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PM Modi makes an emotional appeal to Gujarat for BJP's victory
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Joko Widodo set for second term as Indonesian President
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Sunrisers Hyderabad scores a convincing win over Chennai Super Kings
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NEARBY



Yogi visits Ayodhya amid ban, BSP complains to EC

AYODHYA
 U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday prayed at temples in Ayodhya and visited a Dalit family, prompting the BSP to complain to the Election Commission that he had violated its order barring him from campaigning.

NORTH ▶ PAGE 2

Militants' bodies being mutilated: Mehbooba

SRINAGAR
 PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, who is contesting from the Anantnag seat, on Wednesday said "the bodies of militants were being mutilated with chemicals during operations by security forces in J&K".

NATION ▶ PAGE 7

DELHI METRO ▶ 4 PAGES

Rain, thunderstorm leave over 50 dead in four States

Unseasonal storm damages crops in Gujarat, Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 JAIPUR/BHOPAL/AHMEDABAD

Over 50 people were killed as rain, coupled with thunderstorm and lightning, hit several parts of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra overnight, officials said on Wednesday.

The unseasonal rain and storm also caused damage to property and crops in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Rajasthan witnessed the maximum of 25 deaths, some of them in house collapses, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 15. While 10 people were killed in Gujarat, three were killed in Maharashtra.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Twitter in the morning to express anguish over the loss of lives in Gujarat and to announce relief.



Cooler capital: Rain clouds gather over New Delhi on Wednesday, promising relief from the summer heat. ▶ AP

Soon after, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath accused the Prime Minister of being concerned only with Gujarat, his home State.

In a tweet later, the PMO said, "PM @narendramodi

has expressed grief at loss of lives due to unseasonal rains and storms in MP, Rajasthan, Manipur & various parts of the country." The freak weather was attributed to a western disturbance.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Unemployment is the real national security issue: Rahul

'We are fighting for India's youth, farmers, small traders, women and the poor'

SANDEEP PHUKAN
 KANNUR

Ahead of the second phase of voting on Thursday, Congress president Rahul Gandhi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi now only talks about "national security" because he "stands exposed as a politician full of lies and false promises". He emphasised that "the real and biggest national security issue is unemployment".

EXCLUSIVE

In a wide-ranging interview with *The Hindu*, Mr. Gandhi spoke on key political issues such as the Rafale deal and the minimum income guarantee scheme, or Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY). "We are fighting for India's youth, its farmers, its small traders and businessmen, its women, its deprived sections and its poor. We are not only in opposition to Mr. Modi, but this is a fight for the very idea of India," he said.

Suspense over Priyanka

He also maintained the suspense over fielding his sister and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi-Vadra from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency against Mr. Modi.

"I'm not confirming or denying anything. I'm just say-



Hectic pace: Congress president Rahul Gandhi visiting the Thirunelli temple in Wayanad district of Kerala on Wednesday. ▶ PTI

ing that I'll leave you in suspense," he said, asked whether Ms. Vadra would contest against Mr. Modi.

The last day for filing nomination is April 29, and the Congress has so far not declared its nominee for the seat, from which Mr. Modi is seeking re-election.

In his first comments after the Supreme Court sought an explanation for allegedly linking an interim order of the court in the Rafale case to his 'Chowkidar chor hai' comment, Mr. Gandhi said, "There's a legal process on;

so I won't comment on the SC because I respect it."

Talking about a tie-up with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi, he said he had "convinced everyone in his party of its importance," and put the onus of forming an alliance on Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The Congress president sought to assuage middle class concerns over having to pay higher taxes to fund NYAY. He said: "Not a single rupee would be charged from them."

On the BJP's campaign

theme of "dumdaar sarkar" (muscular government), he claimed that the ruling party had been forced to change its strategy after the first phase of polling as its focus on security issues had "backfired." "The Congress has torn Mr. Modi's perceived strengths to shreds. What you will see is that Mr. Modi's *gubbara* (balloon) is going to burst! No wonder, after the first phase, they're moving from 'national security' back to 'vikas' (development)."

