

## NEARBY



### Highway ban disrupts life in J&K

**SRINAGAR**  
The first day of closure of the 271-km Baramulla-Udhampur national highway for convoy movement disrupted distribution of essentials on Sunday and halted all passenger services.

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## U.P. alliance says it will provide a PM

Mayawati, Akhilesh Yadav and Ajit Singh target Congress and BJP on governance

**ANUJ KUMAR**  
DEOBAND

In a display of unity and strength, 'mahagathbandhan' leaders Mayawati, Akhilesh Yadav and Ajit Singh said at a massive rally here on Sunday that their alliance would put forward a Prime Minister, while targeting both the BJP and the Congress for their poor record of governance.

Criticising the BJP and the Congress for their 'Manuwadi' (anti-Dalit) policies, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati hit out at the Congress for putting up candidates who would cut into the votes of the alliance.

### Appeal to Muslims

She appealed to the Muslims, in particular, not to al-



**Display of unity:** Akhilesh Yadav greeting Mayawati at a rally in Deoband, Uttar Pradesh, on Sunday. • AFP

low their votes to be divided, pointing to the fact that the Congress had fielded fire-brand local leader Imran Masood against the BSP's Fazlur Rahman in Saharanpur.

Ms. Mayawati came down heavily on the minimum income scheme promised by

the Congress and said she would ensure jobs for the poor in the government and private sectors. She criticised the BJP for not being able to fulfil its electoral promises. "Acche din remained a *jumla*, an electoral promise. The BSP believes in

getting things done, rather than making tall promises."

She felt the Prime Minister and his "small and big chowkidars" would not be able to save the BJP's fort.

### 'Mirror images'

Mr. Yadav, president of the Samajwadi Party, described the Congress and the BJP as "mirror images of each other." Reminding the people of the success of the alliance candidates in the Kairana and Gorakhpur Lok Sabha byelections, he said the 'mahagathbandhan' would decide the new Prime Minister. "It is an election that will decide India's future. It is an election to bury our differences for a common goal."

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## It's 'Modi once more' versus 'Justice for all'

BJP, Congress unveil campaign themes ahead of first phase

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Four days before the first phase of voting for the 2019 Lok Sabha election gets under way, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress on Sunday unveiled their campaign slogans.

The BJP pitch sought a second term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi with its main slogan 'Phir ek baar, Modi sarkar' (the Modi government once again), while the Congress promised justice to all with its tagline 'Ab hoga nyay' (Now, there will be justice).

Unveiling the BJP campaign theme, just hours after the Congress launch, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley revealed the focus areas of the party's campaign.

### Larger theme

"The first theme of our campaign will be 'Kaam karne wali sarkar' (A government that works). Our second theme will be 'imaan-dar sarkar' (Honest government). Our third theme will be 'Bade faisle lene wali sarkar' (A decisive government that takes big decisions)," he said and added all these themes would serve the larger theme of 'Modi once more'.

So far, in election speeches and public rallies, the BJP's top leadership has been focussing on issues such as national security and the Modi government's record in tackling terrorism, in an oblique reference to the Balakot air strikes.

The party is keen to project the "strong and decisive



**His leader's tune:** A BJP supporter presenting a musical instrument to PM Modi in Cooch Behar on Sunday. • PTI

## Congress defends lyrics in theme song

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress has demanded to know from the Election Commission what was 'objectionable' in a song released as part of its election campaign.

In a tweet, Congress spokesman Salman Anees Soz said on Sunday, "Dear ECI: What is objectionable about this? This is Modi & BJP."

*Tum jhooti chaalein chal ke, sheheron ke naam badal*

leadership" of Mr. Modi and contrast it with "too many leaders in the Opposition camp."

"We want a government with one captain and not a team of 11 members with 40 captains," Mr. Jaitley said, a reference to the Opposition alliances against the BJP in crucial States.

The Congress played on

*ke, noton ko kachra kar ke, aur har nirdhan ko chhal ke, nafra ka dhuaan phailaake, bhai se bhai ladaake, kehte ho hum ko chun lo, ab tum bhi humaari sun lo*

(You tread on the path of untruth, change the name of cities, turn bank notes into waste, hurt every poor person, spread the smoke of hatred, make brother fight brother, say you elect us; now it's our turn to be heard).

the concept of 'nyay' (justice in Hindi) that also effectively pitched the party's proposed minimum income guarantee scheme, Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY).

