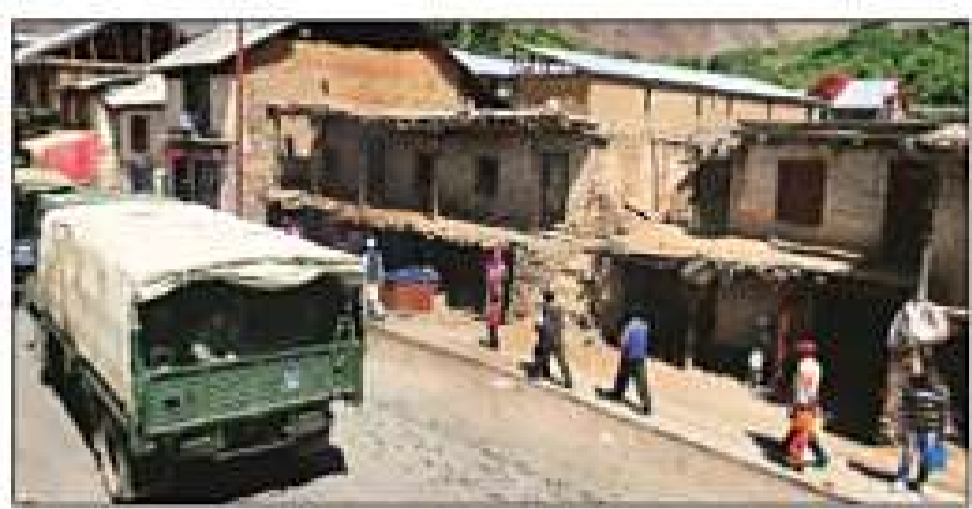


## DECISION 2019

Beyond campaign speeches and WhatsApp forwards, videoclips and soundbites, what does India talk about when it talks about elections? As the final election month begins, **The Indian Express** reporters travel over 7,000 km north-south, east-west to ask for directions

# Kargil, Kanyakumari



In Kargil villages, Army is main income source. Shuaib Masoodi

## At the top: War is a way of life, now need schools & jobs

DEVYANI ONIAL  
KARGIL, APRIL 19

AS THE road winds up the hills to the long-abandoned Hundarman village in Kargil, nestled among the bleak and forbidding mountains, it gets quieter at every turn. Only the sound of wind whistling through the jagged terrain and the occasional flapping of a magpie break the silence. Signposts along the way caution people to stay away from the edges for fear of landmines. Across the mighty Suru river, you can spot a Pakistani

post on a hill. Two decades after the India-Pak war, it's in Elections 2019 that nationalism has emerged as a poll issue for the rest of the country. But in these frontier villages of battle-scarred Kargil, conflict is far from the idea sold on the mainland. Here, it's a way of life, felt, not expressed, and definitely not voted upon. "We did not leave when the war broke out in 1999. We stayed here and served the army. We are always there for them," says Muhammad Ali, 72, a farmer who has witnessed the



**LENGTH & BREADTH**  
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NEXT: PORBANDAR PASIGHAT

many conflicts between India and Pakistan, caught between the shape-shifting border. "Working with the army is our main source of income. We are not educated but we wish there were better schools for our children and more job opportunities," he says as he curses his wobbly knees, pointing out that the years have caught on but things on the ground are very much the same. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## Down the map: In the mix, land, port & fear of a faultline

AMRITH LAL  
KANYAKUMARI, APRIL 19

NATIONAL HIGHWAY 47 enters Tamil Nadu at Kaliakkavilai, a market for fish, cattle and agriculture produce — an arterial road veering off marks the border with Kerala. At Thalanchavilai intersection, a crowd is waiting for Congress candidate for Thiruvananthapuram, Shashi Tharoor. Across the decked-up stage is Tamil Nadu and the crowd around has a smattering of voters from the Kanyakumari constituency where the country meets the ocean. And like the waters at this southern tip, politics here is a swirl of currents, with ripples from next-door Kerala. Six decades after Kanyakumari — then part of the Travancore princely state — joined Tamil Nadu after the linguistic reorganisation, it continues to meld two linguistic and political cultures, making it an outlier in Tamil Nadu politics. CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## MP POLL OFFICE TAKES COGNIZANCE BJP's Pragya brags she killed Karkare with curse, then retracts

Apology after BJP calls him a martyr, says remarks her personal statement

MILIND GHATAWAI  
BHOPAL, APRIL 19

PRAGYA SINGH Thakur, BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Bhopal, triggered a firestorm Friday saying Maharashtra ATS chief Hemant Karkare, killed in the line of duty during the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, died because she had cursed him "tera sarvanash hoga". After her remarks drew all-round condemnation and the BJP distanced itself saying it was her "personal statement" and that Karkare was a "martyr", she retracted the remarks. "I felt that the enemies of the country were being benefited... therefore, I take back my statement and apologise for it. It was my personal pain," she told ANI. "They have started legal action saying I don't have the right to contest election and my bail should be cancelled. The only solace is they have not demanded that I be hanged... even if I am in jail, I will win," she said.



Maine kaha tera sarvanash hoga: Thakur on Karkare

**NO TALK OF RAE BARELI, AMETHI CANDIDATES ON BAIL: PM**  
The PM, in an interview to Times Now, said: "The Rae Bareli candidate is on bail, Amethi candidate is on bail but there is no discussion. But there's a storm if the Bhopal candidate is on bail. How can this be?"

