactive measures to monetise assets. PTI

Chhath devotees flout NGT directive again

Several devotees barged into the Rabindra Sarobar lake in Kolkata on Sunday to perform Chhath Puja rituals, flouting the National Green Tribunal's order for the second time in the last 12 hours, a Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority official said. Security guards at the location were outnumbered by the devotees, the official added. PTI

Motorman saves injured commuter in Thane

An alert motorman rescued a 21- year-old commuter Pankaj Rai on Saturday, who was lying injured by the side of a railway track after falling off a train in Thane district of Maharashtra, an official said. Pravin Katiyar, the motorman, spotted Mr. Rai and immediately applied brakes to stop the train and alerted the train guards. He then carried Mr. Rai to a train coach with the help of some commuters. PTI

M.P minister cleans drain, 3 suspended

Three officials of the civic health department in Gwalior were suspended after a video of Food and Civil Supplies Minister Tomar Pradyumn Singh cleaning a drain went viral on social media. Residents of Birla Nagar had repeatedly complained about the drain slush entering their homes, but no action had been taken by the officials, the Minister said, adding that he would go out to more such areas to carry out cleaning

'More countries are regulating and banning e-cigarettes'

V-P of Vital Strategies, a global public health organisation, says comprehensive ban imposed in India will help prevent its use among the youth

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPADDAN

Vital Strategies works in more than 40 countries to support the adoption of proven policies to reduce tobacco use, and participated in the recent World Lung Conference at Hyderabad. Sandra Mullin, senior vice-president, spoke about the TB-tobacco relationship, the ban on e-cigarettes and the End-TB campaign.

What are your thoughts on the recent ban on ecigarettes in India and compare that with the U.S. where the authorities are now calling it a 'teen epidemic'?

■ In the U.S., policymakers have tragically allowed e-cigarette companies to foster a new generation of nicotine users who are now hooked to their products. The unregulated introduction of e-cigarettes into the U.S. market has led to an epidemic of youth vaping, with a jump of 73% over a single year, undermining the decades-long trend of reduction in tobacco use, particularly among

We commend the Government of India for taking decisive action to protect youth from e-cigarettes. We hope the comprehensive ban on the sale, manufacture, import and advertising of e-cigarettes will help prevent its rising use among youth, as we've seen in the U.S. and other countries.

More and more countries around the world are increasing their support for regulating and banning these products, and we hope that the momentum is continued.

Is there a relationship between tuberculosis and tobacco use?

Smokers are twice as likely to develop active TB and die from it than non-smokers, and smoking also makes TB treatment less effective. In 2018, 900,000 TB cases were attributable to smoking, according to the latest Global Tuberculosis Report. Worldwide TB rates could drop by as much as 20% if we eliminated smoking, according to the most recent Tobacco Atlas.

And it's not just smokers who suffer. We know that secondhand smoke has been linked to TB relapse and also impacts the outcome of TB treatment.

The message is clear – tobacco control is tuberculosis

Implementing strong tobacco control policies is

strong tobacco control policies is among the best ways that countries can prevent TB, especially in a high burden country like India

among the best ways that countries can prevent TB, especially in a high-burden country like India.

There is a lot of focus on TB globally and in India with the End TB campaign. Are there synergies between tobacco control and tuberculosis treatment?

■ Due to better evidence around the links between tobacco use and TB outcomes over the last few years,

there's been more global attention paid to coordination between national TB and to-

bacco control programmes.

We applaud countries who have taken steps in this direction. India's National Strategic Plan for TB elimination provides a road map for coordination between the Tuberculosis Control and Tobacco Control Programmes. We can see opportunities for coordinating care, for instance, providing TB patients who identify as tobacco us-

ers support to help them quit. India's framework also provides smoke-free health facilities to patients and links tobacco users to nearby cessation clinics.

Urging the public to take action and highlighting the twin dangers of tobacco use and TB is also critical. In March 2018, the Indian Health Ministry relaunched the successful 'TB Cough' mass media campaign during the End-TB summit in New Delhi.

The campaign viscerally depicts the association between TB and tobacco use, and encourages smokers to visit their doctor to confirm whether a persistent cough is a sign of TB.

The campaign was remarkably effective, and we will be presenting the evaluation and lessons learned at this This year, what were your expectations from the World **Lung Conference?**

■ Each year, the Union World Conference on Lung Health brings together doctors, policymakers, researchers and health advocates working to end the suffering caused by lung disease.

A key focus was TB, the world's leading infectious killer, and issues like air pollution and tobacco use that need bold, coordinated, multi-sectoral action.

Earlier this year, Vital Strategies and its collaborators published results from the landmark STREAM clinical trial in The New England Journal of Medicine demonstrating that a new treatment regimen for multi-drug resistant TB could reduce treatment times from two years to just nine months.

Army to have first Dhanush regiment by March 2020

Entire order for 114 guns will be completed by 2022: Army

DINAKAR PERI

The Army, which began inducting the indigenously upgraded Dhanush artillery guns, will have the first regiment in place by March 2020 and will get all 114 guns by 2022, Army sources said. Dhanush is the indigenously upgraded variant of the Swedish Bofors gun imported in the 1980s.

