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Swedish royal couple want climate awareness, end to sexual violence

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Gotabaya suspends Sri Lanka's Parliament ahead of snap polls

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Record sixth Ballon d'Or award for Lionel Messi

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NEARBY



Rajoana not pardoned, says Amit Shah

NEW DELHI
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday informed the Lok Sabha that Balwant Singh Rajoana, convicted of the assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh, had not been pardoned. The Minister was responding to a query from Ravneet Singh Bittu, Congress member from Punjab, who asked the Home Minister why the Centre pardoned the killer of the former Chief Minister.

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11 men held for thrashing OBC groom in M.P.

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

The police on Tuesday arrested 11 Rajput men on the charge of thrashing a groom from the OBC community during his wedding procession in Agar Malwa district of Madhya Pradesh on Saturday night. "The men objected to his mounting the horse. There is no rule prohibiting this. We ensured the procession was taken out the same day under police protection," said Savita Sohaney, district Superintendent of Police.

Procession waylaid

"They threatened us, kicked me off the horse, thrashed my father, and when the police came to the rescue, tried to snatch their rifles, and pelted stones at us," said Dharmendra Parmar, whose procession was waylaid on the way to Rajasthan from Bhadwada village in the district.

Mr. Parmar said that when he insisted with the men that a procession like this wasn't anything new, he was asked to not take it in front of their houses. "They asked me to go instead on motorcycles or a tractor."

"They said we should consult them before taking all decisions. They even practise untouchability with us. Well, we are educated. Why should we consult anyone?" said Mr. Parmar, an employee at a cooperative bank with MCom and BED degrees.

Though he denied any animosity between the two communities, Mr. Parmar said the Rajputs wanted to show their supremacy in the area.

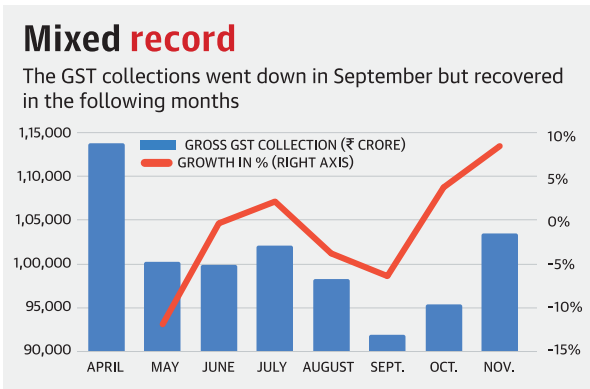
GST revenues not enough for States' compensation: Centre

Letter to States flags falling collections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has written to all States voicing concern that due to the lower Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, the compensation cess might not be enough to pay for losses arising out of the tax system.

The communication comes at a time when several States, including Rajasthan, Kerala, Delhi, Punjab and West Bengal, have publicly urged the Centre to transfer pending compensation payments as they have not received the dues for several months.



The government of Punjab has even said that it may take the matter to the Supreme Court if the Centre does not release the dues.

The issue will be discussed in detail at the next GST Council meeting, scheduled for the second fortnight of December.

night of December.

"Among other issues, the GST revenue position shall be discussed in detail at this meeting," the Centre's letter to the States, reviewed by *The Hindu*, said.

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Porting request will now be met in days: TRAI

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Mobile phone users will now be able to switch their telecom service provider while retaining their number in a maximum of five days, December 16 onwards, as the new regulations on number portability come into effect.

The amended rules, which provide for penalty of up to ₹10,000 per wrongful

rejection of a porting request, also reduce the role of the telecom operators in the process.

An individual porting request within a particular service area will be completed in three working days, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said on Tuesday.

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Chennai skywatcher first to spot debris from Chandrayaan-2 lander, says NASA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In the first authentic information from any source on the fate of Indian lunar lander Vikram, NASA late on Monday released the latest images of the lunar surface that point to the fact that the lander broke into many pieces after crash-landing on September 7.

Images taken on November 11 by NASA's moon orbiter



Shannuga Subramanian

show that Vikram's debris was strewn across at least 750 m of the crash site, which itself is now believed

to be away from the planned landing target, the U.S. space agency said.

NASA credited Chennai-based freelance space observer and professional programmer Shannuga Subramanian with discovering the first spot of debris from the Chandrayaan-2 mission's lander and alerting it on October 3.

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Man detained for halting Defence Minister's convoy

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old man has been detained by Delhi Police for allegedly coming in front of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's convoy near Parliament on Tuesday. Police said the man, identified as Vishambhar Prasad Gupta of Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar, is not mentally sound and is a local singer in his village.

"In a joint interrogation by

Delhi Police and other agencies, it was revealed that he wanted to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the purpose of changing his name in his Aadhaar card. Nothing suspicious has surfaced in the interrogation so far," said a police officer.

The Aadhaar card, the police said, has the man's name as Vishambhar Prasad Gupta but he wants it changed to Vishambhar Badal.

