

INDIA-PAKISTAN TIES

Imran Khan dials PM with call to work together

In first talk post Pulwama, Modi says need ‘trust, environment free of terror’

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MAY 26

IN THEIR first conversation since the NDA government was re-elected for a second term three days ago, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday and said that he looked forward to advancing his vision for “peace, progress and prosperity”.

In response, Modi said that “creating trust and an environment free of violence and terrorism were essential” for cooperation in fostering “peace, progress and prosperity” in the region. The indication was that India would stick to its redlines on dialogue with Pakistan, where it has maintained that talks and terror cannot go together.

This was also the first conversation between the two leaders

after the Pulwama terrorist attack in February this year, which was followed by the Balakot air strikes and Pakistan’s retaliation.

Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mohammad Faisal tweeted: “PM (Imran Khan) spoke to PM Modi today and congratulated him on his party’s electoral victory in Lok Sabha elections in India. PM expressed his desire for both countries to work together for better-



‘Look forward to working with Prime Minister Modi’

ment of their peoples.” He added: “Reiterating his vision for peace, progress and prosperity in South Asia, the Prime Minister said he looked forward to working with Prime Minister Modi to advance these objectives.”

Minutes later, the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi said: “Recalling his initiatives in line with his government’s

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED India’s stand: Talks, terror can’t go together

IMRAN KHAN’S call for talks after Narendra Modi’s emphatic win was expected. But Modi, who won a second term after acting tough on the Pulwama terror attack, has stuck to his government’s stand of linking talks to terrorism. The next step will be clear after a meeting between the two, possibly during the SCO summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, next month.

INSIDE

WALL ALONG MITHI A MAJOR PROBLEM

PAGE 6

BJP worker killed, Smriti Irani says bid to ‘terrorise, disintegrate’ Amethi



Irani carried Surendra Singh’s body for the last rites. *Express*

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, MAY 26

A BJP worker who had actively participated in Smriti Irani’s Lok Sabha campaign in Amethi was shot dead late Saturday night while sleeping outside his house at Baraulia village in the constituency.

The family members of 50-year-old Surendra Singh, a former pradhan of the village, alleged the hand of locals affiliated to the Congress who had old enmity with Singh. The FIR names five and mentions other unidentified villagers. Police, which is looking at several angles including a dispute arising from panchayat elections, is yet to make any arrest.

As per a PTI report, Irani, who rushed to the village along with other BJP leaders and helped carry Singh’s body for the last rites, said he was killed so that Amethi could be “terrorised, disintegrated and made to bow down”. She promised action against “the person who pulled the trigger” as well as “the one who ordered the killing”.

While asking party workers to “exercise restraint”, Irani questioned Congress president Rahul Gandhi’s remark, after she had defeated him from Amethi. “On (May) 23, I was given a message that ‘take care of Amethi with love’. To the person who gave me the message, I would like to say that I have received the message loud and clear,” she said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



PM Narendra Modi waving to supporters from BJP office in Khanpur, Ahmedabad, Sunday, during his visit to thank the people for Gujarat for his win. *Gujarat Chief Minister’s Office* **PAGE 8**

2 yrs after FB beef post, lecturer held

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, MAY 26

TWO YEARS after he wrote a Facebook post saying eating beef was part of Adivasi tradition, a tribal lecturer was arrested by the Jharkhand Police Saturday evening. Police claimed that he had been absconding since a case was lodged soon after his post.

In his May 2017 post, Jeet Rai Hansda, a lecturer with Government School and College



Police claimed Jeet Rai Hansda had been absconding

for Women, Sakshi, Jamshedpur, had written that animal sacrifice and eating beef were part of tribal festival Joher Dangri Maidan, and that this was a “cultural right of adivasis”.

As per court records, he had

also criticised the law against bovine slaughter and asked why tribals had to “live like Hindus”.

The Jamshedpur police had registered a case under IPC Sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups), 295A (deliberate act intended to hurt religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), and 505 (statements conducting public mischief), stating that Hansda’s post could spread “intolerance, enmity and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Cracks in Rajasthan Cong: Two Ministers take aim at Gehlot

MANOJ CGG
NEW DELHI, MAY 26

A DAY AFTER Rahul Gandhi referred to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, while speaking at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) about senior leaders who put the interests of their sons above that of the party during the Lok Sabha elections, two ministers of the Rajasthan Cabinet spoke out in support of the Congress president and demanded “introspection” and “accountability” in their state.

Cooperative Minister Udaylal Anjana told *The Indian Express* that there is “talk in the town that the Chief Minister (Gehlot) would have been able to work more in other constituencies had



CM Gehlot ‘needs to introspect’

he been free.” Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Ramesh Chand Meena warned that the defeat “should not be taken lightly”.

In a repeat of 2014, the Congress failed to notch a single win in Rajasthan this time. The BJP won 24 seats and its poll ally Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) claimed one.

On Saturday, it is learnt, Rahul Gandhi referred to Gehlot, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Results in, first overture to BJP by Karnataka rebels

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, MAY 26

TWO KARNATAKA Congress MLAs identified as rebels met BJP leader S M Krishna on Sunday at his residence, in the presence of senior leader R Ashok, in a sign of the revival of the party’s efforts to dislodge the Congress-JD(S) coalition government in Karnataka.

