



Artillery gun Dhanush completes final trials, ready for induction  
page 7



Not all of Chhattisgarh Cong. MLAs will be fielded again: Singh Deo  
page 10



Afghan govt. extends ceasefire, but Taliban won't reciprocate  
page 12

Hirving Lozano's strike helps Mexico stun champion Germany  
page 15



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**FIFA WORLD CUP RUSSIA 2018**  
**PLAYING TODAY**  
5.30 p.m.  
Sweden vs Korea Republic  
8.30 p.m.  
Belgium vs Panama  
11.30 p.m.  
Tunisia vs England  
REPORTS ON PAGES 15, 16

**NEARBY**  
**'No place in AIADMK for Sasikala, Dhinakaran'**  
CHENNAI  
Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar has made it clear that the AIADMK will take a call on re-admitting the 18 disqualified MLAs, but Sasikala, Dhinakaran and Dhivakaran are not welcome. Those who are genuinely interested in the party's welfare will return, he said.  
**TAMIL NADU** ▶ PAGE 4  
**EDGE** ▶ 4 PAGES  
**METROPLUS** ▶ 8 PAGES

# PM renews call for debate on simultaneous polls

At NITI Aayog meet, Modi favours a uniform voter list

**YUTHIKA BHARGAVA**  
NEW DELHI  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday again called for widespread consultation on simultaneous elections in the country during the fourth governing council meeting of the NITI Aayog. The meeting was attended by the Chief Ministers of 23 States, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and senior Union Ministers.  
“The Prime Minister called for widespread debate and consultations on simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas, keeping in view aspects such as the resulting financial savings and better utilisation of resources,” an official statement said.  
Reacting to Mr. Modi's speech, the Congress accused the government of “telling half-truths and building tall tales.”  
**Finance panel row**  
Briefing the media after the meeting, NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar said as a result of being in a “perpetual election” mode, the focus on development was diluted.  
On amending the terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission as raised by



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with H.D. Kumaraswamy, Mamata Banerjee, Pinarayi Vijayan and N. Chandrababu Naidu in New Delhi on Sunday. • PTI

## BJD nominee for RS post?

After reaching out to AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday, four non-Congress Chief Ministers discussed strategy for the election of the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman and decided that the Opposition nominee would not be from the Congress.  
They appeared in favour of wooing the Biju Janata Dal (BJD). If the Opposition backs the BJD member for the post, the battle will tilt in its favour. ▶ PAGE 10  
some States, Mr. Kumar said, “Those who are already born, they should be given what is rightfully theirs... For all such devolutions, the current population [as per 2011 census] should be the basis.”  
He, however, added that Mr. Modi had asked States to give “fresh ideas” to the Commission for incentivising outcome-based allocations and expenditure correction.  
**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10  
**L-G'S ROLE** ▶ PAGE 10

# Ceasefire ends, ops against J&K militants to resume

Official cites enhanced threat to Amarnath yatra commencing on June 28

**VIJAITA SINGH**  
NEW DELHI  
Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday that the government has decided not to extend the suspension of operations (SoO) in Jammu and Kashmir and that operations against terrorists would resume.  
The SoO was announced on May 16, when the month of Ramzan started.  
The prime reason for the decision was the enhanced threat to the Amarnath yatra that commences on June 28, a senior government official said.

**Hurriyat blamed**  
The official said that by ignoring the government's initiative, the Hurriyat Conference had failed to seize the opportunity.  
“Operations against terrorists to resume. The government commends the security forces for having shown exemplary restraint during Ramzan, despite grave provocations,” Mr. Singh said.  
He said the government was committed to creating an environment free of terror and violence in the State. “It is important that all those who have the interests of the people of J&K, and especially the youth in mind, isolate

**No let-up in violence**  
There was no major dip in the number of casualties (table) in Jammu and Kashmir even after the Centre's announcement on May 16 of stopping military operations in the month of Ramzan

Month	Civilians	Security force personnel	Terrorists
January	2	4	10
February	4	11	8
March	1	7	26
April	16	6	20
May	13	4	17
June	2	10	10

SOUTH ASIA TERRORISM PORTAL DATA TILL JUNE 17

the terrorists and work towards bringing back the misguided youth to the right path... On the other hand, terrorists indulge in wanton killing of innocent civilians and attacks on security forces,” Mr. Singh said.  
Interestingly, the government had made up its mind not to extend the SoO last week itself when it reviewed the security preparedness for the yatra. The assassination of *Rising Kashmir* Editor Shujaat Bukhari only

firmed up the decision.  
“There were multiple incidents reported in the month of Ramzan. It would have reflected badly on the government if taking advantage of the SoO militants attack the Amarnath yatris,” said the official.  
Last year, eight persons were killed when a bus carrying pilgrims from Gujarat was attacked by Lashkar-e-Taiba militants.  
**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

