

IN BRIEF



Two Bengal govt. schemes win UN awards

KOLKATA
Two schemes of the West Bengal government for skill development and distribution of bicycles to students have won the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society awards of the United Nations, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Thursday. PTI

Spanish tourist injured while taking selfie

JAIPUR
A Spanish tourist was injured on Thursday after he fell from a height of nearly 40 feet while clicking a selfie at Jaipur's Amber Fort, police said. Marquez Gonzalez, was visiting the fort along with his mother. PTI

Woman killed for resisting robbery

MUZAFFARNAGAR (U.P.)
A 48-year-old woman was allegedly strangled to death for resisting robbery, police said on Thursday. Four persons allegedly killed the woman and looted valuables from her house in Ambar Vihar colony, they said. PTI

Man killed, three hurt in M.P. accident

HOSHANGABAD
A 25-year-old man was on Thursday killed after being hit by a dumper in Seoni Malwa tehsil in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh, police said. Three others were also injured in the accident. The dumper later crashed into a roadside shop, they said. PTI

Infant dies as hut catches fire in Rajasthan

JAIPUR
An infant and two goats were killed when the hut they were in caught fire in Rajasthan's Pali district on Thursday, police said. The mother of the baby was not at home when the fire broke out, they said, adding the matter was being probed. PTI

The uneasy silence of Muslim voters

Being made to feel as if we are not citizens, say members of the minority community in western U.P.

ELECTION 2019

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD/ MEERUT/
MUZAFFARNAGAR/ DEOBAND

"*Sab theek hai* (everything is all right)" was the common refrain heard from Muslim voters at different polling stations across the sugarcane bowl of western Uttar Pradesh on Thursday during the first phase of polling.

With eyes betraying the lips, they gave a cynical smile when asked about their concerns. "Muslim voter *is baar gumsum hai* (the Muslim voter is silent this time)," said Mohd. Anwar, the caretaker of Jama Masjid in Deoband.

"This is what the BJP has taught us in the last five years — speak with a forked tongue. We are being made to feel as if we are not citizens of this country," said Anas Siddiqui, who runs the popular Naimia Book Depot in Deoband.

'No options'

"The silence is also because we have no options. We know that the SP-BSP-RLD alliance is a *majboori ka gathbandhan* (an alliance of desperation). And we are being asked to vote because the



Power of democracy: Voters show their inked fingers at Islamia Inter College in Deoband during the first phase of polling on Thursday. ■PHOTOS: SANDEEP SAXENA

BJP is a bigger evil," said Mohd Islam, 86, who has seen the days when the Muslim League lost to the Congress in Saharanpur.

"I am a follower of Chaudhary Charan Singh who always talked of Muslim-Jat-Yadav unity. The Grand Alliance has been presented as a source of hope but we can't be sure of the BSP. We are looking for a post-poll alliance between the Congress and the Grand Alliance."

Khursheed Hasan Usmani, a retired English teacher, said political parties have not been fair to Muslims. "We have not tried to build our leadership. Be it Mulayam, Akhilesh or Mayawati, we have always reposed our faith in a non-Muslim. Muslims have always lived as younger brothers of Hindus in the region. Now we are being used to create fear among the majority community. I can speak because

I am sitting in Deoband. But can a Muslim living in a village of mixed population dare to speak his mind? Then they say we love to live in the ghettos."

Muslim vote bank

Mr. Usmani added that those who talk of Akhand Bharat forget that Pakistan was created to "neutralise the Muslim vote bank".

Md. Farooq, a local businessman, said he avoids tak-



Khursheed Hasan Usmani, a retired teacher, feels political parties have not been fair to Muslims. ■

ing meat delicacies with him during travel. "You never know when you can be flogged on charge of carrying beef. The laboratory test reports come much later." But he also sees an opportunity in the adversity. "After the BJP started raising the issue of beef and instant triple talaq, Muslims started asking about what the Koran says on these subjects."

Dr. Aftab Alam, professor of political science at Aligarh Muslim University, said it's not that communal flare-ups didn't happen in earlier regimes. "But at that time things used to return to normal after the riots. Now what's happening is something deeper. This gradual 'otherisation' of one community is much more dangerous."

Sonia files papers from Rae Bareli

Aims for fifth win; pitted against BJP's Dinesh Pratap Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RAE BARELI (U.P.)

UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Thursday filed her nomination from Rae Bareli with her son and Congress president Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Vadra Gandhi by her side.