INTERVIEW ON ▶ PAGE 11

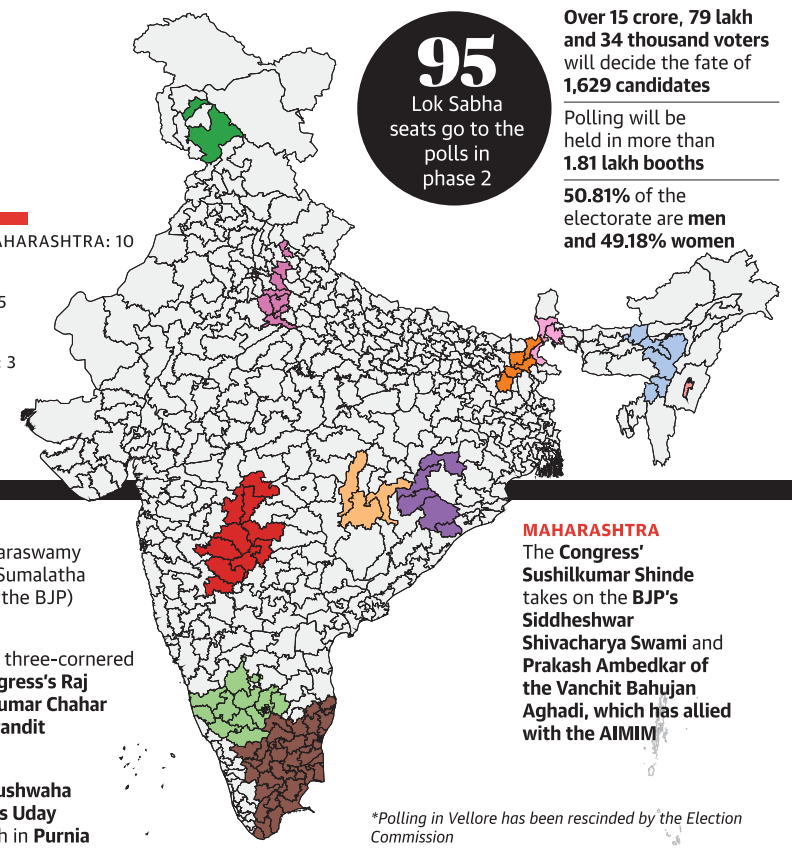
Off to the hustings: Phase Two

Polling in the second phase of the 2019 general election will be held across 11 States and one Union Territory today

- TAMIL NADU*: 38 SEATS
- KARNATAKA: 14
- MAHARASHTRA: 10
- UTTAR PRADESH: 8
- ODISHA: 5
- BIHAR: 5
- ASSAM: 5
- WEST BENGAL: 3
- CHHATTISGARH: 3
- J&K: 2
- MANIPUR: 1
- PUDUCHERRY: 1

SOME KEY CONTESTS

TAMIL NADU
 In **Thoothukudi**, DMK women's wing leader Kanimozhi is pitted against BJP State president Tamilisai Soundararajan. In **Sivaganga**, the Congress's Karti Chidambaram is facing off against the BJP's national secretary H. Raja.



KARNATAKA
 The JD(S)'s Nikhil Kumaraswamy takes on independent Sumalatha Ambareesh (backed by the BJP)

UTTAR PRADESH
 In Fatehpur Sikri, it is a three-cornered fight between the Congress's Raj Babbar, the BJP's Rajkumar Chahar and the BSP's Guddu Pandit

BIHAR
 The JD(U)'s Santosh Kushwaha takes on the Congress's Uday Singh alias Pappu Singh in Purnia

MAHARASHTRA
 The Congress's Sushilkumar Shinde takes on the BJP's Siddheshwar Shivacharya Swami and Prakash Ambedkar of the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, which has allied with the AIMIM

REPORTS ON PAGE 10 & 11

Jet suspends all flights after banks refuse to release funds

Won't be able to pay for fuel or other services, says airline

ADITYA ANAND
 MUMBAI

Jet Airways on Wednesday announced temporary suspension of all its international and domestic flights, with the last flight operating between Amritsar and Mumbai.

In a filing before the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and a statement to the media, the airline said it was informed by the State Bank of India (SBI), on behalf of the consortium of Indian lenders, that they were unable to consider its request for critical interim funding.



