



Foreign delegates meet civil society groups in Jammu

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Many loose ends hamper probe into Pulwama attack

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Rishi Sunak is U.K.'s new Chancellor of the Exchequer

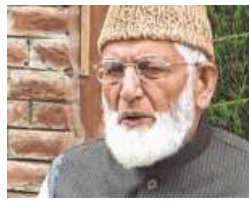
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Chance for India to get its combination right ahead of Test series

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## NEARBY



### Security bustle over Geelani health worries

**SRINAGAR**  
The wish of ailing Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Geelani, 90, to be buried in the Martyrs' Graveyard here has sent the security agencies into a tizzy as the J&K administration had to stop Internet services on Wednesday night.

NEWS PAGE 12

### CAA is a result of Assam fiasco: Chidambaram

**NEW DELHI**  
The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is a "direct result of the Assam fiasco", said former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Thursday while addressing students at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

CITY PAGE 3

FRIDAY REVIEW PAGE 4

# Publish criminal history of candidates, SC orders parties

The judgment is applicable to organisations both at the Central and State levels

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered political parties to publish the entire criminal history of their candidates for the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections along with the reasons that goaded them to field suspected criminals over decent people.

The information should be published in a local and a national newspaper as well as the parties' social media handles. It should mandatorily be published either within 48 hours of the selection of candidates or less than two weeks before the first date for filing of nominations, whichever is earlier.

A Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman, in the judgment, ordered political

## Cause for concern

The Supreme Court on Thursday flagged the alarming increase in incidence of criminals in politics

### MPs with pending criminal cases:

2004	24%
2009	30%
2014	34%
2019	43%

The 2018 Constitution Bench judgment that formed the basis for Thursday's verdict said: Rapid criminalisation of politics cannot be arrested by merely disqualifying tainted legislators but should begin by "cleansing" political parties

No political party offers an explanation as to why candidates with pending criminal cases are selected as candidates

JUSTICE NARIMAN, on February 13, 2020



parties to submit compliance reports with the Election Commission of India within 72 hours or risk contempt of court action.

The judgment is applicable to parties both at the

Central and State levels.

The judgment by the Bench, also comprising Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, signified the court's alarm at the unimpeded rise of criminals, often facing heinous charges

like rape and murder, encroaching into the country's political and electoral realms.

## Detailed information

The published information on the criminal antecedents of a candidate should be detailed and include the nature of the offences, charges framed against him, the court concerned and the case number.

A political party should explain to the public through its published material how the "qualifications or achievements or merit" of a candidate, charged with a crime, impressed it enough to cast aside the smear of his criminal background.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

# Cloud over trade talks as U.S. official puts off trip

Hopes fade for deal during President Trump's visit to India

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer has put off his trip to India this week, at least two official sources said, amid signs that the India-U.S. trade talks have hit a rough patch just ahead of President Donald Trump's visit.

According to the sources, who are aware of the negotiations, no reason has been given for the change of plans in the USTR's visit that was expected on Thursday, but that there is still a considerable chance that he would visit as a part of Mr. Trump's entourage to finalise a trade package or a "mini-trade deal" with his counterpart, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, on



Robert Lighthizer

items that the two sides have been negotiating for more than two years now.

## 'Missed opportunity'

The two chief negotiators have been speaking on the phone quite regularly, the sources added.