## PDP blames separatists for truce failure

**PEERZADA ASHIQ**  
SRINAGAR  
The ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) blamed the “cold response” of the separatists for the Centre's decision on Sunday to withdraw the orders on the cessation of operations in Jammu and Kashmir, while the Opposition parties described it as “an admission of the grave situation prevailing in the State.”  
Government spokesman and PDP Minister Naehm Akhtar said the Hurriyat's inability to come up with a positive response and contribute to the ceasefire offer “is a testimony to the new reality that the separatist leaders are no more a factor in J&K and have lost the leverage over their own constituency.”  
“It's sad that the measure that could have set the stage for dialogue was not reciprocated,” said Mr. Akhtar.  
**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

# Sulphuric acid leak detected at Sterlite

No need to panic, says Collector

**STAFF REPORTER**  
THOOTHUKUDI  
A sulphuric acid leak, described by officials as “minor,” was detected in one of the storage units of the sealed Sterlite copper plant, a Vedanta group company, in Thoothukudi on Sunday.  
A special team formed after the plant's security staff spotted the leak the previous evening confirmed it. Thoothukudi Collector Sandeep Nanduri, however, said there was no cause for panic.  
The team, led by Sub-Collector M.S. Prasanth, comprised the District Environment Engineer of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and officials from the Revenue and Fire Departments. It found the leak after a nearly two-hour inspection of the plant.  
“Measures will be taken

to evacuate the sulphuric acid from the plant tomorrow [Monday],” the Collector told reporters.  
Officials of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, the Inspectorate of Factories and other departments would be involved in the operation.  
A spokesperson of Sterlite told *The Hindu* that although the plant had been sealed, company security staff and the police conducted inspection every day. On Saturday evening, they suspected a leak and reported it to the district administration.  
A statement issued by the company said, “We requested the local administration to allow the company to take appropriate action to stop leakage.”  
**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 5

## Coming alive



**Bountiful flow:** The Cauvery was in spate at Hogenakkal on Sunday as the water released from the Kabini reservoir in Karnataka reached the Mettur dam. The administration has banned bathing in the falls and coracle operations. • N. BASHKARAN (REPORT: PAGE 5)

# We're not on strike, say Delhi IAS officers

Allege they have been victimised

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi IAS Association on Sunday refuted the Aam Aadmi Party's claim that its members were on an “undeclared strike.” Revenue Secretary Manisha Saxena, Transport Commissioner Varsha Joshi, South Delhi District Magistrate Amjad Tak and Directorate of Information and Publicity Secretary Jaydev Sarangi told reporters here that IAS officers were “working with utmost sincerity and dedication,” and in a neutral manner.  
“We have been targeted and victimised and told that we are working with someone,” Ms. Saxena said.  
The officers, however, said they would not attend those meetings which, they feel, would be “unsafe,” in an indirect reference to the



IAS officers Varsha Joshi and Manisha Saxena addressing a press conference. • PTI

alleged assault on Delhi Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash by some AAP MLAs during a meeting at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence.  
Mr. Kejriwal assured them, in a statement, that he would ensure their safety, saying they were a part of his family.  
(With PTI inputs)  
**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10  
**POLICE STOP MARCH** ▶ PAGE 10

# To Russia with love, on a cycle

A Kerala teacher keeps his date with the FIFA World Cup

**SAM PAUL A.**  
ALAPPUZHA  
No place is too far to catch the excitement of the football World Cup, and one fan in Kerala decided to pedal all the way to Russia. Clifin Francis, 28, a mathematics teacher at a coaching centre in Ernakulam, commenced his cycling voyage from Iran on March 13.  
On June 5, he entered Russia and was on his way to Moscow on Sunday. “I love cycling and football. I used to pedal to the coaching centre and once cycled from Kochi to Kanyakumari. I decided to cycle to Russia to join the biggest soccer party. So far, it has been a great journey, enjoying new places, cuisines, cultures, and making new friends,” he told *The Hindu* on the



**Soccer sojourn:** Clifin Francis hopes to get an autograph from Lionel Messi.

phone. Mr. Francis rolled through nearly 4,000 km, passing through several landscapes before reaching Russia.  
He left Kerala on February 23 and his first stop was Dubai, where he bought a bicycle. The next stop was Iran, which he reached by ship. He

launched his cycling expedition from Bandar Abbas.  
The resident of Thuravoor, near Cherthala, says he did not encounter any difficulties while pedalling through Iran and Azerbaijan.  
The only serious difficulty he encountered was in Georgia, where he was denied entry. “I had to return to Azerbaijan and take a different route to Russia, where the authorities welcomed me when I showed them my FIFA fan identity card,” he said.  
Yet, at the end of it all, he will witness just one World Cup game, between France and Denmark, in Moscow on June 26. “I have a ticket only for that match. But my dream is to get an autograph from Lionel Messi.”

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