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**NEARBY**

**Sonia files papers from Rae Bareilly**  
 RAE BAREILLY  
 UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Thursday filed her nomination from Rae Bareilly with her son and Congress president Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Vadra Gandhi by her side. The former Congress president is aiming for a fifth victory from the parliamentary constituency.  
**NATION** ▶ PAGE 6

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**DELHI METRO** ▶ 6 PAGES

## As polls begin, violence mars voting in A.P., J&K

3 killed, 15 EVMs damaged across nation

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 NEW DELHI

The first phase of the Lok Sabha election in 91 constituencies across 18 States and two Union Territories and the Assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday were marred by stray incidents of violence, with at least two deaths reported in Andhra Pradesh and one in Jammu and Kashmir. Fifteen EVMs were damaged.

Polling continued till late in the night in Andhra Pradesh owing to malfunctioning EVMs in several booths. The Election Commission allowed voters who were in the queue at 6 p.m. to exercise their franchise.

West Bengal recorded 81%

polling, while Bihar recorded 50%, the lowest among the 20 States. However, the Election Commission did not disclose the overall polling percentage at its briefing, saying that the data were being collated.

Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha said the average turnout was close to the figure in the 2014 Lok Sabha election.

Six EVMs were damaged in Andhra Pradesh, five in Arunachal Pradesh, two in Manipur and one each in Bihar and West Bengal. In Jammu and Kashmir, one civilian was killed in firing by security personnel.

**EVM GLITCHES** ▶ PAGE 10  
**TWO KILLED IN CLASHES** ▶ PAGE 5

### Voting in droves

Tripura and Manipur recorded the highest polling percentage on Thursday. Provisional data show Bihar, Maharashtra & U.P. registered similar turnouts as those seen in the 2014 Lok Sabha election

\*Turnout as of 5 pm



**Job done:** Deori tribal women coming out after casting their votes at a polling station in Jorhat district of Assam on Thursday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

**1.7%** of VVPAT units, 0.73% of ballot units and 0.61% control units replaced

**91** Lok Sabha seats went to polls on Thursday, and 1,279 candidates contested

Totally there were **14,21,69,000** voters in these constituencies

STATE	VOTER TURNOUT
Andaman & Nicobar	70.67%
Andhra Pradesh	73%
Arunachal Pradesh	66%
Assam (5 seats)	68%
Baramulla (J&K)	35.01%
Bihar* (4)	50%
Chhattisgarh (1)	56%
Jammu (J&K)	72.16%
Lakshadweep	66%
Maharashtra (7)	56%
Manipur	78.2%
Meghalaya	67.16%
Mizoram	60%
Nagaland	78%
Odisha (4)	68%
Sikkim*	69%
Telangana	60%
Tripura (1)	81.8%
Uttar Pradesh (8)	63.69%
Uttarakhand*	57.85%
West Bengal (2)	81%

## Voters needn't know source of political funding: govt.

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 NEW DELHI

Voters do not need to know from where political parties get their funds, the government argued in the Supreme Court on Thursday.

The court cannot "kill" the electoral bonds scheme for the sake of transparency, Attorney General K.K. Venugopal said. He argued that the bond was an experiment to eradicate black money and the court should not intervene now. The government position was in contrast to the stand of the Election Commission of India.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

## Amit Shah vows to bring in nationwide NRC, dump Article 370

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 MURSHIDABAD

The BJP will scrap Article 370 of the Constitution, which grants special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and introduce a National Register for Citizens across the country if voted to power again, party president Amit Shah said on Thursday. He was speaking at rallies in Kalimpong in Darjeeling and Raiganj in North Dinajpur.

At the rally in Kalimpong, he said, "Gorkhas should not be scared [of the NRC].



Amit Shah

Everyone will have citizenship if the Narendra Modi government comes back, which includes Hindus,

Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians. They are refugees and they will get citizenship status."

Mr. Shah said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had blocked the passage of the Citizenship [Amendment] Bill.

