



U.K. "optimistic" that China will allow terror listing of Masood Azhar  
page 5



With NDA leaders in tow, PM Modi files nomination in Varanasi  
page 8



U.K. court further remands Nirav Modi in custody till May 24  
page 10

Rohit and bowlers help Mumbai Indians crush Chennai Super Kings  
page 13



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**NEARBY**  
**AAP files case against Gambhir over '2 voter IDs'**  
NEW DELHI  
Alleging that BJP East Delhi candidate Gautam Gambhir has two voter IDs in different addresses in Delhi, AAP on Friday said it has filed a criminal case against him in a court here. "We will also approach the Election Commission to cancel his candidature," said AAP East Delhi candidate Atishi while addressing a press conference at the party office.

DELHI METRO ► PAGE 1

DELHI METRO ► 6 PAGES

## Supreme Court gives RBI 'last chance' to alter disclosure policy

'Existing guidelines contrary to 2015 ruling on sharing information under RTI Act'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday gave the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) "a last opportunity" to withdraw a November 2016 Disclosure Policy to the extent to which it stonewalls revelation of every other kind of information under the Right to Information Act, including the list of wilful defaulters and annual inspection reports.

A Bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao and M.R. Shah found the policy of the central bank to be directly contrary to the court's judgment of December 2015 that the RBI could not withhold information sought under the RTI Act.

The Bench was hearing contempt petitions filed against the RBI for not com-

### All for transparency

In **RBI versus Jayantilal N. Misty**, the Supreme Court in 2015 said:

- There is no fiduciary relationship between the RBI and the financial institutions
- RBI has a statutory duty to uphold the interests of the public at large,

the depositors and the country's economy and the banking sector

- RBI should act with transparency and not hide information that might embarrass the individual banks, and the RBI is duty-bound to comply with the provisions of the RTI Act



plying with the 2015 judgment.

"We give them a last opportunity to withdraw the disclosure policy in so far as it contains exemptions which are contrary to the di-

rections issued by this court," Justice Rao said, giving an ultimatum in the 12-page verdict.

The 2015 judgment had rejected the RBI's argument that it could refuse informa-

tion sought under the RTI Act on the grounds of economic interest, commercial confidence, fiduciary relationship or public interest.

### 'No fiduciary ties'

The court had observed that there was "no fiduciary relationship between the RBI and the financial institutions".

It had reminded the RBI that it had the statutory duty to uphold the interests of the public at large, the depositors, the economy and the banking sector. "This court was also of the opinion that the RBI should act with transparency and not hide information that might embarrass the individual banks," Justice Rao wrote.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

## Let Bobde panel finish probe first, says ex-judge Patnaik

He has been tasked with examining 'larger plot' against CJI

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

Justice A.K. Patnaik, the retired Supreme Court judge appointed by the court to check a lawyer's claim of a "larger conspiracy" against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, said on Friday that he would not begin his assignment until the in-house inquiry into a former court staffer's complaint of sexual harassment against the Chief Justice was completed.

The former judge said a scrutiny of the conspiracy claim could wait as he was not on a deadline.

"I am not going to start until the in-house inquiry is over. If you see the Supreme Court order [of April 25], I have not been given a time limit, like 15 or 20 days, to complete my assignment... I think to avoid any clash with



A.K. Patnaik

the Justice Bobde Committee inquiry, I will wait for them to finish... Let that be over," Justice Patnaik told *The Hindu* on the phone.

### Own decision

The decision to wait seems to be Justice Patnaik's own as there is no specific direction from the court. On the other hand, the Special Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra, which appointed Justice Patnaik on April 25, said a probe into the "larger

plot" would not queer the inquiry into the sexual harassment complaint.

Despite the Bench's assurances, Justice Patnaik pushed the pause button so the complainant would have no reason to fear prejudice.

The priority, Justice Patnaik said, is now the in-house inquiry into her complaint. The Justice Bobde panel, also comprising Justices Indu Malhotra and Indira Banerjee, heard the complainant on April 26.

Justice Patnaik's words address apprehensions in legal and public quarters that a "parallel" probe may jeopardise whatever defence the woman may put up before the Justice Bobde Committee.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

PARALLEL PROBES ► EDITORIAL

## At the receiving end



Crocodiles that come out in the open at the Manjira Wildlife Sanctuary on the outskirts of Sangareddy in Telangana are being targeted with stones and bricks by visitors due to lack of proper security. • MOHD ARIFF

## PM Modi a fake OBC, says Mayawati

Like the British policy, BJP is trying to divide us and rule: Akhilesh

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Trying to attract OBC voters in the backward region of Bundelkhand, the leaders of the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance on Friday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's OBC credentials while accusing the BJP of trying to "divide and rule" the sizeable backward community.

BSP supremo Mayawati and SP president Akhilesh Yadav stressed that Mr. Modi was not an OBC [Other Backward Class] by birth but by



Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati at a recent rally.

certificate. While Ms. Mayawati dubbed Mr. Modi a "fake OBC," Mr. Yadav called him a "kagzi pichda (OBC on paper)."