After a brief roadshow, the Congress leader went to the Collectorate to file her

papers with a large number of Congress supporters carrying party flags and banners cheering her all along the route.

Offers 'puja'

Before starting the road show, she offered 'puja' at the Congress office where her son-in-law Robert Vadra and grandson Rehan were

also present.

The former Congress president is aiming for a fifth victory from the parliamentary constituency, in a straight contest against Dinesh Pratap Singh, who recently joined the BJP after quitting her party.

Polling in Rae Bareli will be held in the fifth phase on May 6.

'Ateeq assault case true'

U.P. govt. confirms jail attack episode

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday told the Supreme Court that former MP Ateeq Ahmad, who was lodged in Deoria jail, had indeed assaulted and kidnapped a businessman on December 26 last year.

Confirming the incident, the U.P. government said CCTV cameras in the jail

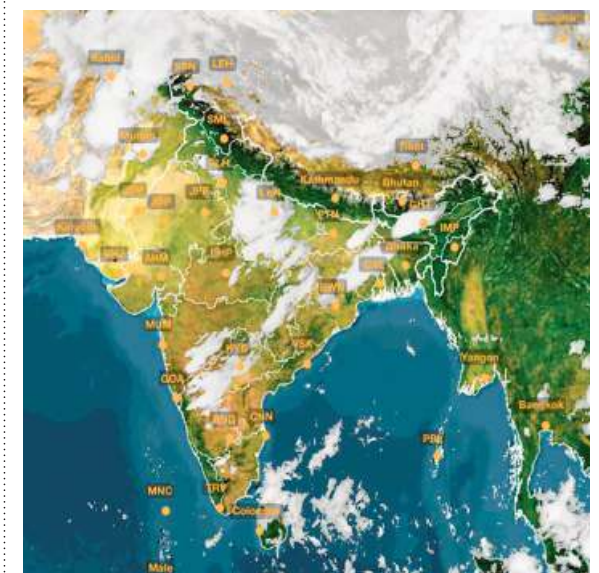
complex were tampered with at the time.

A Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna said it would consider the report submitted by State government on April 23.

In the report the U.P. government said departmental action against five jail officials has been initiated.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/MD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Madhya Pradesh. Thunderstorm accompanied with squall/lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over northeast Jharkhand, Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana and interior Karnataka

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	
Agartala	33.0	22.2	Kozhikode	.....	36.4	27.8	
Ahmedabad	42.0	24.9	Kurnool	.....	41.2	25.1	
Aizawl	23.0	32.4	15.5	Lucknow	37.8	23.4
Allahabad	42.8	23.9	Madurai	.....	40.2	25.9	
Bengaluru	35.4	24.2	Mangaluru	.....	36.2	27.0	
Bhopal	41.3	25.2	Mumbai	.....	33.0	24.4	
Bhubaneswar	38.6	26.4	Mysuru	.....	36.0	21.8	
Chandigarh	36.5	20.5	New Delhi	.....	38.7	23.0	
Chennai	35.2	27.2	Patna	.....	36.0	22.8	
Coimbatore	38.3	25.6	Port Blair	.....	33.8	23.7	
Dehradun	34.5	18.6	Puducherry	.....	35.4	27.1	
Gangtok	21.3	13.2	Pune	.....	40.7	19.9	
Goa	33.7	25.0	Rajpur	.....	40.8	27.6	
Guwahati	33.3	18.6	Ranchi	.....	36.7	22.4	
Hubballi	36.0	22.0	Shillong	.....	21.3	11.0	
Hyderabad	40.2	25.3	Shimla	.....	25.2	15.3	
Imphal	29.1	12.5	Srinagar	0.1	23.6	10.5
Jaipur	40.0	29.3	Trivandrum	.....	36.8	27.5	
Kochi	34.2	26.4	Tiruchi	.....	40.3	27.2	
Kohima	29	23.0	10.5	Vijayawada	38.2	26.0
Kolkata	33.7	25.7	Visakhapatnam	.....	33.1	25.3	

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	Pollutants in the air you are breathing					Yesterday
	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	
Ahmedabad	10	55	26	152	.....	.....
Bengaluru	1	25	69	140	.....	.....
Chennai	13	26	58	169	.....	.....
Delhi	33	113	87	201	244	.....
Hyderabad	7	32	17	56	81	.....
Kolkata	2	41	16	74	80	.....
Lucknow	19	46	49	293	.....	.....
Mumbai	29	19	85	28	62	.....
Pune	31	15	31	88	103	.....
Visakhapatnam	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease