

SUPREME COURT

Justice Patnaik: Will probe conspiracy only after inquiry into sexual harassment complaint ends

SEEMA CHISHTI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

HIS INQUIRY into the alleged conspiracy in the sexual harassment charge against Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi will begin only after the in-house administrative inquiry into the woman's allegations is concluded by three sitting judges, former Supreme Court judge, Justice (ret'd) A K Patnaik, has told *The Indian Express*.

"No time limit has been set for when (my) inquiry report is to be submitted to the Supreme Court," Justice Patnaik said. "The

inquiry will start after the in-house committee on the charges the lady complainant has levelled is completed."

Justice Patnaik, who retired from the Supreme Court in 2014, was nominated Thursday by a three-judge bench of the apex court headed by Justice Arun Mishra, to inquire into allegations of a conspiracy levelled by advocate Utsav Bains in his two affidavits.

Bains claimed that this "conspiracy" was behind the sexual harassment charge being levelled against CJI Gogoi by a former employee of the Supreme Court." **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi arrives at the Supreme Court on Friday. Prem Nath Pandey

Complainant deposes as in-camera hearing begins

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

THE FORMER woman employee of the Supreme Court who levelled sexual harassment charges against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi appeared Friday before an in-house committee of three serving judges, constituted to inquire into the allegations. The inquiry which remained inconclusive Friday, will

resume on a date fixed by the three judges.

The in-chamber proceedings began three days after a full court of the Supreme Court on the administrative side approved formation of a three-member **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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Lankan soldiers guard a mosque in Colombo, Friday. Reuters

Across Sri Lanka, a manhunt for Islamic State suspects, fear grips its minorities



ARUN JANARDHANAN
APRIL 26

PRAYERS AT mosques called off, Muslim taxi drivers logging off work early and shops turning away Muslim women with their faces covered. That was Friday in Colombo, barely a week after terror swept across Sri Lanka, killing 253 people in churches and luxury hotels on April 21. The government has urged calm and solidarity, but the fear is plain to see.

The All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama, the country's apex religious body of Islamic scholars in Colombo, even issued a statement requesting Muslims not to hinder security agencies by wearing the Niqab, and several mosques and Muslim organisations appealed to people asking them to pray at home and avoid large gatherings considering the unfolding crisis.

Sri Lanka President

Maithripala Sirisena, who is also the Defence Minister, spoke of at least 140 Islamic State suspects. "Information is that around 130-140 ISIS suspects are in the country. Around 70 are arrested, we will arrest them all very soon ending this (terror)," he said. He also appealed to the island nation to not view its minority Muslim community as terrorists in the wake of the attacks.

Sirisena said despite the attacks, the island's nine per cent Muslim minority must not be regarded as terrorists.

Catholic churches, too, cancelled all Sunday Masses until further notice over concerns that they remain a top target of Islamic State-linked extremists. Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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Poll panel's flip-flop on J&K elections: Process initiated, and then withdrawn

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, APRIL 26

SUGGESTING THERE were difference in views over the timing of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the Additional Chief Electoral Officer withdrew an urgent note within hours of sending it to all District Election Officers. The note sought information on district-level nodal officers for the "forthcoming Assembly elections, 2019" within the next two days.

The first note was sent following a meeting between Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Election Commissioners Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra with State Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam, Home Secretary Shaleen Kabra, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh, and Chief Electoral Officer Shailendra Kumar. The meeting on Friday was convened to explore the possibilities of conducting Assembly elections in the state.

"I am directed to enclose herewith a format for submission of information regarding district level nodal officers for the "forthcoming assembly elections, 2019" and request you to submit the same within two

EXPLAINED
E.
Weighing the options

THE CENTRAL Election Commission did not include Jammu and Kashmir among states where Assembly and Lok Sabha polls are being held simultaneously now. After a meeting with top state government officials, it appeared certain Assembly polls will be held in 2019 itself. However, within hours of setting in motion the process, the state unit of the Election Commission withdrew it, suggesting there are differences about the timing, and many considerations before polls are held in the sensitive state.

days positively. Matter may be treated as most urgent," the first letter sent by the Additional Chief Electoral Officer read. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

FILES HIS PAPERS FROM VARANASI

Don't stay away thinking I will win, PM tells voters



Prime Minister Modi with Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Uddhav Thackeray in Varanasi, Friday. PTI

LALMANI VERMA
VARANASI, APRIL 26

FLANKED BY top leaders of the National Democratic Alliance who sought to present a picture of unity and strength, Prime Minister Narendra Modi filed his nomination papers Friday for the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency.

Speaking with media persons after filing the nomination, Modi asked voters not to take



the bait when people say it is alright not to vote since he (Modi) has already won. "You must cast your vote to strengthen democracy and form a strong government," he said.

Citing a cricket analogy, Modi said just like no one makes money in a World Cup if India

and Pakistan don't fight, media believes that he (Modi) has won the elections. "Kis party se kaun ummedwar hai, yeh hai, woh nahi hai, falana nahi hai, dhikana nahi hai, woh lamba hai, woh kala hai, woh gora hai, woh tedha hai, woh meda hai, kripa karke aisi charcha mat karen (We should not debate about the candidates in the fray, and what their attributes are)," Modi said, adding every candidate is contesting to strengthen democracy.

