

IN BRIEF



Medha Patkar's passport set to be impounded

NEW DELHI  
In more trouble for Narmada Bachao Andolan activist Medha Patkar, the Regional Passport Office, Mumbai, is set to impound her passport for not disclosing pending criminal cases in her passport application. Since she surrendered the document on December 9, it will automatically be impounded, sources said. PTI

Madras HC nod for release of 'Queen'

CHENNAI  
The Madras High Court on Thursday cleared the decks for the release of director Gowtham Vasudeva Menon's web series *Queen*, a "fictional" rendition of the life of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa. It also rejected a plea by Jayalalitha's niece J. Deepa to injunct the release of a biopic titled *Thalaivi*.

2 Maoists killed, jawan injured in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR  
Two Maoists were killed and a Special Task Force jawan was injured at separate places during a joint counter-insurgency operation by security forces in Sukma, Chhattisgarh, on Thursday, police said. The ultras were gunned down in an exchange with security forces in the forest between Morpalli and Timapuram villages in the afternoon, officials said.

Odisha officer arrested for abusing wife

BERHAMPUR  
Basant Kumar Behera, a recently appointed trainee Odisha Administrative Service officer, allegedly involved in the physical and mental abuse of his wife, was arrested by the Golanthara police in Ganjam, Odisha. He was arrested on Wednesday, following a complaint filed by his wife Kanaklata Behera, sources said.

# CAG hints at massive diversion of LPG

Report finds that around 13.96 lakh beneficiaries of PMUY scheme consumed 3 to 41 refills in a month

DEVESH K. PANDEY  
NEW DELHI  
The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in a report on the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), has highlighted the risk of diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial use, as 1.98 lakh beneficiaries had an average annual consumption of more than 12 cylinders.

The CAG said this level of consumption seemed improbable in view of the BPL (below poverty line) status of such beneficiaries.

"Similarly, 13.96 lakh beneficiaries consumed 3 to 41 refills in a month. Further, IOCL [Indian Oil Corporation Limited] and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) in 3.44 lakh instances issued 2 to 20 refills in a day to a PMUY beneficiary having single-bottle cylinder connection," it said.

The scheme was launched

## Vanishing into thin air?

A CAG audit found that in 3.43 lakh instances LPG distributors had issued 2 to 20 refills in a day to a single Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiary having a single cylinder connection. Table lists customers who ordered more than one refill in a single day and the number of such instances

Daily refills	Customers	Instances
2	2,60,934	3,02,193
3	17,589	20,389
4	6,931	7,574
5	3,829	4,065
6 - 13	9,283	9,587
14 - 20	5	5
Total	2,98,571	3,43,813

- At least 2.98 lakh customers have applied for more than one refill a day in 3.43 lakh instances
- As a domestic connection won't need so many refills, the CAG suspects that they are being diverted for commercial use (such as in restaurants)



in May 2016 to safeguard the health of women and children by providing them with clean cooking fuel. Its target was revised to eight crore LPG connections.

As on 31 March 2019, the oil marketing companies had issued 7.19 crore connections, which is about 90% of the target to be achieved till March 2020.

To rule out existing LPG connections in beneficiaries' household, de-duplication was to be carried out based on Aadhaar of all family members.

"Audit noticed that out of 3.78 crore LPG connections, 1.60 crore (42%) connections were issued only on the basis of beneficiary Aadhaar which remained a deterrent

in de-duplication," said the report.

**Errors in identification**  
The CAG said laxity in identification of beneficiaries was noticed as 9,897 connections were issued against Abridged Household List Temporary Identification Numbers (AHL TINs), where names of all family members

## Committee to study porn content on Internet

Panel formed by RS Chairman on Dec. 5

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu converted an informal group of MPs constituted to study issues related to pornographic content on the Internet and social media platforms into an adhoc committee.

Mr. Naidu said the committee would submit a report within a month. The group, with Congress MP Jairam Ramesh as coordinator, was formed by the Chairman on December 5.

"On December 5, 2019, I had announced in the House the constitution of an informal group ... The group has held several meetings...However, Jairam Ramesh, the coordinator of the informal group, met me



and explained certain logistics problems being faced by the group being an informal one. I have considered the matter and decided to form an adhoc committee with the same composition," Mr. Naidu told the Upper House.

The group had 14 MPs and was studying issues related to pornographic content on the Internet and its effect on children.

## T.N. registers first case of child porn

S. VIJAY KUMAR  
CHENNAI  
The Tamil Nadu police have booked a suspect under the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and the Information Technology Act for allegedly downloading or uploading and circulating child pornography. This is the first time that the State police have invoked provisions under these amended Acts to curb child pornography.

The Tiruchi police on Thursday arrested Christopher Alphonse, 42, of Khajapet on charges of possessing and circulating child porn. After the investigators summoned the suspect based on specific inputs, he deleted the content from his mobile phone and other devices. However, the police retrieved the child porn films forwarded by the suspect.

## IBM's weather forecast system to tap users' phones for data

IBM GRAF can generate forecasts at a resolution of 3 km

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI  
International technology company IBM plans to make a high-resolution weather forecast model that will also rely on user-generated data to improve the accuracy of forecasts available in India.

IBM GRAF, as the forecast system is called, can generate forecasts at a resolution of 3 kilometres. This is a significantly higher resolution than the 12-kilometre models used by the India Meteorological Department to generate forecasts.

These weather forecast techniques rely on dynamic modelling and collect a trove of atmospheric and ocean data, crunch it in supercomputers and generate forecasts over desired timeframes – three days, weekly or fortnightly. "From the



**Weathering the storm:** People walking towards a shelter during Cyclone Titli in Odisha in 2018. ■AP

tests we've done so far, our forecasts are 30% more accurate than those generated by 12-km resolution models," Cameron Clayton, general manager, IBM Watson Media and Weather, said at a press conference here on Thursday.

For its forecasts, IBM relies on a global network of sensors – automatic weather station, data bouys and barometric pressure data from

## 'Lotus on passports is security feature'

National symbols will be used: MEA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI  
A day after Opposition members in the Lok Sabha raised the issue of the lotus being printed on new passports, the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday said it was part of the enhanced security features to identify fake passports. The MEA said the measure would involve the use of other national symbols as well on rotation.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, M.K. Raghavan of the Congress said the matter had been highlighted in a newspaper report. He alleged that this was "further saffronisation" of the government establishment, with the lotus being the election symbol of the BJP.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, "This symbol is



our national flower and is part of the enhanced security features to identify fake passports."

These security features have been introduced as part of the International Civil Aviation Organisation guidelines, he said.

"Apart from the lotus, other national symbols will be used on rotation. Right now, it is lotus and then next month there will be something else. These are symbols connected with India, such as the national flower or the national animal," he said.

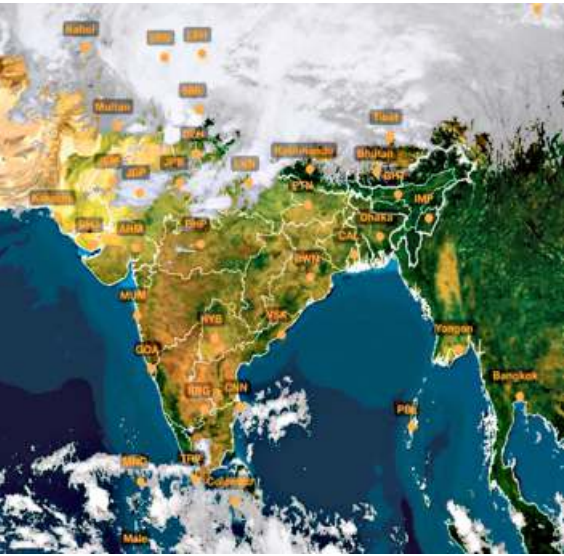
## 12-year-old gang-raped in Haryana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH  
A 12-year-old was raped by four persons, including a minor, over the past few months in Haryana's Karnal, police said on Thursday.

"One of the accused, identified as Lovekesh, 20, alias Lovely, has been arrested, while three others have been detained and were being questioned after we received a complaint from the girl," Harjinder Singh, Station House Incharge, Karnal police station, said. The incident happened around two-and-a-half months ago, but the victim with her parents approached the police on Wednesday, he said. The police has registered a case under Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code and other Sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

### 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 Friday:** Thunderstorm/hailstorm accompanied with lightning very likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh and Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning at isolated places over Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karaikal.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala.....	25.7	13.3		Kozhikode.....	35.2	25.3	
Ahmedabad.....	29.5	12.8		Kurnoor.....	31.1	19.1	
Aizawl.....	8.4			Lucknow.....	22.4	11.8	
Allahabad.....	26.0	13.3		Madurai.....	31.4	22.6	
Bengaluru.....	27.8	16.8		Mangaluru.....	35.6	23.4	
Bhopal.....	15.8			Mumbai.....	32.5	21.4	
Bhubaneswar.....	31.0	17.6		Mysuru.....	28.9	17.3	
Chandigarh.....	0.6	21.5	13.3	New Delhi.....	21.5	12.8	
Chennai.....	30.3	22.1		Patna.....	23.8	13.0	
Coimbatore.....	30.2	21.6		Port Blair.....	30.5	25.6	
Dehradun.....	22.2	11.6		Puducherry.....	30.2	20.6	
Gangtok.....	2.3	11.0	6.6	Pune.....	30.7	18.3	
Goa.....	33.6	21.8		Raipur.....	30.2	16.4	
Guwahati.....	26.4	13.8		Ranchi.....	25.0	12.8	
Hubballi.....	28.0	18.0		Shillong.....	15.2	5.0	
Hyderabad.....	18.5	17.0		Shimla.....	2.8	5.9	2.8
Imphal.....	22.3	8.3		Srinagar.....	6.4	1.4	
Jaipur.....	24.0	14.4		Thiruvananthapuram.....	0.5	31.9	24.8
Kochi.....	34.6	24.4		Tiruchi.....	31.5	21.8	
Kohima.....	24.4	6.5		Vijayawada.....	30.1	21.0	
Kolkata.....	28.1	18.3		Visakhapatnam.....	29.3	22.0	

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

### Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad.....	.73	.20	.08	.149	.121	■
Bengaluru.....	.11	.43	.47	.64	.84	■
Chennai.....	.07	.21	.40	.71	.....	■
Delhi.....	.11	.62	107	.477	.469	■
Hyderabad.....	.16	.70	.39	.171	.....	■
Kolkata.....	.18	.81	.21	.189	.168	■
Lucknow.....	.12	.67	.73	.361	.....	■
Mumbai.....	.21	.49	.55	.260	.153	■
Pune.....	.102	.25	.54	.138	.107	■
Visakhapatnam.....	.07	.54	.41	.54	.99	■

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>**: 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 and monuments.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>**: 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 eyes, 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

## 'Feroz Khan is at BHU, will teach there'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
"Sanskrit is not just a language but contains the essence of our nation, culture and tradition," said Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal in the Lower House, which on Thursday cleared the Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019.

The Minister, while replying to a question, also told the House that Feroz Khan "will continue teaching Sanskrit in BHU".

Mr. Khan was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Sanskrit Vidya Dharam Vigyan at the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) last month but faced protests by the department's students, who objected to a Muslim teaching Sanskrit.

The Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019, seeks to convert three deemed Sanskrit universities presently functioning in the country into Central universities.

The 'Statement of Objects and Reasons' of the Bill notes that the upgrading of the three deemed to be universities in Sanskrit – the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, the Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth Tirupati – into Central universities will enhance the status of these universities and will give a boost to postgraduate, doctoral and post-doctoral education and research "in Sanskrit and Shastraic education".

Assuring the House that the Ministry will work towards promoting all classic languages, starting with Tamil, Mr. Pokhriyal said languages were key to our traditions, heritage and culture.