

Cong seeks more seats, Oppn talks in Bengal, Bihar come under strain

MANOJ CG, SANTOSH SINGH & RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
NEW DELHI, PATNA, KOLKATA, MARCH 18

A DAY after the Congress decided to go alone in the Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal, the party Monday cleared names of candidates for 11 seats, including two sitting seats of the CPM. The CPM was planning a retaliation. In Bihar too, seat sharing talks between the Congress and RJD, though they are continuing, have come under severe strain with the Congress insisting it be given 11 seats.

At stake in these two states are 82 Lok Sabha seats, crucial for the Opposition bid to upstage the BJP from power. The Congress has so far managed seat-sharing pacts in only Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Jharkhand and is racing against time to conclude these — the Election Commission has issued notification for the first phase of polling in 91 Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 20 states on April 11.

The Congress central election committee, which met in the

DECISION 2019



PRIYANKA BEGINS GANGA YATRA, ASKS VOTERS TO 'WAKE UP AND BECOME AWARE'

BJP UNEASY AS KHANDURI PULLS OUT, HIS SON JOINS CONGRESS

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morning, cleared the names of 11 candidates in West Bengal. These included Raiganj and Murshidabad, seats for which the CPM has already announced candidates. The Congress has decided to field Deepa Dasmuni from

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BJP FOILS CONG IN GOA: ALLIES SARDESAI, DHAVALIKAR TO BE DY CMs Sawant is Parrikar successor, enters Raj Bhavan at midnight to stake claim



Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar was cremated with state honours in Goa, Monday. Express

SMITA NAIR & LIZ MATHEW
PANAJI, NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

MOVING SWIFTLY to snuff out Congress attempts to wrest power in Goa following the death of Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, the BJP Monday chose Assembly Speaker Pramod Sawant as the new Chief Minister of the state.

Hours after Parrikar, who



Pramod Sawant, 45, is new CM

passed away Sunday at age 63 after battling pancreatic cancer, was cremated with state honours, 45-year-old Sawant headed to the Raj Bhavan midnight to stake claim after leaders

of two key allies, Goa Forward Party's Vijai Sardesai and Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP)'s Sudin Dhavalikar, who were offered posts of Deputy Chief Ministers but had held out all evening, finally came on board.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, who coordinated the BJP moves and talks with allies, said: "Our alliance partners and MLAs are going to meet the

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BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



EXPLAINED For BJP, real test starts now

SAWANT HAD the backing and trust of Parrikar who, in his final days, relied on him to get work done. With Parrikar gone, and given the precarious numbers in either camp, Sawant's real test will be to keep the NDA lock intact, especially the allies who will want a bigger share and say in the state.

THE IDEAS PAGE

THE CHIEF MINISTER NEXT DOOR
BY NITIN GADKARI
BY RAM MADHAV PAGE 13

THOUSANDS TURN OUT TO BID PARRIKAR FINAL FAREWELL
PAGE 8

Violent turn to protests at Vedanta's Odisha plant, two killed

ENS & PTI
BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 18

A SECURITY man was burnt to death by a mob and a protester killed in clashes near the Vedanta alumina refinery in Odisha's Kalahandi district, after locals demanding jobs tried to storm its premises Monday, police claimed.

Twenty people were also injured in the clashes that broke out between Odisha Industrial Security Force (OISF) personnel and the protesters, police said.

The incident took place when residents of Rengopali and nearby villages were staging a demonstration near the refinery at Lanjigarh demanding jobs and other facilities, Kalahandi SP B Gangadhar said.

They were also demanding admission of their children in a school run by the company and jobs to local youth at the refinery, police said.

Some of the agitators tried to enter the refinery's premises through the main gate, but were stopped by OISF personnel deployed there, they said.

The protesters fought a pitched battle with the security personnel and resorted to stone pelting in a bid to storm the refinery campus, police said.

A statement released by the Corporate Communications wing

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Anil Ambani pays up, thanks 'respected elder brother Mukesh, Nita'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 18

RACING TO meet the four-week deadline set by the Supreme Court and averting a potential jail term for its chairman Anil Ambani, Reliance Communications Ltd (RCom) Monday said it had paid Rs 550 crore and interest to Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson.

Thanking elder brother Mukesh Ambani for "timely support", Anil Ambani said, "My sincere and heartfelt thanks to my respected elder brother, Mukesh, and Nita, for standing by me during these trying times, and demonstrating the importance of staying true to our strong family values by extending this timely support."

"I and my family are grateful we have moved beyond the past,



Averts jail term after RCom pays Rs 550 crore to Ericsson

and are deeply touched with this gesture," Anil Ambani said in a statement.

A spokesperson for RCom said "the requisite payment of Rs 550 crore and interest thereon to Ericsson has been completed today in compliance of the judgment of the Supreme Court".

Since RCom had earlier deposited Rs 118 crore with the Supreme Court, the total payment to Ericsson was around Rs 580 crore including penalty interest. The deadline for RCom to make the final payment was March 19.

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HC sets aside Haryana CM remark against Ashok Khemka



Officers of integrity depleting fast: HC

SOFI AHSAN
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 18

STATING THAT the "severe constraints in which an honest and upright officer works under the political leadership are well known", the Punjab and Haryana High Court Monday set aside the adverse remarks made by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar in senior IAS officer Ashok Khemka's performance appraisal report.

