



# THE ECHO OF INDIA

PAGE-8

DAILY FROM KOLKATA • PORT BLAIR • SILIGURI

<https://www.facebook.com/The Echo Of India>

PAGE-12



VOL XIII ISSUE NO 196

PAGES 12

KOLKATA • WEDNESDAY • JUNE 28, 2017

Rs 1.50

## US clears sale of Guardian drones to India

### Trump supports India's permanent membership of UNSC



Prime Minister Narendra Modi hugs US President Donald Trump after they give joint statements in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington —Reuters

WASHINGTON, JUNE 27 /--/ The US has cleared the sale of predator Guardian drones to India, as President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged today to deepen their defence and security cooperation.

The US and India look forward to working together on advanced defence equipment and technology at a level commensurate with that of America's closest allies and partners, said a joint statement issued after the India US Summit at the White House. "President Trump and Prime Minister Modi pledged to deepen defence and security cooperation, building on the United States' recognition of India as a Major Defence Partner. "Reflecting the partnership, the US has offered for India's consideration the sale of Sea Guardian Unmanned Aerial Systems, which would enhance India's capabilities and promote shared security interests," the joint statement said. Resolving to expand their maritime security cooperation, they announced their intention to build on the implementation of their "White Shipping" data sharing arrangement, which enhances

collaboration on the maritime domain awareness.

Trump welcomed Modi's strong support for the US to join as an Observer in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. Noting the importance of the upcoming MALABAR naval exercise (involving the US, Japan and India), the leaders determined to expand their engagements on shared maritime objectives and to explore new exercises. Earlier in his remarks to the press, Modi said there is increasing possibilities for enhancing cooperation in order to protect "our strategic interests (that) will continue to determine the dimensions of our partnership". In a stern message to Pakistan, India and the US today asked the country to ensure that its soil is not used for cross-border terror with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump vowing to boost their fight against terror groups like ISIS, JeM, LeT and D-Company. As the two leaders held their maiden meeting at the White House and displayed a lot of chemistry, the two countries also called on Pakistan to "expeditiously" bring to justice the perpetrators of the Mumbai,

Pathankot attacks and other cross-border terrorist assaults by Pakistan-based groups. Modi and Trump vowed to strengthen efforts to fight terrorism and eliminate safe havens for terrorists. "Eliminating terrorism is among the top-most priorities for us," the Indian Prime Minister told newsmen in his joint press statement with Trump at the White House Rose Garden.

The US President today supported India's bid for a permanent seat in a reformed UN Security Council and in other multilateral institutions like the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Modi, who met President Trump at the White House, thanked him for the support. "President Trump reaffirmed the support of the United States for India's permanent membership on a reformed UN Security Council," said a joint India-US statement after the meeting between Modi and Trump. As global non-proliferation partners, the United States expressed strong support for India's early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Australia Group," the joint statement said.

### Cong to decide today on participating in GST launch event

NEW DELHI, JUNE 27 /--/ Suspense continued today over the participation of the Congress in the June 30 midnight meeting in Parliament to coincide with the launch of GST, with the main opposition party likely to decide on the issue tomorrow. According to a senior Congress leader, the party would discuss the issue at a meeting slated in the evening tomorrow to arrive at a decision on whether to participate in the event. Sources said the Congress leaders are divided on the issue, as a group within feels that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was the party's brainchild which has been now taken over by the ruling BJP. Therefore, they feel, the party should attend the special meeting convened in the central hall of Parliament to launch the GST. However, some leaders feel that the GST is being implemented in a haste and all aspects have not been taken into consideration leading to harassment of small traders and businessmen and thus, the party should abstain. At the AICC briefing, party spokesperson Shaktisinh Gohil said the Modi government is using GST to spread "tax terrorism", whereas the Congress conceptualised the move to simplify the tax regime for small traders and businessmen. "Our leaders are talking to experts, businessmen and common people and are examining the issue. We will talk to all and discuss with experts and then take a final decision," Gohil said. "Businessmen from Modi's home state of Gujarat who were earlier his loyalists feel that GST will lead to 'tax terrorism'. The prime minister should at least hear them out," he said. Apart from holding its meeting on Wednesday, the Congress is also seeking views of other like-minded parties on the issue and is also likely to hold consultations with them. Other Opposition parties, including the Left parties, are also yet to decide on whether to participate in the event. As per earlier reports, former Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and H D Deve Gowda are expected to share the dais with incumbent Narendra Modi. The historic Central Hall of Parliament will host a midnight function on June 30 to launch the sweeping tax reform measure, reminiscent of India's tryst with destiny on the midnight of August 15, 1947.

