

**10 FEBRUARY 2019**

**1. Rajapaksa underlines need to sustain Delhi-Colomboties**

Sri Lanka’s Leader of the Opposition and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa made an impassioned plea that the relation between India and Sri Lanka should not fall victim to a change in government in either capital.

He said that the two countries must ensure that their territories were not used by groups inimical to the interests of either country and also called for strong people-to-people and civil services relations between the two countries.



**2. As new cases rise, leprosy in spotlight**

The number of recorded leprosy cases has increased from 86,147 (in 2013-14) to 90,709 (2017-18). This was in contrast to the 2005 declaration that India was leprosy-free.

The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** has set the **goal of zero children with leprosy and deformities by 2020**, and less than one patient per million for other newly diagnosed patients.

It is also known as Hansen’s disease (HD), is a chronic infection caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae* and *Mycobacterium lepromatosis* and transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth.

**Infection trail**

States that recorded maximum leprosy cases in three years

Year	2016	2017	2018*
Uttar Pradesh	14,282	13,456	12,583
Bihar	9,142	13,031	14,338
Maharashtra	10,103	9,887	9,836
West Bengal	7,211	8,578	9,175
Chhattisgarh	6,738	7,266	6,499
Odisha	6,044	5,383	6,325
Jharkhand	2,533	3,414	3,979



\*Cases on record as on March 2018 Source: National Leprosy Eradication Programme

**Note**



### 3. India rebuts China on PM's visit to Arunachal

China objected to PM Narendra Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh saying it "firmly" opposed the trip because China does not recognise the State. Mr. Modi visited Arunachal Pradesh as part of the pre-election campaign on Saturday.

India strongly reiterated its claims on Arunachal Pradesh saying "The State of Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India. Indian leaders visit Arunachal Pradesh from time to time, just as they visit other parts of India".



### 4. India set to overtake Pakistan in number of Haj pilgrims

Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that the two Islamic countries Indonesia and Pakistan send around 2 lakh and 1,84,000 people respectively. As of today, India already has over 1,75,000 participants.

Among total number of applications received by the Haj Committee of India, around 50% were from women.

**Pilgrims' progress**

As people gear up for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest city for Muslims, a look at some facts

**1,75,025** Muslims from India performed Haj in 2018. Of them, 48% were women

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**1,75,000** people have so far registered for Haj this year

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**1,300** women performed Haj without a 'mehram' (male companion) in 2018

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**2,340** women will perform Haj without 'mehram' in 2019

**₹113 crore** amount pilgrims will save in 2019 due to the reduction in GST on Haj from 18% to 5%

**Pilgrims arriving at the State Haj House in Srinagar.**  
■ FILE PHOTO: NISSAR AHMAD

**There are two Islamic countries - Indonesia, from where around 2 lakh people participate and then there is Pakistan from where 1,84,000 people participate. As of today, India already has over 1,75,000 participants and we are aiming to supersede Pakistan this year**

**MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI**  
Union Minister of Minority Affairs

Amount people from various cities will save this year on air fare (in ₹)	
Srinagar	1,377
Ahmedabad	7,305
Aurangabad	9,373
Delhi	7,967
Gaya	11,027
Guwahati	13,049
Ranchi	11,945
Kolkata	9,787
Hyderabad	7,204

Source: Data provided by Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

#### Note



### 5. Air links are shrinking in North-east

The flight operators have suspended their operation from new and existing routes in the geographically challenged northeastern region. Recently Jet Airways stopped its flight services on the Guwahati-Aizawl route.

The reasons quoted by the operators are safety, maintenance and viability. But ground-reports say that the passenger occupancy rate is 60-70% in most flights, and more people in the region flying than ever before.



### 6. Moving continents created new centipede species

The drifting of continents almost 100 million years ago created many species of Ethmostigmus centipedes in the different tropical regions. In the Indian peninsula, these centipedes first originated in the southern and central Western Ghats, and then spread across the ranges here.

India is home to six, fairly large Ethmostigmus centipedes: four dwell in the Western Ghats, one in the Eastern Ghats and one in north-east India. Africa, south-east Asia and Australia are also home to other species of Ethmostigmus-centipedes.



Note