"It is our commitment to bring in the NRC nationwide to chuck out every infiltrator. Unlike her, we don't treat infiltrators as our vote bank," he said.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

## WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange arrested in London

**REUTERS**  
 LONDON

The British police dragged Julian Assange out of the Ecuadorian embassy here on Thursday after Ecuador abruptly revoked his seven-year asylum, paving the way for his extradition to the U.S. for involvement in one of the biggest-ever leaks of classified information.

The frail-looking WikiLeaks founder, with white hair and a long beard, was carried head first out of the Ecuadorian embassy by at least seven men to a waiting



Julian Assange arrives at a court in London. ■ AP

police van, after shouting "This is unlawful, I'm not leaving."

Appearing before a London court, Mr. Assange said

he was not guilty of failing to surrender to court in 2012, but his lawyer said Mr. Assange would not give evidence. Minutes later, the judge convicted him of skipping bail. He will be sentenced later.

U.S. prosecutors said they had charged Mr. Assange with conspiracy in trying to access a classified government computer with former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning in 2010.

**U.S. CHARGES ASSANGE WITH HACKING** ▶ PAGE 12

## Stalin sees anti-Modi wave in Tamil Nadu

**B. KOLAPPAN**  
 CHENNAI

Confident of registering a sweep in the Lok Sabha election, M.K. Stalin, president of the DMK, a key ally of the Congress, on Thursday said that in Tamil Nadu there "is an anti-Modi wave, coupled with a strong cyclone against the ruling AIADMK."

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Stalin said he could see an upsurge among the people, who had united as a force to remove the Central and State governments. Along with the Lok Sabha

election, Tamil Nadu is facing by-elections to 22 Assembly constituencies in two phases - on April 18 and May 19. These will decide the fate of the Edappadi Palaniswami government, surviving on a thin majority.

The DMK leader said Congress president Rahul Gandhi would not disturb the post-poll ties with the Left as "everyone's objective is to defeat the BJP that seeks to divide the country on communal lines".

**INTERVIEW** ▶ PAGE 11

## Cong. 'finalises' four names for Delhi

**SANDEEP PHUKAN**  
 NEW DELHI

After weeks of deliberations on whether or not to have an alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi, the Congress late on Thursday night finalised four names, including former Union Ministers Kapil Sibal from Chandni Chowk seat and Ajay Maken from New Delhi Lok Sabha constituency.

Former Delhi Minister Raj Kumar Chauhan is the party's choice for North West Delhi, while former Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee chief Jai Prakash Aggarwal will contest from North East Delhi.

On the remaining three seats in the Capital, names of former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit from East Delhi and Olympian Sushil Kumar from South Delhi are under consideration.

Sources said Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has asked Ms. Dikshit to contest from East Delhi but the latter has sought some time for consultation.

The names, a source said, have been finalised after a meeting of the Congress Election Committee. However, none of the names has been officially announced by the party.

In South Delhi, according to the source, former MP Ramesh Kumar's name was being discussed, but a senior leader cautioned about the potential damage it could do to the party in Punjab as Mr. Kumar is the brother of anti-Sikh riots accused Sajjan Kumar. Former MP and Purvanchali leader Mahabal Mishra could be the party candidate from West Delhi.

Once the names are announced, the prospect of a tie-up with AAP would dim further. Sources said the Congress does not want to have an alliance with AAP in Punjab and Haryana.

## ₹1,400 crore in investor money at risk

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 MUMBAI

As much as ₹1,400 crore of investor money, parked in 40 fixed maturity plans (FMPs) of different mutual funds and maturing this year, could be in trouble.

These schemes had invested in the debentures of Essel Group companies, which could not repay on time.

Kotak Mahindra MF earlier said it could not fully redeem the investments in two FMP series that matured on

April 8 and 10.

Meanwhile, HDFC mutual fund (MF) also announced the extension of one of its FMP schemes that was due for maturity on April 15, by 380 days.

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