Ramesh Jharkiholi and K Sudhakar are among the seven-eight MLAs identified in the Congress as being opposed to JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy continuing as the Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Both Jharkiholi and Sudhakar claimed that their visit to Krishna—a former Congress CM—was a courtesy call and not a political meeting. “We wanted to

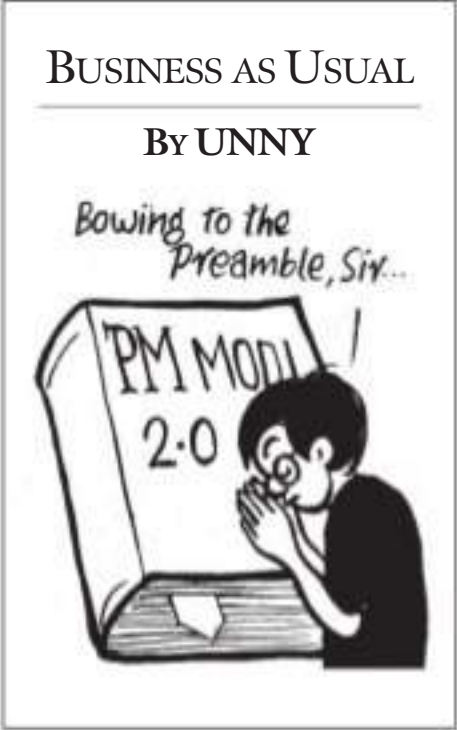
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

A TRANSFIGURED INDIA AWAITS US

BY ASHUTOSH VARSHNEY

PAGE 10



Advocate held in Dabholkar killing also being probed by Karnataka SIT in Lankesh case

JOHNSON T A & SUSHANT KULKARNI
BENGALURU, PUNE, MAY 26

AN ADVOCATE linked to the radical right-wing Sanatan Sanstha outfit who has been arrested by the CBI in connection with the August 2013 murder of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar in Pune is also a person of interest to the Karnataka SIT investigating the September 2017 murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh in Bengaluru.

The SIT’s investigations have found that advocate Sanjeev Punalekar ordered the destruction of the 765 mm country-made gun used to murder Lankesh.



Adv Sanjiv Punalekar being brought to Pune court by the CBI officials on Sunday. *Pavan Khengre*

A man arrested in the Lankesh and Dabholkar cases, Sharad Kalaskar, is said to have

revealed in the course of investigations that he was instructed to destroy the guns used for the

murders by Punalekar, following the arrest of key members of the Sanatan Sanstha by the SIT in May 2018.

Seeking the remand of Punalekar on Sunday, the CBI also told a Pune court that he had instructed Kalaskar to dismantle the firearms used in Lankesh’s murder. The agency also claimed that Vikram Bhawe, a Sanatan Sanstha member arrested along with Punalekar, not only helped Dabholkar’s killers do reconnaissance but also told them about the escape routes to use after the killing.

According to a statement given to the SIT by Kalaskar, which is part of the 9,235-page

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Waste dump near Kochi home of new rice brand

A collective of 17 young men revives discarded paddy fields

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

SHAJU PHILIP
ALUVA, MAY 26

FROM CONSTRUCTION to engineering and IT, they came from different backgrounds, united by a passion for farming, and a dream to do good. Today, these 17 young men are the heroes of an entire panchayat beyond the outer edge of Kochi.

Guided by Kerala’s agriculture department and scientists, they toiled for three years to convert nearly 50 acres of stinking garbage land that had eaten up the fading paddy fields of Choomnikkara in Aluva into the lush green home of a



The reclaimed land in Aluva. *Shaju Philip*

new rice brand. They call it Choomnikkara rice.

This transformation, which includes a small park with benches overlooking the fields, has also helped improve the life of local residents and even the

quality of water in their wells.

Until these men came together to start Adayalam, a self-help group, residents say urbanisation had been engulfing Choomnikkara, with municipal towns on three sides, leaving



only about 200 of the 350 acres of fields suitable for cultivation. And with farmers shifting to other sources of income in rapidly growing Kochi, the paddy fields of Choomnikkara slowly became a ground for dumping waste.

“When the Kochi Metro acquired the paddy fields for its yard, they gave Rs 1.01 lakh for one cent of land. Many landowners then started leaving their land barren, expecting further acquisition. They were no longer interested in cultivation.

We approached the land-owners, seeking their consent to hand over their fields to our group,” says Ansar P M, 34, who hails from Choomnikkara, like many others in the group, and is the face of the initiative.

“In 2016-17, we got 15 acres of land on lease from 40 owners for cultivation, and the sanction and subsidy from the agriculture department. The major task was waste removal. We had to spend Rs 10 lakh just to get the fields cleared of waste dumped over the years,” he says.

Soon, others began to take note — and extend a helping hand.

Says Dr N K Sasidharan, a scientist who retired from the Kerala Agricultural University: “They did not have any idea about cultivation. But they diligently followed our advice on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2