

hindustantimes.com

New Delhi/METRO ■ Vol. XCV No. 66 ■ Price ₹5.00/with Hindustan ₹9.00 (₹7.50 in Faridabad)/with Mint ₹9.50 ■ 22 Pages + 8 Pages of HT City, Area specific pages extra.

MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019



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SMITH, WARNER REUNITE WITH AUSTRALIAN CRICKET TEAM >>htsportp16

Goa chief minister Parrikar dies at 63

TRIBUTES POUR IN State's tallest leader loses battle to cancer

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PANAJI: Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar died at his residence in Panaji on Sunday, prompting the Centre to announce a national mourning even as tributes flowed in from across the political spectrum for the 63-year-old former defence minister who was widely considered the tallest Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader from the state.

Parrikar was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer in February last year and was repeatedly admitted to hospitals in Goa, Mumbai, New Delhi and New York. His mortal remains will be cremated in Panaji on Monday evening after they are kept at the BJP's state headquarters for political leaders and the public to pay their final respects, according to an official statement.

Shortly after the Goa CM's Twitter handle announced on Sunday evening that he was "extremely critical" and that doctors were trying to improve his condition, President Ram Nath Kovind announced that the senior BJP leader had passed away.

"Extremely sorry to hear of the passing of Shri Manohar Parrikar, Chief Minister of Goa, after an illness borne with fortitude and dignity. An epitome of integrity and dedication in public life, his service to the people of Goa and of India will not be forgotten #PresidentKovind," President Kovind tweeted a little before 8pm.

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Unparalleled leader... true patriot and exceptional administrator. His impeccable service will be remembered by generations

NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

Deeply saddened by the news... bravely battled debilitating illness. Respected and admired across parties, he was one of Goa's favourite sons.

RAHUL GANDHI, Congress president

How Goa CM rose to national prominence

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PANAJI/NEW DELHI: Manohar Gopalkrishna Prabhu Parrikar, 63, from a business family in Parra village (from which his family derives its name), not only dominated state politics for two

decades but was also a rare national leader from Goa. From the moment he became the state's first BJP chief minister in October 2000 — after causing a split in the ruling Congress, which won a full majority 11 months earlier — Parrikar became the mainstay of Goa politics.

CONG TO LEAVE 7 SEATS IN UP FOR SP-BSP COMBINE

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LUCKNOW: The Congress on Sunday decided to leave seven Lok Sabha seats for the alliance comprising the Samajwadi Party (SP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) in Uttar Pradesh.

The move came days after the coalition decided that it will not field candidates from the two Congress strongholds of Rae Bareilly and Amethi in the politically crucial state.

"We are thankful to them [alliance] for leaving the two seats... we are leaving seven seats for them. These seven seats include Mainpuri, Kannauj, Firozabad, and the seats from where BSP chief Mayawati and RLD leaders Ajit Singh and Jayant Chaudhary may contest the elections," UP Congress chief Raj Babbar told mediapersons. Though the state Congress chief did not name the seventh seat, he nodded in agreement when journalists hinted at Azamgarh, from where SP chief Akhilesh Yadav may contest the Lok Sabha elections.

>>P8

Justice Ghose set to be country's first Lokpal

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NEW DELHI: Retired Supreme Court judge Pinaki Chandra Ghose is likely to be appointed the country's first Lokpal, the anti-corruption ombudsman, after a Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led selection committee on Sunday agreed on his name, two officials with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Parliament passed the Lokpal Act in 2013, when the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government was in power. The law provides for a Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayuktas in states to investigate cases of corruption against public servants.

"The competent authority will soon take a final decision on the name of justice Ghose for the chairperson, Lokpal, as recommended by the selection committee, and then the appointment will be formally announced," an official said on the condition of anonymity. Justice Ghose, currently a member of the National Human Rights Commission

ABOUT THE OMBUDSMAN

Currently a member of the National Human Rights Commission, justice PC Ghose was an SC judge from March 2013 to May 2017

- A law graduate from Calcutta University, Ghose practised at the Calcutta high court bar as an advocate dealing with arbitration, constitutional and company matters
- He was elevated to the position of a judge at the Calcutta high court in 1997
- In December 2012, he was made the chief justice of the Andhra Pradesh high court
- In March 2013, he was elevated to the Supreme Court of India
- At the top court, he adjudicated on several remarkable cases,

including the Babri Masjid demolition case, in which the SC directed the trial court to proceed against LK Advani, MM Joshi, Uma Bharti and others for criminal conspiracy

■ After his retirement in 2017, justice Ghose was appointed to NHRC as a judicial member

■ He comes from a family of lawyers. His father, justice SC Ghose, was a former chief justice of the Calcutta HC



(NHRC), retired as a Supreme Court judge in May 2017.

The PM, Lok Sabha Speaker, Chief Justice of India or his nominee, Leader of the Opposition, and an eminent jurist are the members of the Lokpal selection committee. As there is no design-

nated Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha currently, the government had invited Kharge, the leader of the Congress legislature party in the House, to the meetings of the selection panel as a "special invitee".

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WATCHMEN IN POLITICS

Ministers prefix 'chowkidar' to their Twitter identities

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NEW DELHI: The social media battle between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress took another turn on Sunday with senior leaders of the BJP — including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, members of his Cabinet, and party chief Amit Shah — adding the prefix "chowkidar" to their Twitter identities. The move came a day after Modi launched a social media campaign, "Main Bhi

Chowkidar (I, too, am a watchman)", apparently mocking Congress president Rahul Gandhi's anti-corruption campaign targeting the PM by using the slogan "Chowkidar chor hai" (the watchman is a thief). Gandhi has often argued that his pitch, which started with his allegation that the government bought overpriced Rafale fighter jets — a charge the government denies, resonated with the people.

"Happy that #MainBhiChowkidar has ignited the

Chowkidar within all of us. Great fervor! Ecstatic to see the passion and commitment to protect India from corrupt criminal and anti-social elements. Let us keep working together for a developed India," Modi tweeted on Sunday evening, further amplifying the social media battle.

On Saturday, the Prime Minister, while launching the campaign, said in a series of tweets: "your Chowkidar is standing firm and serving the nation."

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'MODI WILL BE BACK'

NEW DELHI: Union minister Prakash Javadekar is confident people will vote for PM Modi "because they believe he has the capacity to take India to the next level".

>>P11

Navy says build-up in Arabian Sea put Pak on back foot

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NEW DELHI: Rising tensions between India and Pakistan after the February 14 Pulwama suicide bombing led the Indian Navy to cut short a major exercise in the Indian Ocean region and swiftly redeploy its frontline assets to the north Arabian Sea, the navy said on Sunday.

In a rare announcement, the navy said the build-up, consisting of an aircraft carrier, nuclear-powered attack submarines and scores of frontline warships and maritime aircraft, put the Pakistan Navy on the back foot.

Experts and senior navy officials said the naval mobilisation was the biggest since Operation Parakram following the December 2001 attack on Parliament.

>>P10

Azhar issue will be resolved, says Chinese envoy

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NEW DELHI: China's block on a fresh move to designate Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist at the UN Security Council is aimed at further consultations on the issue that "will be resolved", Chinese ambassador Luo Zhaohui said on Sunday.

Indian officials have expressed disappointment at China's decision on March 13 to place a "hold" on the move spearheaded by France, the US and Britain to list Azhar as a global terrorist with the UN's Islamic State and al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee.

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