"The first regiment of 18 guns will be in place by March 2020. We will get another 36 guns by March 2021 and another 40 by March 2022. The entire order for 114 guns will be completed by 2022," an Army source said.

In April, the Ordnance Factory Board had handed over the first batch of six



Dhanush is an indigenously upgraded variant of the Swedish Bofors gun.

Dhanush guns. The Gun Carriage Factory, Jabalpur, received the Bulk Production Clearance from the Army on February 18, 2019. Sources said the induc-

tion process was reviewed at the recently concluded Army Commanders' Conference and "various options for the employment were discussed".

Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45calibre towed artillery gun with a range of 36km and has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition. It is fitted with an inertial navigation system having global positioning system-based gun recording and auto-laying, an enhanced tactical computer for on-board ballistic computations, an on-board muzzle velocity recording, an automated gun sighting system equipped with camera, thermal imaging, and laser range

The Army recently procured 155mm Excalibur precision guided ammunition from the U.S. Sources said the ammunition can be used with all 155-mm artillery guns in the inventory.

Iqbal Mirchi case: ED lists properties for attachment

The value of the assets is estimated at over ₹600 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has started listing the properties for the first round of attachment in the money laundering case against international drug dealer Iqbal Mirchi, an alleged associate of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, who died in the United Kingdom in 2013.

The value of the assets, several of which are in Mumbai, is estimated at over ₹600 crore.

List of properties

The list includes the third and fourth floors of Ceejay House, constructed by Millennium Developers Private

Limited in 2006-07, according to the agency. In 2007, the third and fourth floors of the building were given by way of tenancy rights to Mirchi's wife Hajra Memon and two children by Millennium Developers.

Overseas assets

The ED has also identified close to two dozen properties in the U.K. and one property, worth ₹180 crore, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that are linked to the drug dealer's family.

Sixteen properties in the U.K. were allegedly owned by Haira Memon through two companies: Country Properties Limited and Uscombe Limited. While six

name of four U.K.-based companies, three are held by the UAE-based Mihaj Investments Corporation Limited, according to the ED.

more properties are in the

The ED has so far arrested Haroun Aleem Yusuf, property dealer Ranjeet Singh Bindra, Humayun Merchant and Rinku Deshpande.

They had allegedly helped Mirchi grab properties in Mumbai and make huge money through realestate deals.

Patel questioned

The ED has also questioned former Union Minister Praful Patel as he is a co-owner of Millennium Developers.

Manipur govt. to freeze accounts of 2 separatists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Manipur government has directed all banks to freeze the accounts of the two separatist leaders. who recently announced the launch of the "Manipur government-in-exile" London.

In a directive issued on Friday, Special Secretary (Home) Kh. Raghumani Singh said all bank accounts of Yamben Biren and Narengbam Samarjit be frozen with immediate

The directive was being issued on the grounds of suspicion that the money, parked in their accounts. could be used for "wrongdoings and unlawful purposes", Mr. Singh said.

WEATHER WATCH RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS) Forecast for Monday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Gale winds with speed reaching 160-170 kmph and gusting to 185 kmph, likely over east-central and adjoining west-central and northeast Arabian Sea

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CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY		MAX	
Agartala	. 00.0	33.0	20.0	Kozhikode		33.0	2
Ahmedabad	3.7	30.0	24.0	Kurnool		33.0	2
Aizawl		25.0	14.0	Lucknow		30.0	2
Allahabad		32.0	21.0	Madurai		33.0	2
Bengaluru		29.0	21.0	Mangaluru		32.0	2
Bhopal		28.0	21.0	Mumbai		34.0	2
Bhubaneswar		31.0	21.0	Mysuru		29.0	1
Chandigarh		29.0	16.0	New Delhi	0.3	27.0	1
Chennai		33.0	26.0	Patna		31.0	2
Coimbatore	4.4	32.0	22.0	Port Blair		27.0	2
Dehradun		28.0	16.0	Puducherry	2.2	32.0	2
Gangtok		21.0	13.0	Pune		31.0	1
Goa		33.0	23.0	Raipur		31.0	2
Guwahati		32.0	20.0	Ranchi	–	28.0	1
Hubballi		27.0	19.0	Shillong		22.0	1
Hyderabad		31.0	21.0	Shimla		20.0	1
Imphal		28.0	16.0	Srinagar	–	–	
Jaipur		32.0	20.0	Thiruvananthapuram	2.2	32.0	2
Kochi	. 18.8	31.0	25.0	Tiruchi		33.0	2
Kohima		25.0	13.0	Vijayawada		33.0	2
Kolkata		32.0	23.0	Visakhapatnam		32.0	2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing										
CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	co	PM2.5	PM10	CODE				
Ahmedabad	119	.90	.43	49	70					
Bengaluru	9	.15	.41	95						
Chennai	.10	.32	.50	. 114						
Delhi	5	.79	112	. 500	.472					
Hyderabad	7		.27	78	99					
Kolkata	6	.49	.24	. 166	.141					
Lucknow	.24	.71	.28	. 424						
Mumbai	.10	.84	117	37	56					
Pune	.92	.11	.82	41	41					
Visakhapatnam	.26	.53	.45	. 304	.203					