The court observed that officers "with such an integrity" are "depleting very fast" in "our

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Human embryo smuggling: Mock delivery leads DRI to Mumbai clinic

KHUSHBOO NARAYAN, TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA & MOHAMED THAYER
MUMBAI, MARCH 18

AN INVESTIGATION that involved the arrest of a Malaysian national and the "mock delivery" of a canister led the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) to conduct a search at a well-known in-vitro fertilization (IVF) clinic in Mumbai run by a top embryologist, who is now being probed in connection with the alleged smuggling of human embryos.

THE CITY

WILL ALLY WITH AAP IF CONG HIGH COMMAND ASKS US TO, SAYS SHEILA
PAGE 5



Dr Goral Gandhi has denied all allegations, moved HC

The search at the office of embryologist and IVF trainer, Dr Goral Gandhi, was conducted on March 16, a day after the DRI detained Malaysian national Partheban Durai on his arrival at the Mumbai international airport and seized a canister of human embryos. Gandhi is the scientific and laboratory director at the

Indo Nippon IVF clinic in Bandra.

The DRI probe found that Durai, a "regular carrier" of human embryos, was to allegedly deliver the canister to the IVF clinic that Gandhi runs. DRI sources said officers questioned Durai and took him to the IVF clinic to complete a "mock delivery" before recording his arrest.

Gandhi has denied the allegations and approached the Bombay High Court, which asked the DRI Monday not to take any coercive steps against her till April 3. A division bench of Justices Ranjit More and

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Arrest warrant issued in UK

Nirav Modi faces arrest in UK after ED request

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

FUGITIVE JEWELLER Nirav Modi is likely to be placed under arrest soon by UK authorities after the Westminster Magistrate Court in London issued a warrant against him a few days ago, sources in Enforcement Directorate (ED) said.

The court has admitted the extradition plea by the agency and issued an arrest warrant, they said. "We have been informed by the authorities there about the issuance of a warrant against Nirav Modi. It officially marks the beginning of extradition proceedings against him," an ED official said.

The development comes days after Modi was tracked by UK's Telegraph newspaper in London — it reported that he was living in an expensive flat from where he was running a diamond business.

According to ED sources, Nirav Modi will be arrested and released on bail on the condition that he cannot leave the country after which extradition proceedings would begin.

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With trucks stuck at LoC crossing, Valley traders despair: Shelf life of goods too low

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, MARCH 18

OVER 100 trucks carrying different items, including 24 stationed at the Salamabad trade centre in Uri, have been waiting to cross over for more than two weeks because of repair work on the Kamaan post bridge that is used to cross the Line of Control (LoC).

Expressing dismay at the de-

lay, the cross-LoC traders association claimed that perishable goods in the waiting trucks have already been damaged.

"Since March 8, trade has remained suspended from Salamabad to the Pakistan side, because we were informed that the bridge needs repairs. There are perishable items in the trucks, including bananas and vegetables, and lot of them have been damaged. We don't have



The Uri crossing has been shut since March 8. File

an exact estimate, but there are goods worth over Rs 1 crore," Hilal Turki, chairman, cross-LoC traders' association, told The Indian Express.

In a letter to authorities, the association stated: "...our traders mostly deal with fresh items and the value of those items is in millions of rupees, here we would like to bring in your kind notice that most of the products come

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Slew of new car launches, high fuel prices: Used cars sold 4 lakh units more than new in 2018

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

PRANAV MUKUL & ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

MARKING A trend that appears to be gaining strength, India's used-car market saw the sale of 40 lakh vehicles in 2018 to overtake the volumes for new cars at 36 lakh in the same year, industry figures show.

In value terms, the used-car market clocked almost two-thirds the business recorded for new cars last year — Rs 1.4 lakh

crore for used cars versus Rs 2.2 lakh crore for new. The drivers for this resurgence in used-car numbers include an expansion of the organised segment of the industry, a high number of new car launches and a rebound in fuel prices.

According to analysts, the ratio of used-car to new-car sales, currently just over 1 in India, is likely to move closer to the ratio of over 2-3 that is seen in major economies such as Germany, the UK and Brazil.

A key differentiator between the two markets is that the fastest growing segment in the used-car market is the entry segment, with Maruti Alto,



Marked difference in entry level segment

WagonR, the old Swift and the Hyundai i10 accounting for nearly 60 per cent of volumes.

In contrast, the fastest growing segment in new cars is no longer the entry-level hatchback

segment, which has been overshadowed by entry-level sedans, such as Maruti Suzuki Swift Dzire, and mid-level hatchbacks, such as Suzuki Swift and Hyundai Grand i10.

There are three main reasons for the pick-up in the used car market, say analysts.

One, the exceptionally high number of new car launches — 31 — or facelift of old models during the 12 months to December 2018. As a result, the number of used cars less than two years old, with under 20,000 km clocked on the odometer, has seen a surge.

Two, the organised segment of the used-car market has been

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WORLD



THREE DEAD IN SHOOTING ON DUTCH TRAM, SUSPECT ARRESTED

NEW ZEALAND PM PROMISES NEW GUN LAWS WITHIN DAYS
PAGE 14

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