



SC denies bail to RJD leader Lalit Prasad in fodder scam case

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NIA arrests JKLF chief Yasin Malik in a terror funding case

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Rahul Gandhi files nomination papers from Amethi

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Pollard scripts a sensational win for MI against KXIP

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No alliance with Congress, says AAP MP

Aam Aadmi Party leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Wednesday ruled out any chances of an alliance with the Congress in the upcoming Lok Sabha election. The Congress, however, did not come on record to say that the talks had ended.

DELHI METRO PAGE 1

Poll officials complain about lack of amenities

As the first phase of polls for the 17th Lok Sabha begins on Thursday, booth officials in Noida's Dadri complained about lack of basic amenities after they were told to take shelter in a local school for the night.

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DELHI METRO PAGE 6

EC puts on hold release of biopic on PM Modi

It prohibits release of all such publicity material

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The release of a biopic on Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been deferred till further orders from the Election Commission, which on Wednesday issued a directive prohibiting display of any biopic material that subserves "the purposes of any political entity or individual connected to it".

The order bars broadcast of any such material in the electronic media, including films. The EC said in case of such a violation in any movie, certified by the appropriate authority [Censor Board], or a complaint made in this regard, a committee set up by the Commission would examine it and suggest appropriate action. The committee will be headed by a retired Supreme Court judge or a form-



Actor Vivek Oberoi as Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the biopic. PHOTO: PTI

er Chief Justice of a High Court.

Violation of model code

The poll panel observed that certain political contents on either a candidate, a political party or the achievement of the party in power — which were not in conformity with the model code of

conduct (MCC) — were being displayed in the electronic media or were intended to be displayed with the purpose of furthering electoral gains. It received such complaints against *NTR Laxmi*, *PM Narendra Modi* and *Udyama Simham*.

It was alleged these films diminished or advanced the electoral prospects of a candidate or a party in the garb of creative freedom; and that such content were surrogate publicity by the candidate or the political party.

Therefore, the EC directed that any biopic material, which is intended to, or which has potential to disturb the level playing field during the elections, should not be displayed during the MCC period.

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SC rejects Centre's plea to keep Rafale documents secret

Court to hear review pleas against its judgment upholding defence deal

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

In unanimous support for freedom of the press in a democracy, the Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed the government's plea to declare the Rafale jets' purchase documents a secret, while upholding the right of free speech of *The Hindu* to publish the defence papers in a series of articles since February 2019.

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, who shared the lead judgment with Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, said *The Hindu's* right to publish the Rafale documents was in consonance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.

With this, the court dismissed preliminary objections raised by the govern-

In fact, the publication of the said documents in *The Hindu* newspaper reminds the court of the consistent views of this court upholding the freedom of the press in a long line of decisions...

— CJI RANJAN GOGOI AND JUSTICE SANJAY KISHAN KAUL

The press in India has greatly contributed to the strengthening of democracy in the country

— JUSTICE K.M. JOSEPH

Modi's facial expressions have changed as he is suffering from the fear of going to jail if there is an investigation into the Rafale scam

— CONGRESS PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI

ment against petitions seeking a review of the December 14, 2018 judgment of the Supreme Court, which upheld the deal for purchase of 36 Rafale jets.

Hearing later

The government claimed that the review pleas were based on secret Rafale docu-

ments unauthorisedly removed from the Ministry of Defence and leaked to the media. The dates of hearing the petitions will be fixed later, the CJI said, after reading out the operative portion of his judgment.

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N. RAM'S STATEMENT PAGE 10

RTI covers it all, says judge

The RTI Act confers on citizens the "priceless right" to demand information even in matters affecting national security and relations with a foreign state, Justice K.M. Joseph said.

Scam is out in the open: Cong.

The government can no longer hide behind the Official Secrets Act, the Congress said. "The layers of corruption in the Rafale scam are now out in the open," its chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said.

