

News Brief

Two CRPF jawans injured in blast in Bijapur

Raipur, April 19 (IANS) At least two jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) deployed on poll duty in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district were reported injured after a shell of Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) exploded, a police official said. The incident occurred in Galgam village under the Usor police station area when a team of security personnel was out on an area domination operation on Friday. As per the information, the blast occurred around 500 metres from a polling booth, injuring two security men. Bijapur district falls in the Maoist-hit Bastar Lok Sabha constituency where voting is underway in the first phase of general elections.

30 injured in accident on Capri ferry in Naples

Capri, April 19 (IANS) Around 30 people were injured in a collision on a ferry sailing to the Italian mainland from the Mediterranean island of Capri on Friday, rescue officials said. The exact course of events was initially unclear. According to reports, the high-speed Isola di Procida collided with the dock upon arrival in the city of Naples, Xinhua news agency reported.

The meeting of the foreign ministers of the Group of Seven (G7) economically strong democracies has been under way on Capri in the Gulf of Naples since Wednesday.

7 killed in fire in Indonesia's Jakarta

Jakarta April 19 (IANS) Seven people were killed in a fire at a frame shop house on Mampang Prapatan Raya Street in Indonesia's capital city Jakarta, according to police.

"There are five adults and two children who were found in a warehouse on the second floor," said Mampang Police Chief Commissioner David Kanitero, adding that all the bodies have been evacuated on Friday, Xinhua news agency reported.

5.7-magnitude quake hits southeast of the Loyalty Islands

Beijing, April 19 (IANS) An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.7 jolted southeast of the Loyalty Islands at 0918 GMT on Friday, the U.S. Geological Survey said. The epicenter, with a depth of 79.5 km, was initially determined to be at 21.93 degrees south latitude and 170.89 degrees east longitude, Xinhua news agency reported.

One killed in Russian Tu-22M3 plane crash

Moscow, April 19 (IANS) A crew member of the Russian strategic bomber died when the aircraft crashed in the Krasnogvardeyskiy district of the Stavropol Territory, regional governor Vladimir Vladimirov said on social media Friday. Updated information has been received on the incident. Unfortunately, the third crew member died. The search for the fourth pilot continues, he wrote, Xinhua news agency reported. The Tu-22M3 long-range supersonic missile carrier bomber is designed to destroy sea- and ground-based targets by guided missiles and aerial bombs.

BJP expecting its 'best show in South': Shah

New Delhi, April 19 (IANS) As the first phase of General Elections began for 102 Lok Sabha constituencies across 21 states and Union Territories, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was expecting its best-ever performance in South India in the polls.

The Union Home Minister, speaking exclusively to NDTV, said that he feels that the party was headed for its "best show in Southern states".

"We will have a strong result in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana and Karnataka. On the back of PM Modi's increasing popularity, we will get more votes and seats in South India, for the first time." He also cited the increase in BJP's vote share between 2014 and 2019 and said that party's outreach in South will help open accounts in some and better vote percentage in others.

His statement echoes popular political perception that the BJP is slated for strong inroads in Southern states including Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The minister also filed his nomination papers from Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency on Friday

and appealed to the voters to elect the Modi government for a third term. Speaking to NDTV after filing nominations, the Union Home Minister rejected Congress's charges of receiving "forced" political donations via electoral bonds and said that the grand old party was the biggest beneficiary. "Concerning Congress and BJP MPs ratio to the Electoral bonds, the former got the highest donations. Congress got about Rs 9,000 crore donations while BJP received just Rs 6,600 crore," he said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ten years of governance remain unblemished and there has not been a single case of corruption. A concerted campaign is being run against him to spread canard and fan false propaganda," he added.

He also reiterated the government's zero tolerance policy on Maoism.

He slammed Congress for calling the recent Bastar encounter "fake", in which 29 ultras were neutralised by the forces and said, "When Congress government was in power, no action happened on Maoists but our government has cracked down on them."

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HARIDWAR, Specially abled voters showing their voters identity cards while waiting in queue to cast their franchise for the Lok Sabha election -2024 during the first phase of election at a polling station, in Haridwar on Friday.UNI

'Beauty of Indian democracy': Women officers dominate polling in Puducherry's Mahe region

Chennai, April 19 (IANS) Showcasing the spirit of the Indian democracy, all the polling process in the Mahe region of the Union Territory of Puducherry is being dominated and controlled by women.