Lenders said they were unable to consider the request for interim funding.

"Since no emergency funding from the lenders or any other source is forthcoming, the airline will not be able to pay for fuel or other critical

services to keep the operations going. Consequently, with immediate effect, Jet Airways is compelled to cancel all its international and domestic flights. The last flight will operate on Wednesday," it said.

Kuldeep Sharma, vice-president, global compliance, and company secretary, in the filing to the BSE, said the decision had been taken after evaluation of all options available.

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REFUND UNLIKELY SOON ▶ PAGE 7

DGCA to do special safety audit of IndiGo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will conduct a special safety audit of the low-cost carrier IndiGo following concerns about the snag-ridden Pratt and Whitney engines, which power the airline's A320 Neo aircraft.

While an annual audit of IndiGo was due in April, a special review will also be done of the airline's operations and engineering departments, it is learnt.

"We confirm that there is currently a DGCA audit of IndiGo, which is combined with the annual main base

audit. IndiGo has received a limited number of show-cause notices.

IndiGo has responded accordingly and we can only comment on this matter after we have a discussion with the DGCA," the airline said in a statement. An airline source, however, dismissed reports that show-cause notices had been served on two senior officials of the airline.

Indian carriers IndiGo and GoAir have been inducting the P&W engine-powered A320 Neo aircraft since 2016. The former has 72 of these planes and the latter has 30.

AAP-Congress talks stall over Haryana alliance

Congress wants tie-up only in Delhi; we will fight in all seven Delhi seats and win, says Sanjay Singh

STAFF REPORTER
 NEW DELHI

Alliance talks between the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress failed on Wednesday, with the Congress agreeing to a tie-up in Delhi but refusing to include a seat-share in Haryana.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh, who was heading the alliance talks for the Aam Aadmi Party, told the media on Wednesday that the Congress was not in a mood for an alliance. "It's very sad that after all the efforts, the Congress is not ready to come to any understanding."



Sanjay Singh

don't feel the Congress is ready for any understanding, so we are going forward. We will fight in all seven seats in Delhi and win. And in Haryana, AAP and JJP will fight together," he said.

Minutes later, however, party sources said the alliance talks were still on.

A senior Congress leader said as far as the party was concerned, the ball was in AAP's court. The party could contest in four seats in Delhi and the Congress in the other three. "The Congress will not agree to a tie-up in Haryana as there are very strong regional leaders within the State. The offer stands

for Delhi alone, with no package deals," the leader said.

The Congress had said that it would announce the list of its seven candidates on Wednesday, but has decided to wait for a few more days. Delhi Congress president Sheila Dikshit and the three working presidents who were against the alliance remain tight-lipped, leaving the negotiations to leaders from the All-India Congress Committee. However, after Congress president Rahul Gandhi's tweet on Monday that an alliance between AAP and Congress would mean the rout of the BJP, sources in

the Delhi Congress said the State unit would adhere to the decision taken by the high command.

Meanwhile, AAP said the party's West Delhi candidate Balbir Singh Jakhar would file his nomination at 1 p.m. on Thursday. The party would hold a roadshow before that and senior leaders Manish Sisodia and Gopal Rai would take part in it.

On Tuesday, AAP had announced that the party's candidates from Chandni Chowk, East Delhi, and North West Delhi would file their nominations on Saturday and the others on April 22.



Pragya Singh with former CM Shiv Raj Singh in Bhopal. ▶ A.M. FARUQUI

Pragya Singh gets BJP ticket for Bhopal

ANUP DUTTA
 BHOPAL

The BJP on Wednesday named Malegaon blasts accused Pragya Singh as its candidate for Bhopal to take on Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh.

The other candidates are Dr. K.P. Yadav for Guna, Raj

Bahadur Singh for Sagar and Ramakant Bhargav for Vidisha. The four seats go to the polls on May 12. The contest in Bhopal, a stronghold of the BJP, has become a battle of prestige for the BJP as well as the Congress. Both the Sangh Parivar and the Congress have taken special interest in

the seat, which the BJP bagged after the emergence of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement in 1989. The Rath Yatra by the then BJP president L.K. Advani in 1990 that touched the Bhopal constituency decisively changed its political direction.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10