



NEARBY



Two Hizb militants killed in Kulgam

SRINAGAR
Security forces killed two Hizbul Mujahideen militants in a pre-dawn operation in Kulgam on Wednesday. The police said Irfan Manzoor Bhat and Zahid Ahmad Mantoo were surrounded by a joint team of the Army, the police and the CRPF in the Gopalpora area of Kulgam. “Both the militants were killed and the bodies were retrieved from the site,” they added.

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Opium link in MLA's killing not ruled out

GUWAHATI
The police in Arunachal Pradesh have not ruled out the possibility of an opium cartel being involved in the gunning down of a legislator and 10 others in the State's Tirap district on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the NSCN (IM) has denied its involvement in the killings.

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Capital put on high alert ahead of poll results

NEW DELHI
Anticipating violence post-results, the national capital was put on high alert after a high-level meeting at the Ministry of Home Affairs on Wednesday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Man kills father ‘in fit of rage’, chops his body into pieces

Caught while trying to dispose of body

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old eatery owner allegedly killed his father, cut his body into about 20 pieces and stuffed them in plastic bags. He was caught red-handed at his house in Shahdara's Farsh Bazar area while trying to dispose of the body, with the help of a friend, in the early hours of Wednesday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Ved Prakash Surya said the accused, Aman Aggarwal, and his friend Ayush have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the murder of Sandesh Aggarwal (48), who used to run a cosmetics shop on the ground floor of the building where he resided on the second floor.

Property issue

Sandesh's brother Adesh, who runs a grocery store opposite his shop and owns the first floor of the building, said the family members of the victim - wife Kanchan, sons Aman, Ayush and daughter Sakshi - were also living on the second floor but separately for the last 10 years.

“The four of them [Kanchan, her sons and daughter] were after his [Sandesh's] property. The second floor of the building is registered in the name of Sandesh and Kanchan. On the ground floor, Sandesh used to run his cosmetics shop while Aman had opened a café in a separate portion. His family wanted the entire shop and had severed relations with him over the matter,” he claimed.

It was Mr. Adesh who alerted the police on Tuesday night. He said he came to check on Sandesh around 10

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day ahead of the counting of votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha poll, the Election Commission (EC) rejected the demand of Opposition parties for tallying of the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips in five polling booths in each Assembly segment with the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), prior to the vote count.

In a statement on Wednesday, the EC said the VVPAT counting sequence would remain as per the Supreme Court-approved guidelines.

A delegation of 22 Opposition parties had met the full Election Commission on Tuesday. Among other things, they requested the EC to count the VVPAT slips before the start of counting of votes polled in EVMs.

‘In-depth’ discussions

Subsequently, the EC deliberated on the issue with senior officials concerned, and after two rounds of “in-depth” discussions, it arrived at the decision.

“It has neither been found possible nor feasible to accede to this demand in the overall context and especially in view of the judgment of the Supreme Court in writ petition (C) No.273 of 2019 delivered on April 8,” it said.



All set: Arrangements being made on the eve of counting of votes at a centre in the Commonwealth Games Village in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

According to the EC, the judgment directs that the random selection of VVPATs be subjected to the process of slip verification as per the guidelines 16.6 of the EVM manual in force.

Procedural issues

“There were some other procedural issues like allowing counting agents of candidates along with all Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers, on which necessary instructions have already been reiterated and, wherever required, made more candidate-friendly,” the EC said.

The EC assured the political parties of strict adherence to the set procedures for the entire counting process, especially the security of the strong rooms and the counting centres.

The parties had also demanded that in case of any discrepancy in the EVM-VVPAT verification, 100% counting of the slips at all polling booths be done in that particular segment.

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DISCLOSING DISSENT ▶ EDITORIAL

Unfortunate, says Congress

Opposition leaders criticised the Election Commission for rejecting their demand for counting the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail slips from randomly selected five booths in each Assembly segment before the counting of votes registered in the Electronic Voting Machines. The Congress called the order unfortunate and said the EC ignored a demand by the representatives of 75% of the electorate. ▶ PAGE 12

Documents stolen from IAF Rafale team office in France

Break-in occurred on the premises of Dassault Aviation

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

In a major security breach, a break-in and theft occurred in the Paris office of the Indian Air Force (IAF) Project Management Team (PMT) overseeing the Rafale fighter deal, and some documents have been taken away, according to multiple defence sources. There was a break-in in two other offices on the premises, another source said.

“The incident occurred on Sunday night and some documents have been taken. An investigation is under way,” a defence source told *The Hindu* on condition of anonymity. “It is Dassault Aviation’s responsibility as it has been on its premises,” the source added. The PMT consists of four IAF officers and is headed by a Group Captain.

Safes broken open

At least two sources confirmed that some safes were broken open and the culprits “managed to get away with some documents...” But the nature of the documents was not known. Defence Ministry and IAF officials declined to comment.

However, a second source said it looked like a case of burglary. “PMT, one among three offices of Dassault, broken into. Money was sto-

Security breach

The office: The office of the IAF Project Management Team (PMT) is located on the Dassault Aviation premises in the suburbs of Paris

PMT's role: The four-member team, headed by a Group Captain, monitors implementation of the Rafale fighter jet deal with France

The fighter: The IAF is likely to get the first aircraft this September as per a €7.87 billion agreement with France to buy 36 jets in a fly-away condition



Centre ‘misled’ court: petitioners

The petitioners in the Rafale deal case accused the Centre of having “misled” the Supreme Court, feeding it with untruths, which amounted to a “wholesale fraud”. This is part of the submission filed by the petitioners, including former Union Ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun

Shourie and advocate Prashant Bhushan. It covered points raised by the petitioners for opening a case of perjury against officials responsible for “suppressing the facts”. It also addressed issues raised for reviewing the December 14 judgment that upheld the deal. ▶ PAGE 13

len from other offices,” the source said. A third source said the burglary looked like a diversion and the matter was of serious concern. “What kind of documents have been taken is yet to be ascertained,” the source said.

The police have been in-

formed and a case has been registered, another source said. In September 2016, India signed a €7.87 billion Inter-Governmental Agreement with France for the purchase of 36 Rafale jets in a fly-away condition.

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Centre clears names of four judges to SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has cleared four names recommended by the Collegium for elevation as Supreme Court judges. With their appointment, the court will reach its full sanctioned strength of 31 judges.

The government has cleared the names of Jharkhand High Court and Gauhati High Court Chief Justices Aniruddha Bose and A.S. Bopanna. On May 8, the Collegium refused the govern-

ment's request to reconsider its April 12 recommendation to elevate the two judges. The government also gave its nod to the Collegium's May 8 recommendation for elevation of Justice B.R. Gavai, a judge of the Bombay High Court, and Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court Surya Kant.

The Collegium had reiterated its recommendation on Justices Bose and Bopanna in the face of the govern-

ment's reluctance. It resent the files to the government, saying there was nothing adverse found in their conduct, competence or integrity. This made it binding on the government to clear their appointments. The Collegium had said the elevation of Justices Gavai and Kant was an attempt to provide “due representation” to all High Courts and all sections of society.

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Two employees get trapped in mill cellar, die

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Two employees, who were working overtime in a pulse and flour mill, died after getting trapped in a 12-foot

deep cellar used to process pulses in north-west Delhi's Keshavpuram on Tuesday night.

DCP (North-West) Vijayanta Arya said the victims were

identified as Bebal Khan (35) and Mobin Khan (30), who hailed from Jaipur and lived on the mill premises.

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