

NEARBY



Teenager shot dead by friend, three arrested
NEW DELHI
A 19-year-old youth died after his friend allegedly shot him inside a car on Central Delhi's Barakhamba Road, the police said on Sunday.
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2 workers die while cleaning septic tank
GURUGRAM
Two workers died after they inhaled toxic fumes while cleaning a septic tank at an automobile company in Narsingpur on Sunday.
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Opposition to move SC again for 50% paper trail verification

The confidence of voters can be gained only through VVPAT checks, says Naidu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Leaders of major Opposition parties said on Sunday that they would approach the Supreme Court again to demand verification of at least 50% of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines with the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

The parties said they had raised the issue with the Election Commission many times, but it did not take the matter "seriously."

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party leader N. Chandrababu Naidu, who met Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora on Saturday to raise the issue of EVM malfunctioning during the election in the State, said 21 parties had agreed to make this demand after a meeting on Sunday to discuss the issue of EVM malfunctioning. "The confidence of voters can be gained only through paper trail. VVPAT ensures the accuracy of the voting system," Mr. Naidu said at a



Joint strategy: Kapil Sibal, N. Chandrababu Naidu, Abhishek Singhvi and Arvind Kejriwal addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday. *SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

joint press conference. Raising the issue of close to 25 lakh voters having been deleted from the electoral rolls in Telangana, he wondered whether the Election Commission's apology was enough. "They admitted [to it] and said 'sorry.' Is it the price to pay," he asked.

Deleted online: Singhvi
Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi said the Opposition parties would seek a directive from the court to match 50% of the VVPAT slips with the EVMs in every Assembly segment. "The names of

laks of voters have been deleted online without physical verification. Parties have given long lists to the EC. It has become even more necessary to count at least 50% of the VVPAT paper trail," he said.

Last Monday, the court directed the Election Commission to increase random matching of VVPAT slips with EVMs from one polling booth to five booths in every Assembly segment to instil confidence in voters.

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'INDIA IS IN DANGER' ▶ PAGE 10

Yechury alleges manipulation

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Sunday alleged large-scale manipulation in the first phase of the Lok Sabha election held in many States, including West Bengal. Left Front leaders would meet officials of the Election Commission on Monday and raise their grievances. ▶ PAGE 10

EC objects to 'expert' again

The Election Commission on Sunday reiterated its objection to the Telugu Desam Party's nomination of Hari Prasad Vemuru as an expert for discussing issues related to EVMs with its officials. He was named in an FIR filed on the charge of EVM theft in 2010. ▶ PAGE 5

Won't allow Abdullahs, Muftis to divide country, says Modi

PM takes on regional parties on issue of special status

PEERZADA ASHIQ
JAMMU

Targeting Jammu and Kashmir's regional parties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said he would not allow "the Abdullahs and the Muftis to divide the country."

"I will never allow 'Do Nishan, Do Vidhan and Do Pradhan' (Two Constitutions, two flags and two sovereign heads) to rule in our land. We are committed to the goal of Syama Prasad Mukherjee. I will not allow the Abdullahs and the Muftis to divide the country. *Main na jhukta hu, na bikta hu* (Neither I give in nor am I up for sale)," Mr. Modi said at a rally in Kathua, under the Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha constituency.

"The Abdullah family and the Mufti family destroyed the lives of three generations of Jammu and Kashmir. They can bring their entire clan into the field, can abuse Modi as much as they want but they won't be able to divide this nation," he added.

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Seeking support: Narendra Modi with Union Minister Jitendra Singh and BJP State unit chief Ravinder Raina in Kathua. *PTI

'Why did BJP back Muftis?'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Sunday reacted sharply to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks at an election rally attacking them for seeking a special status for Jammu and Kashmir.

In a tweet, NC vice-president and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, said: "We have to rid J&K of

these two political families' says Modiji in 2014 and promptly goes and makes not one but two members of the Mufti family CM of J&K. In 2019 Modiji says 'we have to rid J&K of these two political families'. Another jumla Modiji?"