In 2008, Thakur was arrested by the ATS, then headed by CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Immoral, says ex-DGP; Modi had visited cop's home

MOHAMED THAYER  
MUMBAI, APRIL 19

SADHVI PRAGYA Singh Thakur's claim that former Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) chief Hemant Karkare, who was killed in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, died after she "cursed" him has triggered outrage among Karkare's former colleagues who expressed shock at the "hurtful" remarks. Former Maharashtra DGP, Anami Roy, under whom the Karkare-led ATS charged Thakur in the 2008 Malegaon blasts case, said he was "appalled by the unethical and immoral statement". Thakur's remarks also brought back into focus a visit by the then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi to the central Mumbai residence of Karkare on CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Eye on Delhi, Mayawati, Mulayam end 24-yr rivalry to share stage in Mainpuri

ASAD REHMAN & LALMANI VERMA  
MAINPURI, NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

PUTTING A quarter century of rivalry behind to counter the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, BSP chief Mayawati took to the stage Friday with SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav in his Mainpuri bastion. Mulayam, also the gathbandhan candidate, asked his supporters to always "respect Mayawati" while she called him a "real leader" of the back-



Mulayam, Akhilesh and Mayawati in Mainpuri. Vishal Srivastav

ward "unlike" Prime Minister Narendra Modi who she said was "farzi" (fake). CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**EXPLAINED**  
A test for the alliance

With 80 seats, UP is top prize. The key question: will this arithmetic translate on the ground and counter the Modi-Yogi chemistry?

## As aviation sector bleeds, Reliance looks at Jet Airways and Air India

Don't comment on rumour... evaluate opportunities on ongoing basis: RIL

SANDEEP SINGH, ANCHAL MAGAZINE & PRANAV MUKUL  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

MUKESH AMBANI-promoted Reliance Industries Ltd is learnt to have evinced interest in a stake in the beleaguered Jet Airways and, simultaneously, exploring the possibility of buying out the debt-ridden national carrier Air India, two sources close to the development told *The Indian Express*.



Jet temporarily suspended operations on Wednesday

Both Jet and Air India reported losses in the last financial year and their combined market share is less than 25 per cent as on date. After flying high for almost 25 years, Jet had to temporarily suspend operations on Wednesday when lenders, led by State Bank of India, refused Rs 983 crore in emergency interim funding. Reliance is not among the parties that submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the lenders for acquiring Jet Airways. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**BUSINESS AS USUAL**  
By UNNY  
*Can you get private back to Prayagraj?*

**DECISION 2019**  
PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI QUITS CONG, WALKS INTO SHIV SENA PAGE 7

## ND Tiwari's son was strangled, says autopsy, police register murder

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL & ASTHA SAXENA  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

THE DELHI Police has registered a case of murder into the death of Rohit Shekhar Tiwari, son of late Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister ND Tiwari, hours after an AIIMS autopsy report Thursday stated that he died of "asphyxia due to smothering and strangulation". Forensic experts, sources said, have told police that Shekhar died around 14 hours before he was taken to hospital on Tuesday. Police have seized two pillows from Shekhar's and



another room in his house in Defence Colony. "It was not a natural death. Five senior doctors from the medical institute were involved in conducting the investigation. We have videographed and photographed the entire investigation. All of them unanimously came to this conclusion that the victim died due to strangulation," Dr Sudhir Gupta, head of CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**THE EDITORIAL PAGE**  
WHAT'S DRIVING THE KAPUSTIR IN AP BY CHRISTOPHE JAFFERLOT & A KALAIYARASAN PAGE 12



**WORLD**  
NORTHERN IRELAND JOURNALIST KILLED, NEW IRA SUSPECT  
READY TO HOLD INDIA TALKS DESPITE ITS PLANNED BOYCOTT OF BRF: CHINA PAGE 15

## Jail Superintendent branded Om on my back: Tihar undertrial

PRITAM PAL SINGH  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

A TIHAR Jail undertrial took off his T-shirt in a Delhi court to show an Om symbol branded on his back which he alleged was the handiwork of a jail superintendent who had used hot metal for the carving. Nabbir told Metropolitan Magistrate Richa Parihar that the superintendent not only denied him food for two days in the name of Navratri but also told him that he would convert him to Hinduism. This happened in the Karkardooma Courts Wednesday



Court tells Tihar to probe Nabbir's complaint. ANI  
day after Nabbir's lawyer Jagmohan Singh filed an application, a day after he met his CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## 7 IPL stars, 5 commentators, 1 management firm

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

NIHAL KOSHIE  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

WHAT'S COMMON between the IPL's five leading commentators and its seven top players? All of them feature on the home page of Cornerstone, the country's most high-profile sports and entertainment consultancy that specialises in talent management.

The company manages top players like India captain Virat Kohli, World Cuppers K L Rahul and Kuldeep Yadav, international Umesh Yadav and Rishabh Pant, and promising prospects Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishen. But at the same time, it is also associated with the men who comment on the IPL performances of these players — former cricketers Aakash Chopra, Graeme Smith, Alan Wilkins, Mel Jones and Mpumelelo 'Pommie' Mbangwa. So far so good. Or may be not.



Aakash Chopra: 'How do you draw a line?'

In 2017, following a Supreme Court order based on the Justice RM Lodha committee's report on cricket reforms, the BCCI had moved to snap such player-commentator links. At the time, former captain-turned-TV pundit Sunil Gavaskar had to disband the player management unit of his firm, Professional Management Group (PMG), as he opted to be a commentator. Gavaskar is still PMG director. In his report, Lodha had asked the BCCI to deal with all "direct or indirect, pecuniary or

other conflicts of interest or appearance thereof". Cornerstone's website, meanwhile, slots the seven players under "Talent" and lists the commentators as 'Non-exclusive talent'. When contacted by *The Indian Express* on the potential conflict of interest involved, Cornerstone CEO Bunty Sajdeh said he "didn't want to comment on the issue". Sajdeh did not respond to a detailed questionnaire emailed by *The Indian Express* on the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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