



**Ex-PDP Minister joins Faesal's party**

**SRINAGAR**  
Javid Mustafa Mir, a former Peoples Democratic Party legislator and ex-Minister, on Wednesday joined IAS topper Shah Faesal's party, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Movement, in Srinagar. The former Minister joined the JKPM in the presence of Mr. Faesal and other members, said the party spokesman.

**NORTH** ▶ PAGE 2

**Ex-Mumbai police chief on BJD's Lok Sabha list**

**BHUBANESWAR**  
The ruling Biju Janata Dal on Wednesday announced the names of its candidates for nine Lok Sabha and 36 Assembly constituencies for simultaneous elections in the State to be held in the third and fourth phase on April 23 and 29. Former Mumbai Police Commissioner Arup Patnaik will contest the Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha seat, while Rajya Sabha member Anubhav Mohanty will contest from Kendrapara.

**NEWS** ▶ PAGE 10

**Kant Enclave residents served notices**

**FARIDABAD**  
With just four days to go for the Supreme Court deadline to vacate houses in Kant Enclave, the Department of Town and Country Planning has served public notices to the residents to adhere to the court order. The 400-acre township houses bungalows of retired Army officers, former bureaucrats, senior advocates, entrepreneurs, and even a former MP.

**DELHI METRO** ▶ PAGE 1

**DELHI METRO** ▶ 6 PAGES

## Successful anti-satellite missile test puts India in elite club

PM announces launch in televised address; says it's for peace, not warmongering

**DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI**

In an incremental advance, India on Wednesday successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile test, named Mission Shakti, becoming the fourth country in the world to demonstrate the capability to shoot down satellites in orbit. So far, only the United States, Russia and China have this prowess.

"A short while back, our scientists have shot down a live satellite in the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) at 300 km in space," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, addressing the nation around noon.

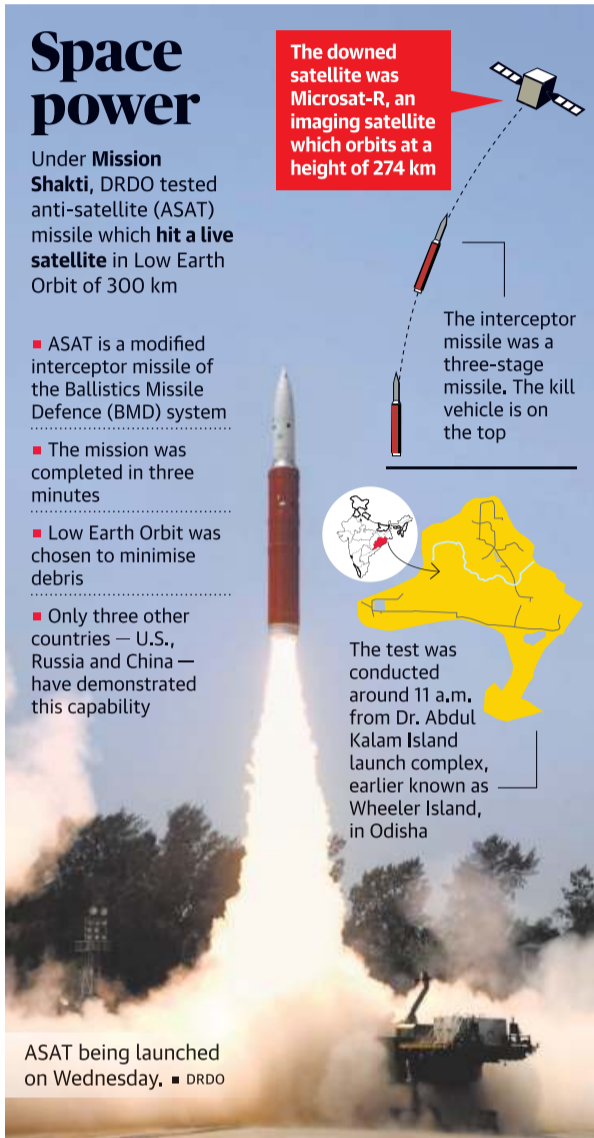
The satellite downed by the ASAT missile was Microsat-R, an imaging satellite which was launched into orbit on January 24, 2019 using a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), a senior Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) official said.

