



## IN FOCUS

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee takes a photo of the crowd at a rally in Murshidabad on Monday. *Express*

## Amid El Nino scare, Met Dept forecasts a near normal monsoon

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, PUNE, APRIL 15

AMID FEARS of a subdued monsoon this year due to a developing El Nino condition over the Pacific Ocean, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday said that rainfall as a whole during the four-month monsoon season would be 'near-normal'.

In the first long-range forecast for this season, the IMD said rainfall was likely to be 96% of the long period average, or LPA. The LPA, defined as the average of monsoon rainfall over a 50-year period between 1951 and 2000, for the country is 89 cm.

The IMD also said the possibility of rainfall being excessive or 'above normal' was very low. The forecast of 96% is at the lower end of the band in which rainfall is classified as 'normal'.

"The good news is that 2019

### 10-YR REPORT

Year	Forecast (%)	Actual (%)
2018	97	91
2017	98	95
2016	106	97
2015	88	86
2014	93	88
2013	98	106
2012	96	93
2011	95	102
2010	102	102
2009	93	78

Source: IMD, Pune

will have a near normal south west monsoon seasonal rainfall between June-September of 96% of the long term average, with a model error of plus or minus 5%," M Rajeevan, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, said at a press conference.

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## 72-HR BAN FOR YOGI, AZAM; 48 HRS FOR MAYA, MANEKA After SC prod, EC cracks whip on Yogi, Maya, Khan, Maneka

CJI bench to poll panel: What are you doing about it?... answer, or we will get CEC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW, APRIL 15

ON THE day it was asked searching questions by the Supreme Court on the action taken against leaders for provocative speeches during the poll campaign, the Election Commission Monday invoked its extraordinary powers to temporarily ban four political leaders — UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, BSP chief Mayawati, Union Minister Maneka Gandhi and SP leader Azam Khan — from campaigning.

While Adityanath and Khan were barred for three days (72 hours) starting Tuesday morning, Gandhi and Mayawati cannot campaign for two days (48 hours).

The punitive action was taken against the BSP chief for appealing directly to Muslim voters in Saharanpur and Bareilly districts during a joint rally of the BSP-SP alliance on April 7. Adityanath was punished for his "Ali and Bajrangbali" remark at a Meerut rally on April 9 and the "green virus" comment which was a reference to Muslims.

Maneka Gandhi was barred for saying, at a meeting in Sultanpur on April 11, that she will not be inclined to help Muslims if they do not vote for

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YOGI ADITYANATH  
UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER



AZAM KHAN  
SP LEADER

"Agar Congress ko Ali par, Sapa-Baspa ko Ali par vishwas hai, hame bhi Bajrangbali par vishwas hai"



MAYAWATI  
BSP CHIEF



MANEKA GANDHI  
UNION MINISTER

"Muslim samaj... vote baantna nahin... ek taraf vote BSP, SP, RLD ke umeedwaron ko..."

"Agar meri jeet Musalmano ke bina hogi... phir Musalman aata hai kaam ke liye ... mein sochti hoon rehne do"

## EC wants Vellore polls cancelled: Money used to influence voters

ABANTIKA GHOSH,  
ARUN JANARDHANAN &  
RITIKA CHOPRA  
NEW DELHI, CHENNAI, APRIL 15

IN WAKE of cash seizures from DMK leaders over the last two weeks, the Election Commission (EC) Monday recommended to President Ram Nath Kovind that elections in the Vellore parliamentary constituency be cancelled. It cited the suspected use of money power to influence voters.

Vellore is scheduled to go to polls with the rest of Tamil Nadu

on April 18. It is unclear whether the two Assembly seats, Ambur and Gudiyattam, under the Vellore LS seat, facing bypolls will also be countermanded or go as planned on Thursday.

Rashtrapati Bhavan received the EC's proposal Monday night. The recommendation, *The Indian Express* has learnt, will be shared with the Law Ministry for its views on Tuesday. However, cancellation is imminent since the President, in this case, has little choice but to accept the EC's proposal.

Once notified by the

### EXPLAINED

#### In 2014, Shah, Azam faced ban

THIS IS only the second time the EC has imposed a temporary ban on a political leader's poll campaign. In 2014, it barred now BJP chief Amit Shah and SP leader Azam Khan for making inflammatory speeches in defiance of notices.

### BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



### DECISION 2019

FULL COVERAGE  
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## RAFALE: LEKHI'S CONTEMPT PLEA Misquoting the apex court: SC asks Rahul to explain, BJP says he lies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 15

THE SUPREME Court Monday sought an "explanation" within a week from Congress president Rahul Gandhi following a plea seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against him for allegedly attributing to the top court certain remarks in its Rafale matter order.

It was hearing a plea by BJP leader Meenakshi Lekhi who contended that Gandhi, while referring to the court's April 10 order rejecting the Centre's objections to the admissibility of certain documents submitted by review petitioners, had attrib-



Will give a full reply, says Cong

uted his own statements about 'chowkidar chor hai' to the court ruling.

After the bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjeev Khanna clarified that it had not made any such observation, Union Minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad asked the Election Commission to take "serious cognisance" of

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## By BJP chiefs in Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, two speeches: 'abuse & hate'

KAVITA UPADHYAY &  
SHAJU PHILIP  
SHIMLA,  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
APRIL 15



Satti (left) and Pillai

AS THE Election Commission suspended four top political leaders for a few days over their campaign speeches that allegedly "contaminated" the poll process, two new speech videos emerged which the Opposition flagged for alleged hateful and abusive content.

Delivered on Sunday by BJP chiefs of Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, these speeches triggered complaints to the Election Commission. While Himachal BJP chief Satpal Singh Satti

referred to a purported Facebook post to use the word "ma....d" in the context of Rahul Gandhi, his Kerala counterpart made a derogatory reference to Muslims.

Addressing a meeting of BJP workers at Ramshehar in Solan district which falls under the Shimla (SC) Lok Sabha constituency, Satti said Sunday:

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