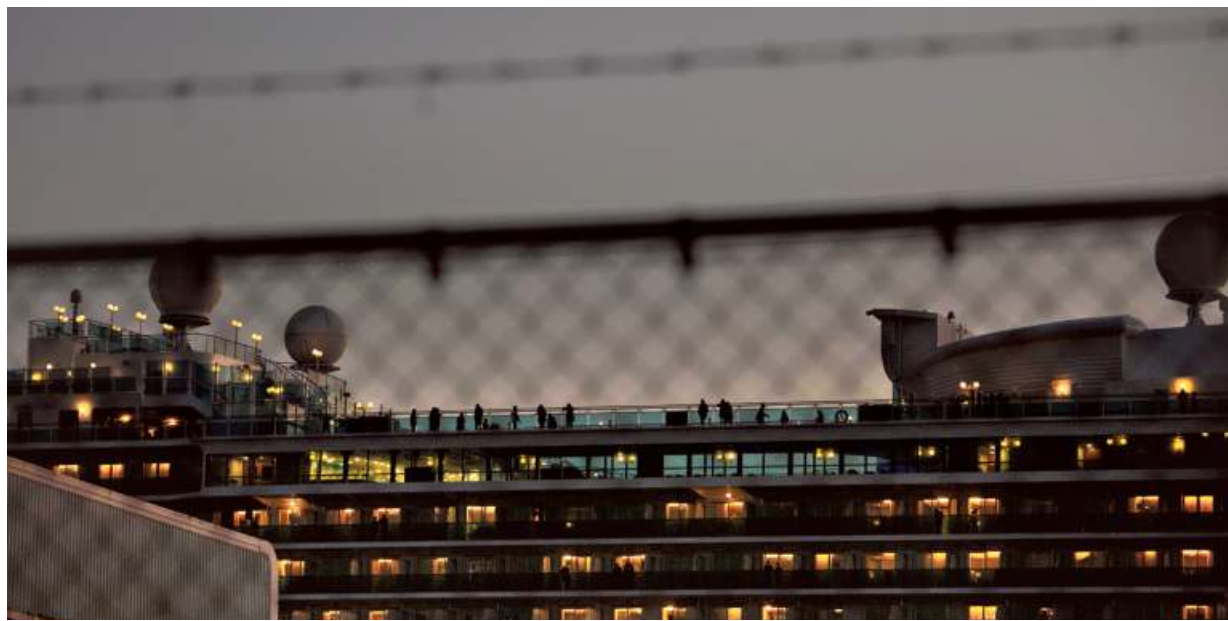
"If (President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra

Modi) fail to bring even a modest agreement forward, it will be a missed opportunity to make progress that can benefit both countries and strengthen economic ties," said Nisha Biswal, president of the U.S.-India Business Council at the U.S. Chambers of Commerce. She was speaking at an interview during a visit to India this week.

However, Ms. Biswal said she remained "optimistic" that a "limited trade deal" would be finalised as part of the visit. Mr. Trump and his wife Melania are travelling to Delhi and Ahmedabad on February 24 and 25, and are expected to visit Agra as well.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Stuck on a liner



Getting fresh air: Tourists quarantined on the cruise ship *Diamond Princess* due to fears over the spread of the new coronavirus are seen on the top deck on Thursday in Yokohama, near Tokyo. • AP (MORE REPORTS ON PAGES 9 & 14)

# Coronavirus deaths spike in China

Toll soars as a record 242 die in one day in Hubei; Japan records first fatality

REUTERS  
SHANGHAI/BEIJING

The Chinese province at the centre of the coronavirus outbreak reported a record rise in deaths and thousands more infections using a broader case definition on Thursday, while Japan became the third place outside mainland China to suffer a fatality.

Japan confirmed its first death - a woman in her 80s living in Kanagawa prefecture near Tokyo - adding to two previous fatalities in Hong Kong and the Philippines.

In Hubei province, in central China, officials said 242 people died on Wednesday, the biggest daily rise since



Laboratory technicians testing samples in Shenyang. • AFP

the flu-like virus emerged in the provincial capital Wuhan in December. Total deaths in China are 1,367.

The rise, following a forecast earlier this week by China's senior medical adviser that the epidemic may end there by April, halted a glo-

bal stocks rally. But it appeared in large part to be due to methodology.

## New case definition

Hubei had previously only allowed infections to be confirmed by RNA tests, which can take days. RNA, or ribonucleic acid, carries genetic information allowing identification of viruses.

But it has also begun using computerised tomography (CT) scans, which give images of the lungs, the Hubei health commission said, to identify cases and isolate them faster.

As a result, 14,840 new cases were reported in the province on Thursday, from 2,015 new cases nationwide

a day earlier. But excluding cases confirmed using the new method, the number of new cases rose by only 1,508.

"It is our current understanding that the new case definition widens the net, and includes not only lab-confirmed cases but also clinically diagnosed cases based on symptoms and exposure," World Health Organization spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said.

The new method is only being used in Hubei. About 60,000 people have been infected in total, the vast majority of them in China.

NEW HUBEI CHIEF PLEDGES TO CONTAIN VIRUS PAGE 14

# Slapping Sec. 144 during CAA protests 'illegal': HC

Court raps Bengaluru police chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday declared as "illegal" the order passed by the Bengaluru City Police Commissioner imposing Section 144 of the Code of Civil Procedure (Cr.PC) from December 19 to 21, 2019, ahead of a series of pro- and anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) rallies.

The court held that the order did not stand judicial scrutiny in terms of the parameters laid down by the Supreme Court.

However, the Bench said that its order was confined only to the December 18, 2019, order passed by the District Magistrate and it had only examined the decision-making process while invoking Section 144, and had not examined the correctness of the decision.