Addressing party workers

before filing his nomination, Modi targeted the West Bengal government and said that BJP workers in the state were working in terror of "bomb, bandook and pistaul" (bomb, guns and pistols). "When a BJP worker in West Bengal and Kerala steps out on party work, he tells his mother that if he does not return home alive in evening, she should send his younger brother for the same work next day," he said. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Fire on board carrier Vikramaditya at Karwar, Navy officer dead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

A NAVAL officer on board the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya was killed Friday while leading efforts to control a fire on the ship, which broke out as it entered harbour in Karwar in Karnataka.

The Navy, in a statement, said that the fire was brought under control by the ship's crew "in a swift action, preventing any serious damage to the carrier's combat capability". "Lt Cdr D S Chauhan bravely led the fire fighting efforts in the affected compartment and while the fire was brought under control, the officer suffered loss of consciousness



INS Vikramaditya was entering Karwar harbour

owing to smoke and fumes," it said. He was immediately evacuated to a naval hospital at Karwar for medical attention but could not be revived.

A Board of Inquiry to investigate the circumstances of the incident has been ordered.

Weaned away from PUBG, Jaipur boy shoots his way to Olympics

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 26

IN 2017, when Ashok Panwar sent his son Divyansh, a 14-year-old then, to the Karni Singh Shooting Range in Delhi to train under coach Deepak Kumar Dubey, it was an act of desperation. It was a father's way of weaning away his son from the popular online combat game PUBG.

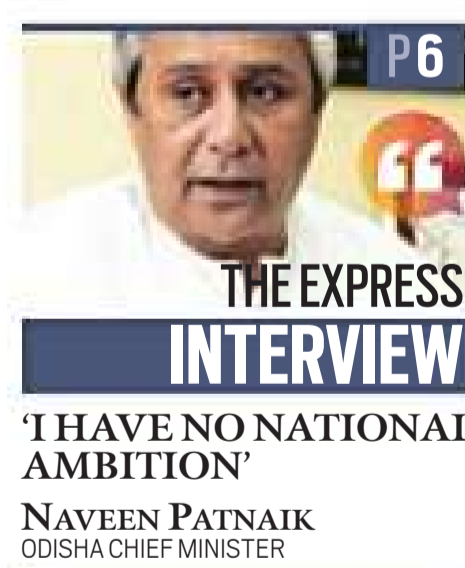
But at the Beijing Rifle and



He won the 10m air rifle silver

Pistol World Cup Friday, the 16-year-old from Jaipur did not need PUBG's virtual arsenal, his standard Walther was good enough to fetch him the silver medal behind Chinese Hui Zicheng and more crucially, get India a spot in the 10m air rifle for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The teenage rifleman shot a 629.2 in qualification and had a 10.9 on the third-last shot of the final where he finished with 249. On the day of son's biggest **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



'I HAVE NO NATIONAL AMBITION'
NAVEEN PATNAIK
ODISHA CHIEF MINISTER

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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 26

MIDWAY THROUGH the Lok Sabha election, it is clear that the euphoric endorsement Narendra Modi enjoyed in 2014 is missing, and it is more 'there is no other alternative', said Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Vice Chancellor of Ashoka University and one of India's foremost political commentators.

"Even a lot of people who claim to be supporting Mr Modi seem to be relatively clear in

their recognition that he has actually not delivered much of what he promised. In fact, it is not the kind of euphoric endorsement. It is 'there is no other alternative'," said Mehta, a Contributing Editor with *The Indian Express*.

At the Express Adda in Mumbai Thursday evening, he spoke on the erosion of institutions, on constitutional law and on the challenges during and after the polls. He said this election is marked by high stakes and low expectations. While the result could fundamentally alter the



nature of politics, even if India were to become "an irrevocably majoritarian state in all dimensions", the Opposition, he said, had not been able to build a concentrated narrative around this.

"There's is no expectation of a visionary alternative, alternative Opposition or a return to basic constitutional principles. There's no promise of *achhe din* as compared to the 2014 election," he said.

Mehta said a distinctive aspect of the BJP's current penetration in civil society is its magnitude. "Even if the BJP's power is



Pratap Bhanu Mehta at the Express Adda in Mumbai

diminished this election, I think what makes it a distinctive moment is the civil society penetration of BJP and the ideology it represents, because the ideology is carried in bits by the other party as well in some forms. This is a right wing whose civil society presence is now of an unprecedented order of magnitude. It can mobilise five million RSS workers. It has become the new normal across a range of institutions from universities to courts to armed forces."

"In fact, in some ways, the real challenge will begin after the

election. I think the first step is in recognising the fact that there is something much deeper going on which is beyond electoral politics, in the terms in which we want to define our relationship with other citizens," he said.

Observing that even the political vocabulary used to debate and discuss is now compromised, he said the words 'liberal' and 'secularism' are now seen as bad words, alongside an ideological mystification around what these values represent.

"It has become such a bad **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**