



Charges framed against Yasin Bhatkal in German Bakery blast case

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Level of freedom a govt. allows indicates how insecure it is: Bengal

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IS releases video, man claiming to be Baghdadi praises Lankan attacks

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Sunrisers Hyderabad scores a thumping win over Kings XI Punjab

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NEARBY
AAP selling unachievable statehood dream: Dikshit

NEW DELHI
Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee chief Sheila Dikshit on Monday hit out at AAP's main election plank — full statehood for Delhi — by saying that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was fooling the voters on the issue.

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

Penal provision necessary, says EC

NEW DELHI
The Election Commission on Monday said the penal provision for a voter making any false allegation about VVPAT displaying wrong result was necessary to prevent frivolous complaints. The EC has so far received three such complaints, one each from Gujarat and Kerala and another from a former DGP in Assam.

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DELHI METRO ▶ 6 PAGES

Violence mars voting in Bengal; turnout up in fourth phase

EC registers FIR against BJP's Babul Supriyo for forcibly entering a booth

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The fourth phase of the Lok Sabha election on Monday, covering 71 constituencies across nine States and a part of the Anantnag constituency in Jammu and Kashmir, was marred by several incidents of violence in West Bengal, where polling was held for eight seats.

The overall voter turnout in the 71 seats registered an increase, with the participation of more than 64%, compared to 63.05% in 2014.

The Election Commission said a First Information Report had been registered against Union Minister Babul Supriyo, the BJP candidate from Asansol in West Bengal, for forcibly entering a polling booth.

Another case has been filed against unknown per-

Highs and lows

Except for West Bengal, the turnout remained below the 70% mark in States that went to the polls on Monday. Voting % calculated as of 9.30 p.m.



sons for smashing the rear wind-shield of his vehicle, after he left the booth and was confronted by some local persons.

In West Bengal, there was

a decline in the turnout from 83.38% in the previous general election to 76.72%, while a similar trend was noticed in Odisha that recorded 68%, both in the Lok Sabha and

State	Seats	Turnout
Bihar	5	59.02
Jammu and Kashmir	1*	9.79
Jharkhand	3	64.38
Madhya Pradesh	6	69.84
Maharashtra	17	55.86
Odisha	6	64.5
Rajasthan	13	67.92
Uttar Pradesh	13	58.86
West Bengal	8	76.72

*Polling in Anantnag is spread across three phases: III, IV, and V

Security personnel make way for Asansol BJP candidate Babul Supriyo's car after it was allegedly attacked by Trinamool Congress supporters while he was heading to a polling station on Monday. ▶ PTI

Assembly elections, as against 73.75% the last time.

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10.32% IN KULGAM ▶ PAGE 10

HEAT MOVES NORTH ▶ EDITORIAL

Election Commission ignored PM's hate speeches: Congress

Supreme Court will take up the petition today

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to urgently hear a Congress petition that said the Election Commission's continued silence on complaints about hate speeches and misuse of the armed forces as political propaganda by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah amounted to a "tacit endorsement" of their conduct.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, agreed to hear on April 30 the petition, which was urgently mentioned by senior advocate A.M. Singhvi and advocate Sunil Fernandes.

Direct attack

In one of the most direct attacks on the EC, the petition filed by Congress lawmaker Sushmita Dev said there was



Narendra Modi

one set of rules for Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah, and another for the rest of the candidates.

The Congress said 40 representations on the violation of the model code of conduct had so far been moved in the EC, but no action had been taken. The delay was a deliberate action itself, it said.

Since March 10, when the general election was noti-

fied, Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah had "specifically in sensitive areas and States, *ex-facie* violated the provisions of the Representation of the People Act and the Election Rules and the process," the petition said.

Political propaganda

It stated, "It is in public domain that they have indulged in hate speeches, repeatedly used the armed forces for political propaganda, despite a clear prohibition on the same by the ECI."

The petition narrated how "the Prime Minister in blatant violation of the model code held a rally on the day of polling in Gujarat on April 23, 2019, i.e. the date of voting for the third phase of the election."

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Vote for water



As others voted in Maharashtra's Palghar district, women and children of Kundacha village near Jawahar town were struggling to collect a bucket of water on Monday. The dry well was filled with water brought in a tanker. ▶ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

NIA arrests youth planning suicide attack in Kerala

'He was following speeches of the Easter blasts mastermind'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday said it had arrested a 29-year-old resident of Palakkad in Kerala, allegedly planning a suicide attack in the State.

In a statement, the NIA said it arrested Riyas A., who goes by the aliases Riyas Aboobacker and Abu Dujana, as part of its probe into the 'ISIS Kasargod case' filed in July 2016 after 15 young men from the district disappeared and later joined the

Islamic State — 14 in Afghanistan and one in Syria.

It said he followed the videos and speeches of the mastermind of the Easter attacks in Sri Lanka, Zahran Hashim.