The Bench also said the order should not be construed to mean that the State is helpless to invoke the prohibitory order if the situation so warrants.

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# CRPF jawan's family yet to come to terms with loss

Lamba was killed in Pulwama attack; his family is organising blood donation camp on death anniversary

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
GOVINDPURA BASRI

Oblivious of the tragedy that struck his family a year ago, toddler Dhruv approaches his father's large picture in the courtyard of his house and bows his head with folded hands and eyes closed. The one-year-old boy has learnt the ritual from his mother.

One year after the Pulwama attack, the family of slain CRPF jawan Rohitash Lamba is yet to come to terms with the loss. Lamba, 27, of Govindpura Basri village, was the youngest of the five CRPF personnel from Rajasthan



Rohitash Lamba's brother Jitendra and son Dhruv at his half-built memorial in Govindpura Basri village. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

who lost their lives in the suicide attack.

Lamba's wife Manju Devi and parents take care of Dhruv, who was born two months before his father's

death. Ms. Devi affirms that though she knows the challenges in her life, she would like to see her son following in the footsteps of his father. "He was an ideal husband.

braveheart is yet to be kept. The family has decided to organise a blood donation camp at the half-built memorial on Friday on his first death anniversary. Lamba's younger brother, Jitendra, 26, said people from Govindpura Basri as well as nearby villages would attend the camp. The blood collected will be sent to a hospital in the nearby Chomu town.

Mr. Babul regretted that the "conspiracy" behind the Pulwama attack has not yet been unravelled and no one knows how a vehicle laden with 200 kg of explosives hit the CRPF bus.

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# Experts' meet to discuss restoration of Sun temple

Archaeologists, engineers to review safety of 800-year-old structure in Konark

DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI

A plan to restore and preserve the nearly 800-year-old Konark Sun temple in Odisha would be drawn up soon, after a two-day conference of experts at the end of the month, Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel said.

The 13th century temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, had been filled with sand and sealed by the British authorities in 1903 to stabilise the structure, an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) official said. A scientific study was

carried out by the Roorkee-based Central Building Research Institute from 2013 till 2018 to ascertain the temple's structural stability as well as the status of the filled-in sand, the official said.

## Structure stable

The official said the study found that the sand filled in more than 100 years ago had settled, leading to a gap of about 17 feet.

The official, however, added that the structure was found to be stable. The ASI was in the process of removing the



An ASI official said the scaffolding at the Sun temple in Konark would be taken down by the end of the month. • AFP

scaffolding erected around the temple for the study, the official said, adding that it would be taken down by the

end of the month. Among the potential choices before the government would be to fill

in more sand or to remove all the sand and put in place alternate support for the structure, sources in the Ministry of Culture said.

## Taking stock

Mr. Patel had visited the temple on January 24 to review the preservation plans, a Ministry statement had said.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the Minister said the conference of experts, including archaeologists and engineers, would be held in Odisha on February 28 and 29 to take a call on the future restoration plan.

"A decision will be taken after the conference," Mr. Patel added.

# 11K trees to be cut for Jewar airport

Central nod comes with afforestation clause and green cess

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

An apex committee of the Union Environment Ministry has cleared the cutting of 11,182 trees for the proposed Jewar airport in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. The panel of experts has however directed that this is conditional upon 1,12,820 trees being planted at alternative sites and the paying of an environmental cess worth ₹35 crore by the State's Directorate of Civil Aviation.

Apart from the 11,182 trees to be cut, 178 trees would be shifted for developing the airport. The afforestation activities would be carried out in Sector 22 D and Sector 29-

30 where a green belt is to come up, with 52,000 trees to be planted over 11 hectares in Murshadpur forest block and 15.5 hectares in Gulistanpur forest block. The afforestation would cost ₹2.3 crore and be separate from the green cess.

## Village development

The cess would be spent in villages such as Rampur Bangar, Nilouini, Durgapur Rilka, Chandpur and Achheja Buzurg. Funds would be spent here on construction of toilets and community water tank as part of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, construction of a health centre, organising health camps, refurbishing existing schools,

strengthening the technical training institute at Jewar, solid waste management and improving village roads as well as infrastructure.

A survey by the Wildlife Institute of India had identified six species of mammals and 60 bird species in and around the proposed airport site. These included black-buck, nilgai, golden jackal, jungle cat, sarus cranes, Egyptian vulture and the Indian peafowl; 99 perennial waterbodies were also recorded across the landscape.

The organisation has prepared a conservation plan for the project. The project developer would also have to restore waterbodies and fill 14 ponds in the region.