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**SAYS PM** ▶ PAGE 10  
**TAX OFFICIALS SEARCH KAMAL NATH'S ASSOCIATES** ▶ PAGE 10

## President Ibrahim Solih's MDP heads for a landslide in Maldives

Early results give party 60 seats in 87-member Majlis

**MEERA SRINIVASAN**  
MALE

Reinforcing the trust they reposed in President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in September 2018, Maldivians gave his party a significant majority in the legislature in Saturday's election.

Provisional results on Sunday evening pointed to the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) heading for a big win, securing some 60 of the 87 seats in the people's Majlis or Parliament. Complete results are yet to be declared by the Elec-



Ibrahim Mohamed Solih

tion Commission.

The likely two-thirds majority may help the MDP — which fought last year's presidential election as part of a coalition — consolidate power in the legislature and push through key bills and laws that partners in the ruling alliance have resist-

ed.

Speaking at a late-night rally on the sea front in the capital Male on Saturday, Mr. Solih said the work "starts now" to strengthen democratic institutions, deliver basic services, bring the corrupt to book and end impunity.

### Challenges ahead

Even as he reminded the huge crowd of supporters gathered there of the "immense challenges" ahead, he dispelled murmurs about possible splits within the coalition that backed him for Presidency.

**NASHEED MAKES TRIUMPHANT RETURN** ▶ PAGE 12

## No disrespect for seniors in party, says Rajnath

'Govt. not politicising security issues'

**NISTULA HEBBAR**  
JAMUI

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said it was, in fact, his idea — proposed during his second term as BJP president — to put a 75 year age cap on party candidates.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said it was the correct way forward for the party, and respect for senior leaders should not be reduced to the question of nomination. "Whether it is Advaniji or Joshiji, their contributions cannot be undermined by anyone. To be honest, it was under my presidentship of the party (the second term between

2012 and 2014) that I mooted the idea that those aged above 75 should not be given ticket. Issuing ticket to fight an election cannot be the only yardstick for conveying respect to senior leaders. We respect them and shall do so in the future too," he said.

Mr. Singh also dismissed suggestions that the government was politicising national security issues. "The Congress has attempted to do this, along with other opposition parties. We have only appreciated the valour of our armed forces," he said.

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## 'Vote sambhal ke' campaign focuses on idea of India

Filmmaker Bordoloi's series features prominent names from the film world

**NAMRATA JOSHI**  
MUMBAI

After appeals by filmmakers, authors, scientists and theatre artistes, it's the turn of celebrities, mainly members of the Hindi film fraternity, to take to short videos urging people to vote with care and concern for the country and its citizens. *Vote Sambhal Ke* (vote with care) is the implicit advice.

The two-three minute videos, up on YouTube, have been directed and edited by former journalist-turned-scriptwriter-filmmaker Satyen K. Bordoloi.

The series kicked off with actor Kalki Koechlin asking people to think before voting. "Vote right, or vote left, but vote with deliberation and purpose," she says, before going on to recite the last few lines of the poem, "Man, You Should Explode" by Marathi poet, writer and Dalit activist Namdeo Dhasal.

In the second video, writer, director and actor Tigra Manshu Dhulia talks about how there can be no bigger religion than the nation, so one must vote for someone who wouldn't destroy India's social fabric.

More videos are likely in the next few days, including from filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane, writer Anjum Rajabali,



Actor Kalki Koechlin making an appeal to people to think before voting. • YOUTUBE VIDEO

filmmaker Saeed Mirza and actor Swara Bhaskar, ahead of the first phase of polling on April 11.

Mr. Bordoloi said he decided to deconstruct the oft-heard litany that the film fraternity is not political enough.

The videos are streaming under the umbrella Truth Deserves You Production on Bordoloi's YouTube channel. Even as the video began streaming on Sunday, several Bollywood notables waded into political debates on social media. Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt put up links to two sections of Anand Patwardhan's *Vivek* (Reason), an eight-part documentary on the increasing radicalisation of India. The two sections talk of the work of rationalist Narendra Dhabholkar and communist leader Govind Pansare, and raise questions about their murders.