



**Congress Seva Dal workers participating at Tiranga Yatra on the occasion of 76th Quit India Moment anniversary, in Vijayawada on Thursday.**

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**Landslides triggered by heavy monsoon rains killed more than a dozen people, cutting off road links and submerging several villages in Kerala**

## AT A GLANCE

### Rains in Kerala claim 20 lives

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Heavy rains in Kerala today claimed 20 lives, leaving a trail of destruction across the southern state. With water levels rising in various dams and reaching almost its maximum capacity, shutters of at least 22 reservoirs in the state have been opened to drain out excess water. Of the total deaths, 11 people were killed in a massive landslide in high range Idukki, six in northern Malappuram district, two others in Kannur, one in Wayanad district since Wednesday night, disaster control room source said here. (Details on Page 3)

### Stalin, others pays homage at Karunanidhi's burial site

**CHENNAI, AUG 9 /--/** DMK working president MK Stalin, prominent personalities and the general public today paid homage at the burial site of departed leader M Karunanidhi. Stalin, accompanied by party leaders including A Raja and Thangam Thennarasu, paid floral tributes at the site on the Marina beachfront. The departed leader was interred on Wednesday with full military honours. Family honours Vairamuthu and actress Trisha were among the prominent personalities who paid tributes. DMK cadres and the general public thronged the area to pay homage.

### NIA nabs another JMB militant

**BENGALURU:** The NIA has arrested another member of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh in the city, a day after the nabbing of the outfit's top leader Mohammed Jahidul Islam, wanted in several terror cases, officials said today. 29-year old Adil Alias Assadullah, a resident of a village in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, was arrested near the Cantonment Railway station on August 9 in connection with the bomb blast at Kalchakra Maidan in Both Gaya in January 19, a statement from the National Investigation Agency said.

## Antigua examining India's request to extradite Choksi: MEA

**NEW DELHI, AUG 9 /--/** India today said Antigua and Barbuda is considering its request to extradite Mehul Choksi, who is wanted in connection with India's biggest banking fraud and currently living in the Caribbean nation. An India team led by a senior official from the ministry of external affairs (MEA) on August 3 handed over a



(Left) Mehul Choksi. MEA spokesperson Ravesh Kumar

request to Antigua for extradition of Choksi who obtained citizenship of the island nation. "We have been told that they (Antigua authorities) are examining the (extradition) request," MEA spokesperson Ravesh Kumar said, responding to a volley of questions on the issue during a media briefing. Ravesh said it will be premature to talk about what would be the response of the Antigua authorities on India's request. India is trying to bring back Choksi from Antigua under the provision of a law of the island nation which provides for extradition of a fugitive to a designated Commonwealth country. He faces various charges in India in connection with the USD 2 billion Punjab National bank scam. The spokesperson said as per the provisions of the Extradition Act, 1993 of Antigua and Barbuda, a fugitive may be extradited to a designated Commonwealth Country

under the island nation's extradition law. Choksi had fled India on January 4 this year and took oath of allegiance in Antigua on January 15. His citizenship was cleared in November 2017. According to probe agencies, Choksi and his uncle Nirav Modi are the masterminds of the PNB fraud. Ravesh said the MEA has forwarded to the British authorities the request it received from the Enforcement Directorate for extradition of Modi, Choksi and his companies allegedly availed credit from overseas branches of Indian banks using the fraudulent guarantees of PNB given through letters of undertaking (LoU) and letters of credit issued by the Brady House branch which were not repaid, bringing liability on the state-run bank, the officials have said. An LoU is a guarantee given by an issuing bank to Indian banks having branches abroad to grant short-term credit to the applicant. (PTI)

## India has asked China to stop construction in PoK: Minister

**NEW DELHI, AUG 9 /--/** India has conveyed its concern to Beijing over Chinese construction activities in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and has asked them to stop it, the Rajya Sabha was informed today. In a written response to a question in the Rajya Sabha, V K Singh, minister of state in the external affairs ministry, said India's consistent and principled position has been that the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. He asserted that Pakistan was in illegal occupation of a part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. "Government is aware of Chinese construction activities in PoK. The government has

conveyed to the Chinese side, including at the highest level, its concern over these activities, which we see as violating our sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have asked the Chinese side to cease these activities," Singh said. In response to another question on 'Pakistan-promoted propaganda on social media to mislead the people of Kashmir, the MoS said the government consistently monitors the situation and takes all possible measures to maintain law and order and safeguard national interest and security. He said during an informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Wuhan on April 27-28 this year, the two leaders discussed the possibility of cooperation between India, China and Afghanistan. "Both sides agreed to undertake capacity building programme for Afghan diplomats in India and China later this year," Singh added.

