



on Sunday



**PDP leader Naeem Akhtar booked under stringent PSA**  
page 10



**Thai soldier kills 20 in shooting rampage inside shopping mall**  
page 12



**Jamieson makes a grand debut as Kiwis seal ODI series**  
page 17

**India takes on Bangladesh in u-19 World Cup final**  
page 17



PRINTED AT - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - BENGALURU - HYDERABAD - MADURAI - NOIDA - VISAKHAPATNAM - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - KOCHI - VIJAYAWADA - MANGALURU - TIRUCHIRAPPALLI - KOLKATA - HUBBALLI - MOHALI - MALAPPURAM - MUMBAI - TIRUPATI - LUCKNOW - CUTTACK - PATNA



**Two killed in cracker explosion in Punjab**  
CHANDIGARH  
Two persons were killed and nine injured when firecrackers loaded in a tractor trolley exploded during a religious procession in Tarn Taran district of Punjab on Saturday. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has asked the SDM to conduct a thorough inquiry.

**NATION** ▶ PAGE 9

**Kamal Nath warns RSS workers of legal action**  
BHOPAL  
Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath on Saturday warned RSS workers of legal action if they went ahead with their plan to "coerce" the tribals of the State into declaring themselves Hindus during the 2021 census. "I'll not allow the RSS to go ahead with its plan, at any cost."

**NEWS** ▶ PAGE 10

**One dead as three-storey building collapses**  
CHANDIGARH  
One person died while three were rescued from the debris of a three-storey building that collapsed on Saturday in Kharar town of Mohali district in Punjab, the police said. "The building came down when a JCB machine was digging an adjacent plot," said Mohali SSP Kuldeep Singh Chahal.

**NORTH** ▶ PAGE 7

**GS PRELIMS**  
70+ Qs. Assured  
10 Red Books  
crack IAS 921-70707  
crackIAS.com

**CLASSIFIEDS** ▶ PAGES 6 & 7  
**MAGAZINE** ▶ 12 PAGES



**In the grip of fear:** People wearing masks leaving a subway station in Hong Kong. • AP

## Coronavirus death toll in China rises to 722

Nearly 35,000 people infected globally

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
BEIJING  
The death toll from the novel coronavirus outbreak soared to 722 in China on Saturday, including the first foreign victim, as Hong Kong imposed a mandatory quarantine on mainland arrivals to block the spread of an epidemic that has caused global panic.  
With 86 more people dying in mainland China – the highest one-day jump so far – the toll was closing in on the 774 killed worldwide during the 2002-03 SARS epidemic.  
A 60-year-old U.S. citizen, diagnosed with the virus, died on Thursday in Wuhan, the city at the epicentre of the health emergency, according to the U.S. Embassy, which did not provide more details about the person.  
China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement to AFP that the victim was a U.S. ci-

# Exit polls predict AAP's return in Delhi

Voting peaceful but turnout dips to 61.67%; Shaheen Bagh bucks trend with large numbers

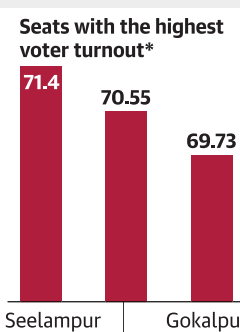
**JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ**  
NEW DELHI  
Delhi's reported voter turnout declined to 61.67 on Saturday, from the 67.13% recorded in the 2015 Assembly election.

Polling passed off peacefully despite the run-up to the election witnessing several vitriolic campaign speeches and three incidents of firing at anti-CAA protest sites. Union Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur was barred from campaigning for three days for exhorting "traitors" to be shot.

As polling began, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal made a request to women voters to go out and vote. "Just as you shoulder the responsibility at home, likewise, the responsibility of the country and Delhi is on your shoulders. Also take the men in your family out to vote and discuss with them who is the right person to vote for," he tweeted. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who spearheaded the BJP's campaign, appealed on Twitter to the people of Delhi to

**Back with a bang** Exit polls predicted that the AAP would cross the majority mark of 36 seats, and the BJP would improve on its 2015 tally

Source	AAP	BJP+	CONG+
India Today Axis	59-68	2-11	0
Times Now-Ipsos	47	23	0
ABP News-C Voter	51-65	3-17	0-3
TV9 Bharat-varsh-Cicero	54	15	1
Republic TV-Jan Ki Baat	48-61	9-21	0-1



\*As of 10.20 p.m. on Saturday

vote to "free Delhi from lies and vote bank politics". At the New Delhi constituency, President Ram Nath Kovind, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were among those who voted. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra cast her vote along with her son Rehan, a first-time voter.

