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NEARBY



**Modi, Mayawati spar over Alwar rape case**  
KUSHINAGAR/DEORIA/LUCKNOW  
A full-scale war of words broke out on Sunday between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati over the Alwar gang-rape incident, with the PM accusing her of "shedding crocodile tears", a charge trashed by her as his "dirty politics".

NORTH ► PAGE 2

**Post-Fani, Naveen seeks special category status**

BHUBANESWAR  
Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has demanded special category status from the Centre post-Fani, saying the State faces natural calamities almost every year. He said a special category status was the need of the hour due to the massive loss to infrastructure which may stall growth of the State.

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DELHI METRO ► 6 PAGES

# 63.5% turnout in sixth phase

Incidents of violence reported from West Bengal and Jharkhand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

An overall tentative turnout of 63.5% was reported from the 59 constituencies in six States and the Union Territory of Delhi on Sunday in the penultimate phase of the Lok Sabha election. Incidents of violence were reported from West Bengal and Jharkhand. The turnout in 2014 stood at 63.67%.

The highest participation of 80.35% again was reported from the eight seats in West Bengal which, however, was lower than the 84.95% in the previous election.

**BJP candidate injured**

The State also witnessed several incidents of violence. In Keshpur under the Ghatol Lok Sabha constituency, there were reports of an attack on the BJP candidate and former IPS officer Bharati Ghosh when she tried to enter a polling booth. Ms. Ghosh's convoy was targeted when miscreants threw stones and bombs after she tried to enter another polling booth in Keshpur.

Ms. Ghosh, once seen as close to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and who is contesting against Dipak Adhikari of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), was heckled by ruling party supporters on several occasions.

Following the attacks, Central Industrial Security

## Mixed record

The overall turnout in phase six was 63.5%\*. The seats in Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar registered a slight increase in turnout compared to 2014, while those in other States recorded a decrease.

\* Data as of 10 p.m.



States	Seats	Turnout %
Bihar	8	59.29
Haryana	10	68.34
Madhya Pradesh	8	64.77
Uttar Pradesh	14	54.74
West Bengal	8	80.35
Jharkhand	4	64.5
Delhi	7	59.78

Voters displaying the indelible ink on their fingers outside a booth in the Vaishali seat in Bihar on Sunday. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

Force personnel accompanying her resorted to lathi-charge and firing. Ms. Ghosh was forced to take shelter in a temple near the Keshpur police station. One person sustained injuries in the incident.

The adjoining Medinipur constituency also reported violence. At Belda, four Trinamool supporters sustained injuries in clashes with BJP workers.

At a polling booth in Bishnupur, central forces opened fire after a scuffle in the queue of voters.

A delegation of BJP leaders, including Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, met officials at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer and alleged "booth capturing and rigging" at certain booths.

Neighbouring Jharkhand

reported a marginal dip in the turnout with 64.5% compared with 65.53% in 2014. There was a bomb explosion in Chaibasa but no casualties were reported. A clash between two communities was reported in Jamshedpur, while the vehicle of a candidate from Giridih was pelted with stones by some locals.

**Surge in M.P.**

Madhya Pradesh, where senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh is facing the BJP's Pragya Singh Thakur in Bhopal, an overall polling of 64.77% was recorded as against 56.81% in 2014. In Bihar too, where a poll official was killed in accidental firing by a home guard, the figure improved from 57.25% to 59.3%.

Voter participation in Haryana dropped from 71.86%

in the previous election to 68.34%. The same trend was noticed in Delhi, which recorded a tentative figure of 59.8% compared with 65.1% in 2014.

Of the seven seats in Delhi, Chandni Chowk and North East Delhi recorded over 62% turnout, while New Delhi, known for its VVIP voters, saw a turnout of 56.1%. Delhi's Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh expressed disappointment, saying the turnout did not meet the expectations, given the awareness campaigns.

In the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh, the turnout was close 2014's figure of 54.74%.

VOTE IS STILL A YOUTHFUL PURSUIT ► PAGE 10

VIOLENCE MARS POLLING IN BENGAL ► PAGE 10

## Saudi-educated trainer of Easter bombing kingpin held in Sri Lanka

Aliyar founded Islamic centre in Zahran's hometown

REUTERS

KATTANKUDY

Sri Lankan authorities have arrested a Saudi-educated scholar for what they claim are links with Zahran Hashim, the suspected ringleader of the Easter Sunday bombings.

Mohamed Aliyar, 60, is the founder of the Centre for Islamic Guidance (CIG), which boasts a mosque, a religious school and a library in Zahran's hometown of Kattankudy, a Muslim-dominated city on Sri Lanka's eastern shores.

Aliyar, police said, was "involved" with training in the southern town of Hambantota for the group of suicide bombers who attacked hotels and churches on Easter, killing over 250.

"Information has been



A mosque is seen at the Centre for Islamic Guidance at Kattankudy. ■ REUTERS

revealed that the suspect arrested had a close relationship with ... Zahran and had been operating financial transactions," said a police statement late on Friday.

Calls to Aliyar and his associates went unanswered. Reuters was unable to find contact details for a lawyer.

The government says

Zahran, a radical Tamil-speaking preacher, was a leader of the group.

Two Muslim community sources in Kattankudy told Reuters his headline views were partly shaped by ultra-conservative Salafi-Wahabi texts that he picked up at the CIG's library around 2-3 years ago.