### China accuses Indian troops of 'crossing border' in Sikkim

BEIJING, JUNE 27 /--/ China today accused Indian troops of "crossing the boundary" in the Sikkim section and demanded their immediate withdrawal, while asserting that it has shut down the Nathu La pass entry for Indian pilgrims travelling to Kailash Mansarovar because of the border standoff. China also said that it has lodged diplomatic protests with India, both in New Delhi and Beijing, alleging that the Indian troops trespassed into Chinese territory in the Sikkim sector. "We have lodged solemn representations in Beijing and New Delhi to elaborate on our solemn position," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Lu Kang told a media briefing here. "Our position to uphold our territorial sovereignty is unwavering. We hope the Indian side can work with China in the same direction and immediately withdraw the personnel who have overstepped and trespassed into Chinese border," he said. China, on Tuesday night, said that it had put off the visit of Indian pilgrims who enter Tibet via the Nathu La pass "for safety reasons" in view of the border issue.

"China urges India to immediately withdraw its border guards that have crossed the boundary and have a thorough investigation of this matter," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said. "The Indian border guards crossed the boundary in the Sikkim section of the China-India border and entered the territory of China, and obstructed normal activities of Chinese frontier forces in the Donglang area

recently, and the Chinese side has taken counter-measures," Geng said in a statement on Monday night. The spokesperson's statement came after the Chinese defence ministry accused the Indian troops of objecting to building a road in what it claimed to be Chinese territory. The dispute over the constructing of the road was apparently the reason why China stopped a batch of 47 Indian pilgrims from crossing through Nathu La border in Sikkim into Tibet to visit Kailash and Mansarovar. Chinese defence ministry spokesman Ren Guoqi said on Tuesday that recently China has begun the construction of a road in Donglang region, but was stopped by Indian troops crossing the Line of Actual Control (LAC). In his statement, Geng said that the Sikkim section of the China-India boundary has been defined by treaties, noting that the Indian government has repeatedly confirmed in writing that there is no objection to it. China urges India to respect boundary treaties and China's territorial sovereignty to maintain peace and stability at the China-India boundary, Geng said. In view of the above event, for safety reasons, China has to put off arranging for the Indian pilgrims to enter China through the Nathu La pass, Geng said, adding that China has informed India of its decision through diplomatic channels. The Nathu La Pass sits 4,545 metres above the sea level and is wedged between Yadong County in Xigaze Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region, and Sikkim.

### Centre initiates work on roads in 44 Naxal-hit districts

NEW DELHI, JUNE 27 /--/ The Centre has initiated work on a road connectivity project in 44 Naxal-hit districts at an estimated cost of Rs 11,725 crore. The allocation under the project include Rs 550 crore for deployment of security forces at strategic locations in the districts, senior government officials said.

The Union government has sought a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the centrally-sponsored "Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Af-

ected Areas" scheme. The scheme, which was approved by the cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last December, is aimed at improving rural road connectivity in the affected districts.

The districts include Sukma in Chhattisgarh, which witnessed a deadly Maoist attack on troops working to secure a road under construction in April this year. Five per cent of the total project cost has been kept aside for administrative expenses including for deployment of security

forces at strategic locations, the officials said. The project will be implemented under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in districts that are critical from a security and communication point of view. Under the project, there will be construction or upgrading of 5,411 kilometres of roads and 126 bridges. Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra are the other states that will be covered under the scheme.

### GJM to boycott GTA polls, will urge other Hills' parties to follow suit

#### Copies of GTA burnt in hills

KOLKATA, JUNE 27 /--/ Intensifying their agitation for Gorkhaland, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha activists today held demonstrations and burnt copies of the GTA accord in the hills as the indefinite shutdown of the hills entered 13th day.