Five found dead in Ghaziabad; financial troubles likely motive

Deceased include a couple and their two children

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Ghaziabad woke up on Tuesday to five deaths in a high-rise society in the Indirapuram area.

A 45-year-old owner of a jeans factory was found dead at the Krishna Apra Sapphire Society around 5.30 a.m., along with his wife. The man's business partner, a woman, was also found lying nearby with grievous injuries, police said.

Later, when the police broke open the door of the flat, they found bodies of two children on the bed, said SP (City) Manish Mishra. While the man and his wife died on the spot, the business partner, who used to live in the same flat with the family, died during treatment at a private hospital.

"The two children were possibly killed before the el-



Policemen at the crime spot.

ders ended their lives. The note written on the wall of the room said they were ending their lives because of their poor financial condition. In the note, the man has named a close relative for cheating him in business and has held him responsible for pushing them to take the extreme step," said Mr. Mishra. Some bounced cheques were also recovered from the flat. A few ₹500 notes had also been left with a mention in the written note that they could

be used to complete their last rites.

Local sources said the man used to live in Jhilmil Colony in Delhi before moving to Indirapuram and had run into loss after he was allegedly duped of ₹2 crore by his brother-in-law. The police said the brother-in-law also spent some time in jail because of a complaint filed by the deceased jeans factory owner, but they could not settle the financial matter.

"A police team has been formed to locate the brother-in-law. We have detained his brother who was earlier arrested in a forgery case. Necessary action will be taken after investigating their role in the case," said Mr. Mishra.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health; OII-40769002 (Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Church where Charnock lies buried faces a grave problem

People living nearby think little before throwing trash into the compound

BISHWANATH GHOSH
KOLKATA

As far as colonial-era monuments go, St. John's Church in Kolkata is by far the richest in terms of history. In its compound lie buried several figures who landscaped the colonial era, and a mere walk in the churchyard – looking at the tombstones and tablets – can help discerning visitors reconstruct in their heads the period when the sun never set on the British Empire.

This should make the 1787-built church a popular destination for visitors, but ignorance and indifference keep it largely deserted: it serves as an island of peace in the

bustle of Dalhousie Square, or BBD Bagh. Yet, church officer Rangan Datta is a much hassled man. He has a strange but serious problem at hand: the corner of the churchyard where the mausoleum of Job Charnock (considered the founder of Calcutta) stands is hemmed by flats; and many residents think nothing of throwing garbage into the church compound.

"Leftover food, empty liquor bottles – everything is flung into the compound. Recently, a packet containing leftover food almost hit the head of a Westerner who had come to see Charnock's grave. He was nice enough to



The Moroccan-style mausoleum of Job Charnock in the compound of St. John's Church in Kolkata. ■ BISHWANATH GHOSH

shrug off the incident with the remark: 'That was some blessing from the heaven'. Only in India will you find such disregard for heritage," laments Mr. Datta.

Mr. Datta has even lodged a complaint at the local police station, but that hasn't helped. "Our staff cleans up

the mess. What else can we do? The ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) has merely erected a signboard that this is a protected moment, beyond that it has done little to help," he says.

The fact that Charnock, who died in January 1693, lies buried here makes the

church compound – a former riverside cremation ground – the oldest existing known site of the British period in Kolkata. Among the others buried here include Vice-Admiral Charles Watson, who had accompanied Robert Clive when the latter was dispatched from Madras to recapture Calcutta from the Nawab of Bengal; Lord Brabourne; Lady Canning (*dedikeni*, the popular Bengal sweet, was named after her); and Frances (Begum) Johnson.

Rich history

The church itself is a handsome piece of architecture and it houses – besides several plaques marking milestones in the lives of celebrated soldiers – Zoffany's *Last Supper* (painted in 1787) and

a still-functional pipe organ installed in 1824. One of its rooms once functioned as the office of Warren Hastings, and there, in a glass case, Hastings's chair remains preserved.

The church, run by the Calcutta Diocese, may be rich in history but remains cash-strapped. As a result, renovations, which should be carried out more often are being carried out only now – after 35 long years.

"We were somehow able to raise enough funds from our own members to carry out this renovation," says Mr. Datta. "But more than funds, what we need is respect for heritage. You have no idea how angry I feel when I find chicken bones and liquor bottles strewn around Charnock's mausoleum."

51 left India, defrauding over ₹17,900 crore

CBI processing extradition requests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has informed the Finance Ministry that 51 absconders and proclaimed offenders in 66 cases, who face allegations of fraud involving over ₹17,900 crore, have left for other countries.

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, the government quoted the figures shared by the CBI and other enforcement agencies.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has reported that six economic offenders had left the country illegally. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had filed applications in

court against 10 individuals under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act. The CBIC sent two extradition requests to the External Affairs Ministry in July.

The Interpol had issued Red Notices on the ED's requests for the extradition of eight individuals.

As reported by the Department of Financial Services, the expected losses on account of the stressed loans stemming from such cases were reclassified as non-performing assets.

While the CBI and the ED have moved court in these cases, the CBI is processing 51 extradition requests pending at various stages.