

NEARBY



Two arrested in Bhandi assault case

GURUGRAM
Over 72 hours after several members of a Muslim family were beaten up by a large group of men in Bhandi, Gurugram, two people have been arrested in the case.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

Fire breaks out at AIIMS Trauma Centre

NEW DELHI
A fire broke out at the basement of the AIIMS Trauma Centre on Sunday evening, the Delhi Fire Service said, adding that no casualties were reported.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

Moneywise

Beginning today, *The Hindu* will carry Moneywise, a weekly feature on personal finance, in the Business section. It aims to give individuals and families a grasp not just of savvy investments, but also of smart spending. A query column will answer readers' questions on managing finances.

EDGE ▶ 4 PAGES
DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

India, Pakistan row over Hindu sisters' abduction

Sushma, Pakistan Minister trade barbs

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's statement on the abduction of two sisters from the minority Hindu community in Pakistan snowballed into an online spat on Sunday after strong responses from Islamabad.

India followed the Minister's statement with a rare note of protest, citing widespread incidents of forced conversion of Hindu women in parts of Pakistan.

Radio Pakistan later reported that Prime Minister Imran Khan had ordered an immediate investigation.

The incident was taken up by social media in Pakistan with videos showing the father of the girls protesting at a police station in Sindh. Subsequent videos showed the girls begging to be saved from captivity after they were taken away by goons during Holi. Responding to



Sushma Swaraj

a news release, Ms. Swaraj said, "I have asked the Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan to send a report."

This drew a quick response from Pakistan's Information Minister Fawad Hussain Chaudhry, who said the incident was an internal issue.

Sources said India then sent a note of protest or "note verbale" on Sunday asking Pakistan to take "remedial action" to ensure the safety of its citizens from minority communities.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

'Jamaat-e-Islami pushed youth to militancy'

Surge in local recruits linked to outfit

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The surge in local youth joining terrorist ranks spurred the ban on Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI-J&K), a socio-religious group that has been active in Jammu and Kashmir since 1942, a senior official said.

Most locals who joined terrorist groups were associated with the JeI, either through educational institutions run by it or religious activities, the official said.

In 2018, over 180 Kashmiri youths joined these groups, and around 56% were locals, the official said. The same year, 252 terrorists were killed in various operations and around 60% were locals.

"Earlier foreign terrorists killed were more in number but the trend has reversed in the past two years. More locals have joined the militant ranks



The sealed headquarters of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Srinagar.

and more are getting killed," said the official.

An internal note from the Centre before the February 28 ban said the "JeI has been using its network of schools to further promote anti-India feeling among children in the Valley."

"Its leaders have been encouraging cadres of the JeI youth wing- Jamiat-ul-Tulba to be recruited into terrorist outfits."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Pulwama: India to seek U.S. virtual SIM details

It is a new method used by terrorists across the border, say officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR

A request will be sent to the U.S. for details from a service provider of "virtual SIMs," which were used by the suicide bomber of the Jaish-e-Mohammad behind the Pulwama attack and his Pakistan and Kashmir handlers, officials said.

Piecing together the probe from the site, searches carried out by the Jammu

and Kashmir police and Central security agencies at an encounter site in Tral as well as other locations, it was found that the bomber, Adil Dar, was in constant touch with his JeM handler across the border using this technology, they said.

The main mastermind, Mudassir Khan, was killed in the Tral gunfight. Forty soldiers were killed on February 14 when Dar rammed his

explosives-laden vehicle into a CRPF convoy at Pulwama. India retaliated, bombing the Jaish hideout in Pakistan's Balakot. It was a new method for terrorists across the border to use a "virtual SIM," generated by a service provider in the U.S.

Dar was in constant touch with his Jaish-e-Mohammad handler across the border and the mastermind Mudassir Khan using the virtual

SIM technology, officials said.

Under the method, the computer generates a telephone number and the user downloads an application of the service provider on his smartphone. The number is linked to social networking sites. The verification code generated by these networking sites is received on the smartphone, and the user is ready.