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Rohtak, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 496 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor. Kerala recorded a

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI) SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by

reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters. CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death. PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eves nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced

lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

ISRO's NavIC set to be commercialised by Antrix

The regional navigation satellite system can serve as an indigenous-GPS

MADHUMATHI D.S.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its older commercial arm Antrix Corporation Ltd. are poised to commercialise India's regional navigation satellite system, NavIC, with Antrix recently floating two separate tenders to identify industries that can develop dedicated NavIC-based hardware and systems.

NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation) is the Indian system of eight satellites that is aimed at telling business and individual users where they are, or how their products and services are moving. The indigenous positioning or location based service (LBS) works just like the established and popular

U.S. Global Positioning System or GPS, but within a 1,500-km radius over the sub-continent.

Antrix's Chairman and Managing Director S. Rakesh said the company was currently identifying suitable device manufacturers on the one side and comprehensive integrators of NavIC-based systems (SIs) on the other. Eligible manufacturers

from the two sets would be empanelled so that they could bid for government projects that require monitoring of moving assets and

Early users

The early set of commercial NavIC users, he said, would be potentially be transporters of resources such as



Easy navigation: A boat carrying a NavIC receiver sets out to the sea for user trials at Kerala's Vizhinjam harbour. ■ FILE РНОТО

mined ore, coal and sand in various States. Several transporters currently use GPSbased systems.

"Mining and transportation sectors need vehicle tracking applications that are tied to revenue sharing systems of the government," said Mr. Rakesh.

Last year, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways mandated that all national-permit vehicles must have such tracking devices. As a pilot, many fishing boats have been fitted with these devices that have a unique texting facility.

Besides the Antrix tenders, two other recent deve-

lopments have paved the way for taking NaviC closei to end users.

Positive developments In mid-October, ISRO an-

nounced that Qualcomm Technologies Inc., a leading producer of semiconductor chips, had developed and tested NavIC-friendly chipsets across its user bases and that it would add NavIC to them.

Another important development for NavIC was the certification of the Indian system by the 3GPP (The 3rd Generation Partnership Project), a global body for coordinating mobile telephony standards.

The specifications will be available in March 2020 and the Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India has said it would adopt them as a national standard.

BSF tracks earth, water and air on Bangladesh border

Recently acquired Israeli tether drones & thermal imagers aid operations in challenging riverine terrain

RAHUL KARMAKAR GUWAHATI

The Border Security Force (BSF) has literally gone underground to keep a watch on trafficking in the Dhubri sector of the India-Bangladesh border. It has also placed eyes in the sky.

The border force has procured an unspecified number of Israeli tether drones for the Dhubri sector that stretches from Meghalaya to Cooch Behar in West Bengal. Tethered to a base for continuous supply of power, these drones worth ₹37 lakh each – are equipped with day-andnight vision cameras that can capture images within a range of 2 km.

Five States – Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and West Bengal – share a 4,096-km border with Bangladesh. Of the 263 km that Assam shares, 119.1 km is riverine. The 61-km border in

western Assam's Dhubri sector, where the expansive Brahmaputra river flows into Bangladesh, is arguably the toughest to man. Vast sandbars or river islands and innumerable water channels make surveillance a challenge, especially during the rainy season. "Smuggling is usually

done at night and through

blind spots that are difficult

drones are an extension of

to monitor. The tether

our physical and biological limitations with cameras constantly feeding images from a maximum height of 150 m," Inspector-General of BSF's Guwahati Frontier

Piyush Mordia told *The* Hindu.

Going high tech: The BSF has bought Israeli drones for use in

Dhubri sector that stretches from Meghalaya to Cooch Behar.

Mr. Mordia admitted that cattle smugglers or human traffickers could detect the tether drones. "But the idea day and night," he said. Apart from the drones,

is to send them the message

that they are being watched

the BSF has employed thermal-imagers - noncontact temperature measurement devices - and both underground and underwater sensors to detect movement of people, animals and other objects. "The underwater sensors are crucial given the topography of the area where our men cannot patrol without boats," Mr. Mordia said.

The BSF's use of gadgets is part of the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System to ensure foolproof security.

Minister's son beaten up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MADHEPURA (BIHAR)

A Bihar Minister's son was beaten up by a group of people in Madhepura district in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

Bihar Sugarcane Industries Minister Bima Bharti's son Raj Kumar and his cousin Sanjay Kumar were beaten up by a group of people near Bhatgama village of the district, Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar said. Both have been admit-

ted to Chausa primary health centre for treatment, police said, adding that an FIR has been lodged. The Minister has de-

manded the immediate arrest of those involved in beating her son.