'In contact with accused'

"During interrogation, he disclosed that he had been in online contact with the absconding accused Abdul Rashid Abdulla, alias Abu Isa, for a long time and was following his audio clips, including the one he had circulated on social media plat-

forms instigating terror attacks in India," the NIA said. The terror accused said he was also in online contact with Abdul Khayoom, alias Abu Khalid, who is accused in the Valapattanam ISIS case and is believed to be in Syria, the NIA said.

"He said he had been following speeches/videos of Zahran Hashim of Sri Lanka and Zakir Naik. He admitted that he wanted to carry out a suicide attack in Kerala," the NIA statement read.

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Cyclone Fani gathers force, to hit Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Cyclone Fani intensified into a "severe cyclonic storm" on Monday evening and is headed towards the Odisha coast, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

It could become an "extremely severe cyclone" by Wednesday, prompting the government to put the NDRF and the Coast Guard on high alert. Light to moderate rainfall is likely over north coastal Andhra Pradesh and south coastal Odisha on Thursday.

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Rahul expresses 'regret' for linking SC to remark on Modi

But no word of apology in response to court

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A 28-page formal response from Congress president Rahul Gandhi to a notice on a criminal contempt plea expressed "regret" for juxtaposing a political slogan 'Chowkidar chor hai' with Supreme Court proceedings in a moment of euphoria, but there was no word of apology in it.

He also said the Rafale deal was a "tainted transaction" and a "gross, brazen abuse of power" by the "BJP government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi".



Rahul Gandhi

He said it deserved to be investigated by a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

He made his position clear a day before the court is to hear the Rafale review petitions along with this contempt plea. It is to be seen

whether the hearing takes place on Tuesday as the government on Monday sought more time to respond to the review petitions.

Mr. Gandhi's counter-affidavit was identical to an earlier 'explanation' with regard to the contempt plea. It had also expressed "regret" without apologising. In his counter-affidavit, he reiterated that the comment was made with rhetorical flourish in the heat of campaigning.

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BJP'S REACTION ▶ PAGE 10

40 Trinamool MLAs with me, says PM Modi

Party says will complain to poll panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed at a rally in West Bengal's Hooghly district on Monday that "40 Trinamool Congress MLAs" would join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after the party's victory in the Lok Sabha election.

The Trinamool Congress accused Mr. Modi of poaching and said it was taking the issue to the Election Commission.

Trinamool national spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien tweeted that the party was filing a complaint with the

Election Commission.

Mr. O'Brien addressed Mr. Modi as "expiry babu" — as Trinamool chief Mamata Banerjee often refers to the Prime Minister as one whose time is expired.

"Expiry Babu PM, let's get this straight. Nobody will go with you. Not even one councillor. Are you election campaigning or horse trading! Your expiry date is near," he tweeted.

Mr. O'Brien said the party was "charging [the Prime Minister] with horse trading."

MAMATA HAS BETRAYED
STATE, SAYS PM ▶ PAGE 10

Sacked BSF jawan to face Modi in Varanasi

Given SP ticket, Tej Bahadur vows to strengthen the forces and eliminate corruption

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party on Monday declared dismissed Border Security Force constable Tej Bahadur Yadav as its candidate to take on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Varanasi.

The party moved its candidate, Shalini Yadav, who had joined it recently, to make way for the BSF jawan. The SP is in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal in Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Yadav was dismissed from service for indiscipline in 2017 after he post-



Tej Bahadur Yadav. ▶ PTI

ed a video complaining about the quality of food served to the troops in the region along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir.

By replacing Ms. Yadav with the former BSF constable, the SP hopes to blunt

the nationalism narrative of the BJP. Mr. Modi has referred to the Pulwama attack and the Balakot air strikes in his rallies.

Talking to reporters in Varanasi after filing his nomination papers, Mr. Yadav said: "I am the Samajwadi Party's candidate now. The Samajwadi Party's issues are now my issues."

'Sole objective'

"I was sacked for raising the issue of corruption. My sole objective will be to strengthen the forces and eliminate corruption," he added.

Senior SP leader Manoj Rai said Mr. Yadav was in touch with the party and its chief Akhilesh Yadav obliged him with a ticket.

The party's Varanasi candidate would focus on issues of *jawan*, *kisan aur naujawan* (soldier, farmer and youth), said Mr. Rai, adding that "the fight is between the *nakli* (fake) *chowkidar* and *asli* (real) *chowkidar*". Varanasi goes to the polls in the seventh phase of the Lok Sabha election on May 19. (With PTI inputs)

SEE ALSO ▶ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

HC refuses to gag media in CJI case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed a petition seeking to restrict the media from reporting on the sexual harassment allegation levelled against Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi. "Go to the Supreme Court... We will not interfere," the court told the petitioner Anti-Corruption Council of India, an NGO.

The Bench said the Supreme Court was seized of the issue.

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