## NDA candidate Harivansh elected deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha

**BJD, TRS support boost to ruling alliance as it gears up for LS polls**

**NEW DELHI, AUG 9 /--/** Ruling NDA nominee and JD-U member Harivansh was today elected as deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha, securing 125 votes as against 105 polled by Opposition candidate B K Hariprasad. The post of the deputy chairman was lying vacant since the retirement of P J Kurian on July 1. The entire House congratulated Harivansh, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulating him on his election and, in a lighter vein, saying "ab sub kuch Hari Bhariosse". Aur muhe vishwas hai ke sabhi, idhar ho ya udhar, sabhi sansadon per Hari Krishna banegi (everything is now in the hands of Hari or God. And I am confident that every member, whether on this side or that side, will have his mercy). Leader of the House Arun Jaitley and Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad also led the felicitations. The nomination of Harivansh was proposed by Ram Prasad Singh and seconded by Union minister and RPI member Ramdas Athawale. BJP president Amit Shah, Shiv Sena's Ranjay Raut and Akali Dal's Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa were also among the proposers. The voting was carried out the second time as some members pointed out mistakes in the first polling. Result displayed for the first voting was "122 ayes, 98 noes and abstain. Total: 222. However, the final vote count was 125 votes in favour of Harivansh, 105 for Hariprasad along with two abstentions. The Congress and the TMC led the campaign to get the Opposition's candidate elected to the post, but failed to ensure that all their members were present when votes were cast in the house today. While the BJP-led NDA was present in full strength in the house, two members each of the

Congress, TMC and DMK were not present. In his speech, the Prime Minister said the election was such that "dono taraf Hari the, ek ke age B K the, B K Hari, kol no boke, aur ek ke age koi B K, V K nahi the (both sides had Hari, but there was 'B K' (Hariprasad) on one side, while the other did not have such initials." Soon after the election result was announced by chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, Jaitley, Azad and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar, accompanied Harivansh, a journalist for the seat designated for the Deputy Chairman in the House, which is next to that of the Leader of Opposition Jaitley, who is recapturing after a renal transplant, attended the house after a long gap. Modi Azad and several other MPs also welcomed Jaitley for attending the House after the transplant. Azad advised Jaitley to take some more rest. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister spoke of the achievements of Harivansh, a journalist for about four decades. The BJP winning over the BJD and TRS in the election to the Rajya Sabha deputy chairman's post is seen as a blow to the Opposition's attempts to forge larger unity against it and a boost to the ruling NDA as both camps gear up for the next Lok Sabha elections. There was jubilation in the BJP camp after it managed to get the better of the Opposition in the number game in the Rajya Sabha. Its senior leaders pointed out as to how the BJD and TRS had chosen to abstain dur-

ing the voting in the Lok Sabha on the no-confidence motion against the government on July 20 but decided to back the NDA today. The decision of the two parties is also significant as the BJP has emerged as the main challenger to Odisha Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik while



TRS supremo and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao was till recently exploring the possibility of a federal front of regional parties against the BJP. If Patnaik is taking a decision, it must be based on his calculations for the future. A BJP leader said, Patnaik has had an uninterrupted reign since 2000 and was an ally of the BJP before he broke ties in 2009 following Kandhamal riots. However, there is also a view that the new-found bonhomie between the two parties could lead the BJP to tamp down its campaign against him ahead of the Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the state, making things easier for the BJD. (PTI)

## Mamata accuses BJP of disrupting peace in Maoist-affected areas

**JHARGHAM, AUG 9 /--/** West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today accused the BJP of creating a division among people on the basis of religion, caste and creed, while asking them to repose faith in her as she would never allow any body to act against their interests. During a visit to Jhargham district, her first after the panchayat polls in May this year, the Trinamool Congress supremo urged the people to stay united against communal forces and stop them from entering the district. The BJP had fared well at the rural polls in the tribal-dominated district. Mamata directed the MLAs, "TMC leaders, as well as the district magistrate and the superintendent of police to help solve people's problems. She also inaugurated a number of health care projects for the district. Accusing the BJP of trying to disrupt peace in this erstwhile Maoist-affected area, the chief minister said: "In the last seven years, we have not let anybody disrupt peace in this region. We have not allowed the Maoists to enter this place. A few people are bringing in Maoists from neighbouring Jharkhand to create bloodbath in Jhargham."