**Protests continue**  
Voters in Shaheen Bagh, the epicentre of anti-CAA protests, turned up in large num-

bers to exercise their franchise. With Shaheen Bagh being used as a punching bag by the BJP during the bruising campaign, several voters present outside polling stations said that it was time for the Hindu-Muslim discourse to end. In a bid to ensure that the Shaheen Bagh dharna continued, women protesters took turns to vote, with some arriving after spending the entire night at the protest site while others headed

there soon after casting their vote. There was heavy presence of paramilitary forces in the Okhla constituency as Shaheen Bagh had been declared a "critical" area by the Chief Electoral Officer. A 50-year-old polling officer on duty in northeast Delhi's Babarpur reportedly died of a heart attack after he fell sick at the polling station, an hour before voting began.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10

## BJP likely to gain over 2015 tally

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is all set to return to power for another term with a big win, based on the projections of all major exit polls.

The counting of votes will take place on February 11.

A poll of polls done by NDTV showed AAP winning 56 of the 70 seats, a drop from its tally of 67 seats in 2015, while the BJP was projected to win 14 seats, a jump from the three seats won by the party in the last Assembly election.

The Congress's bad run in the national capital was expected to continue with the poll of polls showing the party drawing a blank.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10



**Warm welcome:** Sri Lankan PM Mahinda Rajapaksa with PM Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Saturday. • V.V. KRISHNAN

## Modi flags Tamil concerns to Mahinda

Sri Lankan PM remains non-committal

**SUHASINI HAIDAR**  
NEW DELHI

Sri Lanka wants India to allow debt repayments by Colombo to be deferred for three years, visiting Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said, in order to help the country deal with its massive debt burden. The issue was at the top of the agenda when Mr. Rajapaksa met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi on Saturday and discussed plans to utilise a \$400 million Line of Credit extended by India.

Speaking to the media after their bilateral talks at Hyderabad House, Mr. Modi said he had raised the issue of post-LTTE war reconciliation with Sri Lanka's Tamil population.

**Under 13th Amendment**  
"I am confident that the Government of Sri Lanka will realise the expectations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace, and respect within a united Sri Lanka. For this, it will be necessary to carry forward the process of reconciliation with the implementation of the 13th Amendment to the

Constitution of Sri Lanka," Mr. Modi said.

However, in an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, Mr. Rajapaksa gave no firm commitment on the way forward for the 13th amendment, which prescribes the devolution of powers to the Tamil minority north and eastern provinces, and ruled out any resolution that was not acceptable to the "majority community" of Sri Lanka.

Once parliamentary elections are completed in April this year, which his party is expected to win, the government plans to hold provincial elections, and engage with whomever the Tamil population chooses, he added. "We want to go forward, but we need to have someone to discuss, who can take responsibility for the [Tamil] areas. So the best thing is to hold elections, and then ask for their representatives to come and discuss the future with us," Mr. Rajapaksa said.

**CONTINUED ON** ▶ PAGE 10  
**'WE CAN CONVINCE OTHERS TOO'** ▶ PAGE 11

## AAP, BJP leaders locked in war of words

Manoj Tiwari says Kejriwal insulted Hinduism; god belongs to all, says Delhi Chief Minister

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

As the people of Delhi stepped out of their homes to vote on Saturday, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and BJP Delhi president Manoj Tiwari sparred on Twitter over the Chief Minister's temple visit. Mr. Tiwari stated that Mr. Kejriwal "insulted" the Hindu religion.

The AAP chief hit back, saying god belongs to everyone and may god bless all,

including those of the BJP. "Look at the truth of the Hanuman devotee Kejriwal... The garlands of flowers were offered to Baba with which he removed his shoes! You insult Hinduism, Arvind Kejriwal," Mr. Tiwari said in a tweet of a video, in which Mr. Kejriwal is seen entering a temple. "Ever since I read Hanuman Chalisa on a TV channel, people from BJP have been constantly mocking me.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. • PTI

Yesterday I went to the Hanuman temple. Today BJP lead-

ers are saying that the temple was defiled by me going there. What kind of politics is this? God belongs to everyone. May God bless everyone, even people from BJP," Mr. Kejriwal said in response.