The sources are not affiliated with the centre.

"I used to always run into him at the centre, reading Saudi journals and literature," said one of the sources.

During that time, Zahran started criticising the practice of asking God for help, for instance, arguing that such pleas were an affront to pure Islam.

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MOSQUES ATTACKED ► PAGE 12

## Voter turnout dips in city from 65.07% to 60.5%

Lowest polling recorded in New Delhi

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi saw a dip in voter turnout for the Lok Sabha poll on Sunday with the Election Commission putting the polling percentage at a tentative 60.5.

In 2014 the turnout was 65.07%, about 5% more than this year's average.

The lowest turnout was recorded in New Delhi constituency at 56.9% and the highest in North East Delhi at 63.41%.

The Delhi police said the polling process was overall peaceful and they received 337 calls related to missing voter names from the rolls.

The Aam Aadmi Party alleged "rigging" by the BJP at a polling station in South Delhi and also claimed large-scale deletion of voter names, an issue they had

raised before the election too. The BJP dismissed the allegations.

**Model booths a hit**

Model polling booths were an attraction with the voters as they distributed chocolates and flowers, provided wheelchair facility to senior citizens and even offered pick-up and drop service to those above 100 years of age. Several voters said they were happy with the introduction of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail machines.

The decision of AAP and Congress to go it alone in the polls left many voters, who did not want to vote for the BJP, in a fix as they felt their votes were getting split between the two parties.

SEE ASLO ► DELHI METRO PAGES 1, 2 & 3

## Malinga magic



Lasith Malinga produced an incredible last over to defend nine runs as Mumbai Indians claimed undisputed supremacy in the IPL by securing their fourth title with a narrow one-run win over Chennai Super Kings in Hyderabad on Sunday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK (REPORTS ON PAGE 15)

## Opposition parties to meet only after results are declared

Leaders do not want to lose focus on counting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA

Opposition leaders seem to be now planning to meet in New Delhi after May 23, the day the results of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections would be declared, rather than before as suggested by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and TDP leader N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Top sources in the Trina-

mool Congress said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee indicated to Mr. Naidu that such meetings should be held after the results were declared, and it would not be useful to meet before the numbers were out.

**'Training for agents'**

According to sources, Ms. Banerjee conveyed that it

was necessary to focus on the counting on May 23 rather than a roundtable meeting on May 21. Spending a day in Delhi during counting was "meaningless." Instead, the focus should be on "imparting proper training" to the counting agents.

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BJP TARGETS MAMATA, GEHLOT ► PAGE 10

## AASU leader files NRC objection against party member

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

A member of a local unit of the All Assam Students' Union in Udalguri district has submitted about 100 objections against people he felt were ineligible to be in the National Register of Citi-

zens being updated in Assam.

One of them turned out to be a former president of the Kalaigaon unit, of which he is a member.

Son of a freedom fighter, Siddique Ali received the objection notice from the

local NRC service centre. The notice has saddened the 64-year-old who had contested the Assam Assembly election in 1985 for the now-defunct United Minorities Front.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 7

## Assam produces an orchid link to the Orient

The parasitic bloom, found by forest officer Jatindra Sarma, is a variant of a Japanese orchid



RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

An Assam forest officer's chance discovery has given India one of its smallest orchids in terms of size and duration of bloom to be recorded botanically.

*Lecanorchis taiwaniana*, which the Japanese *Journal of Botany* has published as a "new record for the flora in India" in its latest issue, is a mycoheterotroph, one of two types of parasitic plants that have abandoned photosynthesis.

**Studied, classified**

"We took time to classify this orchid as it appeared close to the *nigricans* species while bearing 90% similarity with the *taiwaniana* species named

after Taiwan. The vote went in favour of the latter as the slight morphological differences were found to be due to local conditions,"

Jatindra Sarma, a Conservator of Forests, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Sarma, also the Member Secretary of the State Medicinal Plants Board, co-authored the study on the new orchid with Hussain A. Barbhuiya of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Santanu Dey of Nagaland University's Botany Department, and Kenji Suetsugu of Kobe University in Japan.

*Lecanorchis taiwaniana* adds to the orchid wealth of northeast India, which has 800 of some 1,300 species in the country.

About 300 species are found in the Western Ghats and 200 in the northwestern Himalayas.

**Herbal value?**

The orchid, discovered earlier in Japan, Taiwan, and Laos, was found to have a maximum height of 40 cm and a blossoming period of five-six days.

"We are yet to ascertain the herbal value of this orchid that flowers and fruits from July to September. But as it derives its energy and nutrients from fungus, it may be of herbal importance," Mr. Sarma said.

The forest officer has a few other botanical discoveries to his credit. These include the rare,

ginger-like *Amomum pratisthana* named after his daughter, and the *Smilax sailenii* named after Prof. Sailen Borah, one of Assam's best known botanists.

Mr. Sarma has also published the two-volume *Medicinal Plants and Mushrooms of India* with special reference to Assam.

It contains information on 1,400 medicinal plants and mushrooms, including *Costus pictus* or the insulin plant used in treating diabetes mellitus, and *Ophiorrhiza mungos* used in treating cancer because of the alkaloid Camptothecin present in it.

Also known as Indian snake root, *O. mungos* has been the subject of medicinal research.