Uproar in T.N. Congress over choice of Karti

Sudarshana Nachiappan was also eyeing Sivaganga seat

B. KOLAPPAN
CHENNAI

The Congress on Sunday evening released its ninth list of candidates for the Lok Sabha election, fielding among others Karti Chidambaram in the Sivaganga constituency in Tamil Nadu, triggering strong protests from former Union Minister E.M. Sudarshana Nachiappan, who was in the race for the seat.

Mr. Nachiappan had in 1999 defeated Mr. Karti's father, P. Chidambaram, when the latter was in the Tamil Maanila Congress.

The intense fight between Mr. Karti and Mr. Nachiappan delayed naming the candidate for Sivaganga. On Sunday, the list was released and it included Rajya Sabha member B.K. Hariprasad (Bangalore South) and Tariq Anwar (Katihar, Bihar), who had recently quit the NCP. With this, the party has so far fielded 227 candidates for the seven-phase polling.

Mr. Karti had lost the election in Sivaganga in 2014. He is facing criminal cases, including a money laundering case involving INX Media.

Asked whether there would be some political fallout of the INX Media case, Mr. Karti said there was no case against him and he faced no case in any court.

(With inputs from Sandeep Phukan in New Delhi)

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
CONGRESS MANIFESTO LIKELY ON APRIL 2 ▶ PAGE 10



KARTI CHIDAMBARAM
Congress candidate

In Azamgarh, Akhilesh to step into father's shoes

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Jumping into the electoral fray in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav will contest the 2019 Lok Sabha election from Azamgarh, a seat with a strong Muslim-Yadav flavour. Senior party leader and former Cabinet Minister Azam Khan will also debut in his bastion Rampur.

Mr. Yadav's father and party patron Mulayam Singh is the sitting MP from Azamgarh, which he decided to retain after winning two seats in 2014, the other being Mainpuri.

Strategic move

Mr. Yadav's decision to contest from Azamgarh is a direct replacement of his father in the politically vibrant constituency but also considered a strategic



Akhilesh Yadav

move to bolster the party's hopes in the crucial eastern region of the State which includes Varanasi and Gorakhpur, both important centres for the BJP.

SP MLC Udaiveer Singh told *The Hindu* that Mr. Yadav's candidature was to fill the absence of Mulayam Singh, who will contest only from Mainpuri this time, and of a Yadav leader in general in Purvanchal.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10
DON'T PUNISH U.P. FARMERS, SAYS RAHUL ▶ PAGE 10

Congress plays coy over hashtag on fake news

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

While the Congress is yet to officially announce an effective poll slogan to anchor its campaign, the party has thrown its weight behind a social media offensive calling out the government.

On Saturday, a mysterious Twitter handle @STFUIndianmedia started sharing video clips with the hash tag #ShutTheFakeUp, modifying a commonly used colloquial phrase to express exasperation but also viewed as a term of abuse.

Within 24 hours, the hashtag #ShutTheFakeUp had raced to the top 10 trends. Interestingly, though, only one verified account, that of Sanjay Dutt, All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary in-charge of Tamil Nadu, was among the 137 followers of the handle until Sunday evening.

But several senior Congress leaders from verified handles started tweeting videos of what promised to be spoofs on mainstream media reportage on the Narendra Modi government's claims.

"2 crores jobs a year to 45 year low as Unemployment Hits Nation- this drastic fall from grace should have been the national media's headline, but real, relevant issues stopped mattering to them since last 5 years!"



tweeted Chhattisgarh Minister and senior leader T.S. Singh Deo with the hash tag #ShutTheFakeUp. He also shared a video that mocked the Modi government's claim on jobs. The two minute clip showed how mainstream media, including popular TV anchors, presented statistics of job creation without questioning the government's claims or verifying data.

The video was also shared on Instagram, one of the most popular social media platforms.

Leaders of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) in Haryana, Kiran Chaudhary, Punjab Minister VijayINDER Singla, former union ministers Jitin Prasada and Bhanwar Jitendra Singh were other Congress leaders who tweeted with #ShutTheFakeUp.

However, the Opposition party seemed cautious in claiming credit for the hashtag.

"We may tweet or retweet something we agree with individually. But our own Congress party's campaign would be tweeted from our official handle @incindia," said a Congress leader.