Some GJM activists were seen participating in the demonstration bare-chested and broke tube lights on their backs leading to injuries. Hundreds of GJM supporters burnt copies of the Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) accord at Chowkbazar as

the security forces kept a strict vigil.

GJM sources said that now there is no entity of GTA in the hills. "We don't want GTA. We want Gorkhaland. We will continue our agitation for a separate state. We will not participate in election to GTA," a GJM leader said. "By burning the GTA accord we ended relations with the state government," he added. All the 45 elected members of GTA who belonged to GJM had resigned last week. The Centre, the state government and GJM had signed the GTA in 2011. GTA had three

sub-divisions, Darjeeling, Kurseong and Mirik and some areas of Siliguri subdivision of Darjeeling district and the whole of Kalimpong district under its authority. Meanwhile while the CID of the state police has taken over the investigation into the incident of Singmari of June 16 in which three GJM activists were killed, Javed Shamim, IG, one of IPS officers who were sent to Darjeeling to supervise police operations submitted a report to the state government detailing the prevalent situation in the hills.



GJM supporters burning copies of the GTA agreement as part of their agitation at Chowkbazar in Darjeeling —EIO Photo

### AT A GLANCE

#### Meira Kumar to file nomination today

NEW DELHI: Opposition Presidential candidate Meira Kumar will file her nominations on Wednesday, the last date for filing of nominations, in the presence of Congress president Sonia Gandhi and a number of opposition leaders. According to sources, Kumar will file a set of four nomination papers which will be proposed and seconded by leaders of a number of Opposition parties. She will file her papers at 11:30 am in Parliament before the Lok Sabha Secretary General, the returning officer for the July 17 Presidential election.

#### Ganguly part of BCCI panel

NEW DELHI: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was today named in a seven-member committee, headed by senior BCCI official Rajeev Shukla, to analyse the few contentious Lodha panel reforms which are being opposed by the Board's state units. The other members of the panel are TC Mathew (former Kerala Cricket Association president), Naba Bhattacharjee (Meghalaya Cricket Association Secretary), Jay Shah (Gujarat Cricket Association secretary and son of BJP president Amit Shah), BCCI treasurer Anirudh Chaudhary and acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary, who will be the convener of the committee. (Details on Page 12)

## Armed miscreants hang girl's body after killing her inside house

### Incident follows complaint of rape of the girl by main accused

SAUMYA DE SARKAR

MALDA, JUNE 27 /--/ In a macabre incident that spoke of colossal police apathy, a girl student of class IX of Baluachara High School of Rathbari village in Malda district was killed today morning by miscreants who had driven out the parents and other family members from the house before the sinister act.

The incident follows a com-

plaint by the family of the hapless girl with the police on June 22 alleging that the girl was gang raped by some men. "It was Rezaul Sheikh and his gang named in our FIR who barged into our house today, drove us out on gun point and then tortured and killed my daughter," alleged the father. Police have started a probe into the incident. According to the complaint by the family the girl had

gone missing on June 22 evening. After exhaustive searches late in the evening she was found in an unconscious state with her hands and legs tied, from an abandoned land. She was rushed to Bangotola hospital. After she regained senses, the girl reportedly accused Sheikh of raping and torturing her. Today the family members of the girl alleged that they filed an FIR against Rezaul

Sheikh on June 23 accusing him of raping the girl. But the police did not arrest the accused, who along with other miscreants began threatening the girl and her family asking them of withdrawing their complaints. "It was for fear of them that we had to send my two sons to a relatives' house as we feared they would abduct them and do harm to them. We requested the police to arrest the accused but

strangely they did nothing," the girl's father said. Today, the family members claimed, Sheikh and his gang broke into the girl's house with arms and after driving the parents out, tortured and killed her. They later hanged her body. "They said they would have to talk to the girl. When we refused they showed guns and asked us to leave. We loitered around for some time and after we came

back we saw our girl hanging from the ceiling of one of the rooms of our house. Had the police taken action against the accused, the girl's life would have been saved," the girl's father said. Police officials said that whether it was a suicide or murder could be ascertained only after having the post-mortem report. A probe into the death was started. No arrest has been made so far.