India has built the broad capabilities and building blocks to develop ASAT missiles for some time as part of its Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme.

Mr. Modi said the aim of the test was to maintain peace, rather than warmongering.

"A BMD interceptor missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in LEO in a 'hit to kill' mode", the DRDO said in a statement.

A DRDO official claimed that the ASAT missile was a modified exo-atmospheric interceptor missile of the BMD. A LEO of 300 km was chosen to "minimise" debris



ASAT being launched on Wednesday, DRDO

and it also won't last more than a few months, the official said. Anti-satellite weapons provide the capability to shoot down enemy satellites in orbit thereby disrupting critical communications and surveillance capabilities. ASAT missiles also act as a space deterrent in dissuading adversaries from targeting the country's satellite network.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10  
**MORE REPORTS** ▶ PAGE 7

## Opposition attacks PM

A war of words broke out between the BJP and the Opposition over PM Narendra Modi's address. While Congress president Rahul Gandhi wished Mr. Modi a "very Happy World Theatre Day", the Trinamool Congress and the CPI(M) said the announcement was a violation of the Model Code of Conduct. ▶ PAGE 7

## EC to check for code violation

The Election Commission on Wednesday directed a committee of officers, headed by Sandeep Saxena, Deputy Election Commissioner, to examine whether the PM's address violated the Model Code of Conduct. After a high-level meeting, the EC said: "The matter... has been brought to the notice of the Election Commission."

## No treaty was violated: MEA

India has assured the world that it did not violate any international treaty or understanding with the anti-satellite missile testing. The Ministry of External Affairs said the test was not directed against any country. ▶ PAGE 7

## Electoral bonds will affect transparency, EC tells SC

'Foreign corporates could influence Indian elections'

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI**

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has told the Supreme Court that electoral bonds, contrary to government claims, wreck transparency in political funding.

Coupled with the removal of cap on foreign funding, they invite foreign corporate powers to impact Indian politics, it said in an affidavit filed in the apex court.

The ECI ripped apart amendments made to various key statutes through the two consecutive Finance Acts of 2016 and 2017.

It said these amendments would pump in black money for political funding through shell companies and allow "unchecked foreign funding of political parties in India which could lead to Indian



The EC reiterated the need for declaring donations.

politics being influenced by foreign companies."

The poll body said it had, way back in May 2017, warned the Ministry of Law and Justice that these amendments "will have serious repercussions/impact on the transparency of political finance/funding of political parties." It annexed the

letters written to the Law Ministry, along with its 37-page affidavit filed in the Supreme Court on March 25, 2019.

"The Election Commission of India has time and again voiced the importance of declaration of donations received by political parties and also about the manner in which those funds are expended by them for better transparency and accountability in the election process," it submitted. The affidavit was circulated on Wednesday by petitioner Association of Democratic Reforms.

It said the amendments virtually derailed ECI guidelines of August 29, 2014, requiring parties to file reports on contributions received.

**CAN SKIP RECORD** ▶ PAGE 10

## In 2018, Official Secrets Act invoked in five cases

Complaint filed against engineer working in Nagpur

**VIJAITA SINGH  
NEW DELHI**

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued five prosecution sanction orders last year under the Official Secrets Act (OSA), 1923.

On October 8, Nishant Agrawal, an engineer working at the BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited centre in Nagpur, was arrested on charges of illegally possess-

ing highly sensitive and secret documents, the Uttar Pradesh police alleged.

The police recently filed a complaint (technical term for charge sheet under OSA) in a Nagpur court against the accused but did not press any charges under the British-era Act for sending the sensitive information to Pakistan, a claim widely reported in media. The Nag-

pur court also sought legal advice on the complaint.