He also posted a photograph showing Mr. Modi hugging PDP chief Mufti Mohammad Syed.

'INDIA ISN'T MODI, MODI ISN'T INDIA' ▶ PAGE 10

Voting in women's health in Assam

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

One of the responsibilities of a district electoral officer during the poll process is to ensure systematic voters' education and electoral participation, or SVEEP.

Keerthi Jalli, the first woman Deputy Commissioner of southern Assam's Hailakandi district since its birth in 1989, has packed in other campaigns too - such as promoting menstrual hygiene.

It turned out to be a 'SVEEPing' success, especially among women in some Muslim localities in the district.

Myths broken

"We branded some sanitary pads in SVEEP material and distributed them to Muslim women who came out in the open breaking myths on menstrual hygiene besides deciding to cast their votes," Ms. Jalli said from district headquarters Hailakandi, about 310 km southeast of Guwahati.

According to the 2011 census, Muslims account for 60.13% of the total population in the Bengali-dominated Hailakandi, one of three districts comprising the Barak Valley. Though the district has a literacy rate of more than 75%, it is skewed against women, many of whom are caught in conservatism.

The district authorities have so far distributed 250 packs of sanitary pads.

The district administration hit upon other ideas too for inspiring people to vote. One of them was presenting shakhas to married Hindu Bengali women in the slums and some villages of the district. Made of conch-shell, a shakha is a traditional bangle married Bengali women wear along with pola made of red



Keerthi Jalli interacting with voters. So far, 250 packs of sanitary pads have been distributed.

corals.

"We distributed approximately 300 pairs of shakhas, each printed with the message for voting on the 18th," Ms. Jalli said.

Hailakandi falls under the Karimganj Lok Sabha constituency which goes to the polls in the second phase on April 18 along with Nagaon, Mangaldoi and Autonomous District constituencies in Assam.

"The bangles were a pleasant surprise. I will vote but will probably keep the bangles in safe custody as a trophy," Seba Sabdakar, of Tempur village under Matijuri Paikan gram panchayat, said.

At North Narainpur village, the likes of Shuba Rani Das and Hafsa Begum received shitalpati sporting the Election Commission's logo. Made from the reeds of a marshy plant, shitalpati is a mat so named because it has a cooling effect on the user. The mats and gamosas (cloth-towel) were sourced from a Muslim self-help group in the district's Algapur. The authorities also presented tea-plucking women in the district with jaapi or cane-bamboo sunshades branded with SVEEP material.

"About 300 such jaapis were distributed. Our campaign was focussed exclusively on the womenfolk as we firmly believe that if a lady votes, her family votes, the society votes and thereby the nation votes," Ms. Jalli said.

Jet Airways unions defer strike plan; fresh talks today

ADITYA ANAND
MUMBAI

Jet Airways pilots, engineers and cabin crew unions are set to jointly meet the airline management on Monday in what they term "another attempt to get the airline flying." On Sunday, as the midnight deadline set by the pilots union for clearing

pending dues and sharing details of the revival plan drew closer, the pilots body, the National Aviators Guild (NAG) said it had "reviewed" the earlier "unanimous decision" of pilots to stop flying from April 15, if demands remained unmet.

The NAG said the members requested that the strike

be put off in view of the 'critical meeting' planned for Monday with the airline management and the State Bank of India (SBI), the key lender. Therefore, the "call of No Pay No Work stands deferred for the time being" to give the airline a chance of survival, it said.

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The employees had issued a No Pay No Work call over pending dues.

Mayapuri traders given 48 hrs to comply with sealing orders

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

Scrap dealers in Mayapuri on Sunday were busy getting their goods ready for transport after a public notice, issued late on Saturday night, gave the traders 48 hours to comply with the

sealing directives issued by the DPCC. Violence had broken out in the area on Saturday morning when officials arrived with a large contingent of police and paramilitary forces to carry out the sealing drive.

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