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From theory to fact

Scientists on Wednesday revealed the first image ever made of a black hole after assembling data gathered by a network of radio telescopes around the world. The image was released by astronomers of the Event Horizon Telescope



constellation Virgo, that is about 53 million light years from Earth. One light year is 5.9 trillion miles, or 9.5 trillion km. This black hole is about 6 billion times the mass of our sun

Astronomers created the picture by assembling data gathered by eight radio telescopes around the world. The data was gathered by the Event Horizon Telescope two years ago, but it took so long to complete the image because it was a massive undertaking, involving about 200 scientists, supercomputers and hundreds of terabytes of data delivered worldwide by plane

The team looked at two supermassive

black holes, the M87 and the one at the centre of our own Milky Way galaxy. The one in our galaxy is closer but much smaller, so they both look the same size in the sky. But the more distant one was easier to take pictures of because it rotates more slowly

This is a huge day in astrophysics. We're seeing the unseeable

—FRANCE CURODVA, director of U.S. National Science Foundation

Black holes are like the walls of a prison. Once you cross it, you will never be able to get out and you will never be able to communicate.

—AVI LOEB, director of the Black Hole Initiative at Harvard University

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Jet aircraft seized over pending dues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

An unnamed cargo agent from Europe seized a Boeing 777 aircraft of Jet Airways when it landed in Amsterdam from Mumbai, demanding payment of dues from the debt-laden airline. The quantum of dues could not be immediately ascertained.

Jet Airways officials confirmed the incident but said the return flight to Mumbai (9W 231 Amsterdam-Mumbai) on Wednesday was delayed due to operational reasons.

LUKEWARM RESPONSE TO

JET SALE OFFER PAGE 13

CPI(M) assails Imran's preference for Modi

'Pak. interference a serious concern'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's comments preferring a BJP government to a Congress administration have led to sharp reactions here, with the CPI(M) saying on Wednesday it had serious concerns over foreign governments influencing the election process.

In remarks made to foreign correspondents in Pakistan and reported by Reuters, Mr. Khan, who led the charge against Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the February 26 Balakot air strike, said a government

led by the Congress might be too scared to discuss a settlement to the Kashmir issue.

"Perhaps if the BJP — a right-wing party — wins, some kind of settlement in Kashmir could be reached," Mr. Khan said.

Given the strident attacks made on Pakistan and its "Congress supporters" by Mr. Modi in the ongoing election campaign, Mr. Khan's remarks led to sharp responses from Opposition leaders, including from those in Kashmir.

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Voting for first phase of LS election today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Voting for the first round of the seven-phase Lok Sabha polls will get under way on Thursday. At stake are 91 Lok Sabha seats with simultaneous Assembly polls to be held in Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and for the 60-member Arunachal Pradesh Assembly, as well as 28 out of the 147 seats in the Odisha Assembly (with the rest spread out in the next three phases).

A total of 1,279 candidates are contesting in this phase across 20 States.

POLLING IN VAST SWATHES

OF THE COUNTRY PAGE 10

May expresses 'regret' for Jallianwala Bagh firing

April 13 will mark its 100th anniversary

VIDYA RAM LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday expressed "regret" in Parliament for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, ahead of the 100th anniversary of the killings on April 13.

Opening the Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday with a reference to the massacre, Ms. May quoted Queen Elizabeth's remarks, calling the incident a "distressing example" of Britain's past history with India. "We deeply regret what happened and the suffering caused," Ms. May said.

This came after MPs from across the political parties called for a formal apology during a debate



Theresa May

on Tuesday afternoon.

Foreign Office Minister Mark Field had told MPs on Tuesday that he recognised that there was a "strong and compelling case" for Britain to go beyond the "deep regret" already expressed.

LABOUR PARTY CALLS FOR

FULL APOLOGY PAGE 12

Defamation charges framed against Ramani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday framed defamation charges against senior journalist Priya Ramani in a case filed by former Union Minister M.J.

Akbar.

Mr. Akbar had accused Ms. Ramani of defaming him by alleging that he sexually assaulted several women journalists when they were working with him.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal framed the charges against Ms. Ramani when she pleaded not guilty.

DETAILS DELHI METRO PAGE 1

Freed scribe vows to carry on fight for free speech

RAHUL KARMAKAR GUWAHATI

Kishorechandra Wangkhem, the 39-year-old television anchor who was freed on Wednesday after four months in prison on charges of sedition under NSA, said he would continue to fight for freedom of speech. He also said that he would do his bit towards getting another "draconian piece of law" — the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 — scrapped.

"NSA and AFSPA are draconian laws not suitable for a democratic country like



Kishorechandra Wangkhem. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ours. I am not the right person to go against these laws, but I will contribute toward scrapping them," he said.

Mr. Wangkhem was jailed for calling Chief Minister N. Biren Singh a "puppet" of PM Narendra Modi.