"We got the prosecution sanction from the MHA last December. We filed a complaint against him only for possession of secret documents of BrahMos missile in his personal computer," said Asim Arun, Inspector General, Anti Terrorist Squad, U.P.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

## Telecom providers evasive, CBI tells SC

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court against telecom service providers, Bharti Airtel Limited and Vodafone Mobile Services Limited, for their "surprisingly and strangely evasive" replies to repeated requests from the agency, regarding crucial call data records in connection with the probe into multi-crore ponzi scam cases, including the Saradha group scandal.

The CBI said it had been writing to the two service

providers for the call records of certain mobile phone numbers since last year. It said it specifically wanted to know what was the period for which the call records were requested by the West Bengal police. Secondly, it wanted to know the period for which the call records were "actually supplied" by the two service providers to the police.

In its application, the CBI said the information was "extremely germane" to its probe.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

## Rahul takes injured journalist to AIIMS

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday 'rescued' a journalist who met with an accident on Humayun Road in New Delhi. The injured journalist, Rajendra Vyas, was taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences by Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. Vyas owns a local newspaper in Rajasthan.

Around 1.15 p.m. when Mr. Vyas was crossing the road, he was hit by a vehicle. Mr. Gandhi, who was passing by, got down from the vehicle and with the help of his security person-



Rahul Gandhi with the injured scribe. ■ TV GRAB

nel, took him to AIIMS.

According to AIIMS, Mr. Gandhi arrived at the casualty ward with an injured person at 1.30 p.m.

Mr. Vyas, who had minor bruises on his limbs, was discharged after first aid. Mr. Gandhi remained with Mr. Vyas till the time he was declared fit by the doctors.

## SC for as few tribunals as possible

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Wednesday said the numerous tribunals, once meant to lighten the burden of high courts across the country, have now become virtually non-functional, crippled by a chronic lack of infrastructure, manpower and an irregular appointment mechanism.

Heading a Constitution Bench, Chief Justice Gogoi said a "practical solution" would be to have "as few tribunals as possible."

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

## BJP Dalit MP resigns, hands over letter to chowkidar

Anshul Verma was upset after he was denied ticket for the upcoming Lok Sabha election

**OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW**

Upset at being denied a ticket for the upcoming Lok Sabha election, Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Hardoi Anshul Verma on Wednesday quit the party and joined the Samajwadi Party.

The episode, however, stood out for the manner of the resignation. Mr. Verma handed over his letter to the chowkidar (watchman) at the BJP State headquarters in Lucknow.

The Dalit MP - Hardoi is a reserved constituency - also handed over a day's wage to the chowkidar, as he taunted the BJP over its chowkidar campaign led by Prime Mi-



Anshul Verma, who resigned from the BJP and joined the SP, with Akhilesh Yadav and Azam Khan in Lucknow on Wednesday. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

nister Narendra Modi.

Addressing the media, Mr. Verma said the BJP may also have penalised him for not writing chowkidar on his so-

cial media wall.

"Vikas kiya hai vikas kareng, chowkidar nahi Anshul hi bane rahenge (I have done development and will

continue to do so. I will remain Anshul and not become a chowkidar)," said Mr. Verma.

In 2014, Mr. Verma won the Hardoi seat in central U.P. after securing 3.60 lakh votes against 2.79 lakh by the BSP.

However, in the first list of candidates released by the BJP last week, he found himself among the six sitting MPs who have been replaced, apparently for not performing up to the mark.

Linking it to their caste identity, as four of the six MPs replaced were Dalits, Mr. Verma asked: "Are only MPs from the Dalit society niskriya (sluggish)?"

The BJP has fielded Jai Prakash Rawat from Hardoi this time. Mr. Rawat, a Pasi like Mr. Verma, is a former four-time MP from Hardoi and Mohanlalganj.

Explaining reasons for quitting the BJP, Mr. Verma said he was hurt after being denied a ticket and no responsible leader saw it fit to talk to him or give him an appointment.

He said he was also disappointed after the party did not act on his complaint on distribution of liquor to people who attended a Pasi Sammelan organised at a temple in Hardoi in January by BJP leader Naresh Agarwal and his son Nitin.