**Sanjay Singh's charge**  
Hitting out at the BJP, AAP MP Sanjay Singh said, "The BJP considers Arvind Kejriwal an untouchable. Manoj Tiwari has said 'Kejriwal de-

filed Bajrangbali by worshipping Hanumanji.' Why so much hatred? I appeal to the people of Delhi to give a reply to the BJP, which considers your son an untouchable." Mr. Kejriwal and Union Minister Smriti Irani also got into a war of words on Twitter on Saturday over his tweet urging women to discuss with men about the right person to vote for.

**MORE REPORTS ON** ▶ PAGES 4 & 5

## Aurangabad therapist makes Ironman triathlon history

Dalal is first wholly visually-challenged man to finish event

**JHELUM BHATTACHARYA**  
MUMBAI

Niket Dalal, a 38-year-old from Aurangabad, created history on Friday by becoming the first completely visually-challenged athlete to finish an Ironman triathlon.

Associated with Adventures Beyond Barriers Foundation (ABBF), Mr. Dalal completed the gruelling Ironman 70.3 – consisting of a 1.9 km swim, a 90 km bicycle ride and a 21.1 km run – with assistance from his sighted companion, Arham Shaikh.

Mr. Shaikh is the youngest Indian to finish the 5000 km coast-to-coast cross-country race in the U.S.

"The first Indian achieved an Ironman finish in 2005. Till 2020, we had no disabled athlete to have completed the race. I believe if we have to work towards complete inclusivity, this huge gap of 15 years needs to be bridged and this is one of the major reasons why I did this," Mr. Dalal said.

Mr. Dalal and Mr. Shaikh completed the race in seven hours and 44 minutes, with 46 mins to spare. They stood second in their category of physically disabled athletes, and were the first Indian team to finish an Ironman 70.3 triathlon.

Mr. Dalal, a professional speech therapist, participated as part of a team from the Pune-based PowerPeaks Athlete Lab, which is found-



**Proving his mettle:** Niket Dalal celebrating after completing the Ironman 70.3 race. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ed by coach and pro-athlete Chaitanya Velhal. Mr. Velhal has been racing as well as training participants for triathlons, cycling races and marathons for the last five years.

**Rigorous training**

"It took a lot of detailed training, endurance and fitness assessments and diet planning to bring Niket up to the training required. The first leg of the race required Niket and Arham to complete the entire swim course while being tethered together. Swimming together for 1.9 km in the open sea with hundreds of other athletes, while trying to keep to the course was extremely challenging," Mr. Velhal said.

"This was followed by a quick transition to the 90 km bike ride, where the rid-

ers faced heavy winds and dehydration but there were special aid stations set up. The most exhausting segment was the 21.1 km run. The temperatures were soaring and the landscape was difficult, but they conquered with strength and flair," the coach said.

Mr. Shaikh added, "Both of us trained hard under Mr. Velhal for the last four months, continuously refining and improving upon our skill-set for the huge task facing us."

Always having had a passion for sports, Mr. Dalal has been a State-level swimmer and has participated in and won many sea swimming competitions. He took up cycling as a sport last year and completed the gruelling Manali to Khardungala cycling expedition in August 2019.

### PES UNIVERSITY

ADMISSIONS 2020



- BTech (CS, ECE, Mech, EEE, BT & Civil) LAW (Honours)
  - BArch BDes BBA/MBA MCA BBA Hospitality & Event Management
  - BCom/MCom MTech MS/PhD B/M/Pharm/D
- For full list of programs, check [www.pes.edu/programs](http://www.pes.edu/programs)

## PESSAT

REGISTER TODAY  
[www.pes.edu/pessat](http://www.pes.edu/pessat)

ALL INDIA ONLINE ENTRANCE EXAM FOR ADMISSION TO PES UNIVERSITY

- PESU Scholarships**  
40% tuition fee waiver for the Top 20% of students. Over ₹ 25 Crore merit scholarships given till date.  
[pes.edu/scholarships](http://pes.edu/scholarships)
- Flexible Curriculum**  
BTech Major/Minor and MTech Integrated Program  
[pes.edu/btech](http://pes.edu/btech)
- Research Driven Learning**  
[pes.edu/research](http://pes.edu/research)
- International Internships**  
[pes.edu/summer](http://pes.edu/summer)

#1 University in Karnataka (New Universities Under 5 Years) - KSURF

### INFO SESSION FEB 16

JOIN US FOR A SESSION TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PES UNIVERSITY & PESSAT. SUNDAY 4 PM

+91 80 2672 9391 / 9449794000 [pessat@pes.edu](mailto:pessat@pes.edu), [admissions@pes.edu](mailto:admissions@pes.edu)