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee embraces a tribal woman on the dais during her public meeting at Jhargham — EOI Photo

If you (people) have faith in me, I will ask you not to trust anybody else other than us (TMC). "I'll I am alive, I will never let anybody to act against the interests of the people. You are my family. I love the Adivasis (tribals)," she said at a public meeting here. The TMC supremo claimed that during the Left Front government, around 300 people were killed in Jhargham in a year, while it was almost nil now. Hitting out at the BJP Mamata said: "I do not create any division among people. I do not create division among the Hindus and Muslims, nor among the other communities. It's the ruling BJP at the Centre which does that. We are not with them (the BJP)." "They (BJP) want the poor to face problem. They do not want them to get rice at Rs 2 a kg, free education, job and health care," the TMC su-

## Oppn delegation seeks Prez's intervention in NRC issue

**NEW DELHI, AUG 9 /--/** A delegation of opposition parties, including the Congress, TMC and the Left, urged President Ram Nath Kovind today to ensure that not a single Indian citizen was excluded from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. A memorandum submitted by the delegation to Kovind accused the government of undermining the nation's democratic and secular values and alleged that the draft NRC had resulted in the exclusion of over 40 lakh Indians. It also accused the government of spreading misleading statements against the Supreme Court over the NRC issue. The memorandum claimed that the NRC had resulted in the exclusion of over 40 lakh Indian citizens, including Bengalis, Assamese, Rajasthanis, Marwaris, Biharis, Gorkhas, Punjabis, those from Uttar Pradesh and the southern states and tribals, who were residents of Assam for a very long period. The aftermath of the NRC 2018 was an example of the ruling dispensation threatening and attempting to ruin the country's great institutions like the Constitution, Parliament, the judiciary and the media, it alleged. "As the custodian of these great institutions, we appeal and urge you upon to ensure that not a single Indian citizen is excluded from the NRC list in Assam," it added. (PTI)

## Govt adds safeguards in Triple Talaq Bill

**NEW DELHI, AUG 9 /--/** Seeking to allay fears that a proposed law which makes the practice of instant triple talaq illegal and imposes a jail term of up to three years on the husband could be misused, the government today approved certain safeguards in it such as adding a provision of bail for the accused before trial, union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters here that the Union Cabinet has approved three amendments to the 'Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Marriage Bill' which has been cleared

by Lok Sabha and pending approval of Rajya Sabha, Friday is the last day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament and the government could introduce amendments in Rajya Sabha. If the bill is cleared by the upper house, it will have to go back to Lok Sabha for approval of the amendments. While the proposed law will remain "non-bailable", the accused can approach a magistrate even before trial to seek bail. Under a non-bailable law, bail cannot be granted by police at the police station itself. Prasad said a provision has been

added to allow the magistrate to grant bail "after hearing the wife". "But the offence of instant triple talaq under the proposed law remains non-bailable," he clarified. Sources later said the magistrate would ensure that bail is granted only after the husband agrees to grant compensation to the wife as provided in the Bill. The quantum of compensation will be decided by the magistrate, as per the Bill. "There were fears and we have plugged the holes... nothing has been done under pressure," Prasad said in response to a question. Another amendment makes it clear that the

police would lodge FIR only if approached by the victim (wife), her blood relations or people who become her relatives by virtue of her marriage. "This would settle fears that even a neighbour can file FIR as is the cases in any cognisable offence. This would check misuse," the minister said. The third amendment makes the offence of instant triple talaq "compoundable". Now, a magistrate can use his powers to settle the dispute between a husband and his wife. Under a compoundable offence, both parties have the liberty of withdrawing the case. (PTI)