Addressing a joint rally in

Orai in Jalaun, Ms. Mayawati cautioned OBC and Dalit voters against Mr. Modi's backward caste pitch, saying that while he was Chief Minister of Gujarat he had used his authority to include his "forward caste" in the OBC category to eat up their share.

On the other hand, Ms. Mayawati hailed SP patron, and opponent-turned-ally, Mulayam Singh as the true leader of the backward community. "He (Mulayam) Singh is an inbred OBC, not a fake one like Modi who [just] made a certificate," she said,

also praising Mr. Yadav for following in his father's footsteps. Mr. Yadav said that while everyone in 2014 assumed Mr. Modi to be an OBC, the entire country knew today that "he is not a backward by birth."

In another rally in Jhansi, he called the BJP the "most casteist party" and accused it of dividing people on the basis of castes and spreading hatred between religions.

"Like the British policy of divide and rule, they (BJP) want to divide us and rule," Mr. Yadav told the crowd.

## Officer dies in fire on INS Vikramaditya

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A Navy officer lost his life while controlling a fire that broke out on the aircraft carrier *INS Vikramaditya* on Friday morning. The fire has been brought under control.

"Lt. Cdr. D.S. Chauhan led the fire-fighting efforts in the affected compartment. While the fire was brought under control, the officer lost consciousness owing to the smoke and fumes..." the Navy said in a statement.

He was evacuated to INHS Patanjali, the naval hospital at Karwar. "However, the officer could not be revived," the Navy said. Lt. Cdr. Chauhan hailed from Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

## 17% jump in *The Hindu's* readership

Retains No. 2 position among English newspapers

LALATENDU MISHRA  
MUMBAI

At a time when digital reading is growing rapidly in India, the print edition of *The Hindu* has also sharply increased its readership in the latest Indian Readership Survey (IRS) 2019 Q1 as compared to IRS 2017, up 17%, indicating the growing popularity of the newspaper.

In this readership survey conducted by Nielsen for the Media Research Users Council (MRUC), the findings of which were released on Friday, *The Hindu* has maintained its number 2

position among all English language newspapers in the country.

As per data released by the MRUC, *The Hindu* had an all-India readership of 62,26,000 in the IRS 2019 Q1 as compared to the total readership of 53,00,000 in IRS 2017, up 17%. In terms of average issue readership (read yesterday), it increased its numbers from 15,68,000 to 16,35,000, up 4.27%.

As per the IRS, the overall readership of all daily publications increased by 1.8 crore to 42.5 crore since

IRS 2017. Magazines also reported increased readership of 8.7 crore, which is 90 lakh more than the numbers in the last survey.

Online newspaper readership has grown 5% on an all-India basis. Active Internet users have grown significantly and now constitute 24% of the total universe.

Among English daily newspapers, *The Times of India* retained its number one position, followed by *The Hindu* and *The Economic Times*.

IRS TO BE RELEASED EVERY QUARTER ► PAGE 8

## Dreaming big and chasing their dreams

Party floated by over 50 IIT alumni is contesting the Lok Sabha election in five States

AMARNATH TEWARY  
SHEOHAR (BIHAR)

Driven by a desire to change the "political discourse of the country", over 50 alumni of IIT have got together and formed a new party, the Bahujan Azad Party, to contest the Lok Sabha poll. Formed in April last year, the party has been allotted "slate" as its election symbol.

"Our party symbol signifies our motto: nurture the root first," say a group of IITians in one voice as their white SUV moves precariously on a narrow levee full of potholes in Bihar's Sheohar constituency. "It (levee)

has been in construction for 20 years... you can see its condition, and they [parties in power in Bihar and at the Centre] keep talking about development," says Anand Kumar Kushwaha.

A bespectacled young man clad in white kurta and blue jeans, Mr. Kushwaha is an alumnus of IIT-Delhi. He passed out in 2006 and founded a start-up in Bangkok. But somewhere in his heart, he says, there was an ache to do something for the people of his State.

### Online coaching

He later came in contact with NGO 'Mauka Founda-



IITians bonding together for a cause. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tion' run by fellow IITian Akhilesh Kumar. Over 50 IITians were associated with the foundation that gives online coaching to IIT aspirants living in remote villages.

wanted to empower the downtrodden. Their IIT fellows in Delhi had seen and participated in the "Anna movement". But they got disillusioned with fellow IITian Arvind Kejriwal's (now Chief Minister of Delhi) "hurry to get power" and decided to take the plunge themselves.

"So we formed BAP," says party president Naveen Kumar alias Virodhi Naveen.

### Local contribution

BAP has decided to contest five seats in Bihar (Sheohar, West Champaran, Karakat, Patna Sahib and Patliputra), 22 in Maharashtra, one in

U.P. (Allahabad), one in Punjab (Bathinda) and two in Delhi.

"We've our own way of interacting with the locals... we move on bicycles fitted with loudspeakers and reach out to people through meetings. The response is very encouraging," says Mr. Akhilesh, who is also the party's Bihar unit president. "While campaigning we seek a contribution of ₹1 from the locals to meet our expenses."

Mr. Kushwaha is pitted against two-time sitting BJP MP Rama Devi and Syed Faisal Ali, a journalist, fielded by the RJD in Sheohar that goes to the polls on May 12.