Mahe has 31,000 voters and has 31 polling booths which are dominated and controlled by women polling officers.

The Mahe province is geographically situated in Kerala and borders Thalassery in the Kannur district and Vadakara in the Kozhikode district of Kerala. As per the Mahe administration, a total of 140 women polling officers have been deployed for

the smooth conduct of elections in the region. Each polling booth has four officers including a Presiding Officer (PO) and three Polling Officers (POs).

Around 124 women polling officers are on duty while 16 women officers have been put on standby in the constituency.

Interestingly, the police officers on duty at the booths are also women. Each booth has two women police officers.

Sreekala, a voter in Pandakkal, Mahe told IANS that all women polling booths in the Mahe region make them proud.

"This is the beauty of Indian democracy. Women

controlling the entire polling process including law and order is a novel experience," Sreekala told IANS.

In the Lok Sabha elections for the lone seat in Puducherry, Congress leader and former Chief Minister of Puducherry V. Vaithilingam is seeking re-election.

Former Puducherry State Congress President, A. Nammavayam who switched to BJP and is presently the Home Minister of the Union Territory is contesting against Vaithilingam.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Vaithilingam won the seat by a margin of 1,97, 025 votes.

Violence erupts in Bengal's Cooch Behar as TMC and BJP workers clash

Kolkata April 19 (IANS) The polling in the first two hours for three Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal on Friday was marred by incidents of violence in the Cooch Behar Lok Sabha constituency. Some cases of violence were reported from Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha constituency as well. Alipurduar, however, was an exception, with no report of poll-related violence in the first two hours. Till 9 a.m. the polling percentage was 15.09, as per the records of the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

The maximum polling percentage was recorded at Alipurduar at 15.91, followed by Cooch Behar at 15.26 per cent and Jalpaiguri at 14.13. Although ECI has deployed as many as 112 companies of CAPF personnel in Cooch Behar, the effectiveness of their deployment is being questioned. The reports of inter-party clashes, burning down and ransacking of rival party offices and serious injuries to some party activists and that too in the first two hours of polling in the first phase were being reported.

The maximum reports of violence have been reported from the Chandamari area in Cooch Behar. Tension mounted over the assault on BJP's booth president, Lob Sarkar, who was hospitalised with severe head injuries. Similarly, a Trinamool Congress worker also received serious head injuries following stone-pelting between BJP and Trinamool Congress activists. Similar tension prevailed in the Rajakhora area and also in Cooch Behar. The area witnessed attacks and counter-attacks between

the ruling and opposition party activists following which the temporary camp offices of both Trinamool Congress and BJP were ransacked. Reports also surfaced that a temporary party office of Trinamool Congress at Sitalkuchi also in Cooch Behar was burnt down allegedly by the local BJP supporters. Similarly, tension prevailed in the Dabgram-Phulbari area under the Jalpaiguri Lok Sabha constituency after a booth office of the BJP was completely gutted allegedly by the ruling Trinamool Congress activists.

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HARIDWAR, Security personnel keeping vigil during the first phase of Lok Sabha election -2024 at a polling station, in Haridwar on Friday.UNI

Pak-born Bangladeshi national held in Tripura with Indian documents

Agartala, April 19 (IANS) A 25-year-old man was arrested in Tripura while attempting to cross into Bangladesh illegally, officials said here on Friday, adding that he claimed to be a Pakistani-born Bangladeshi national who had travelled across India.

The official said the youth, named Ayan Alam was detained by border villagers at Jalefa in South Tripura district on Thursday night and was handed over to the police later.

Alam's mobile phone, a few thousand rupees and some Indian documents, including an Aadhaar card, were recovered from his possession. The documents were being examined to corroborate the truth of his confession and his Pakistan connection, the official told the media.

"During interrogation, the detainee said that he was a Pakistan-born Bangladeshi citizen. Thorough interrogation revealed that he was from Mayarampur village of Brahmanbaria district of Bangladesh," the official said.

Alam confessed that his parents had shifted

from Bangladesh to Pakistan 25 years ago and he was born in Pakistan, the official said. Quoting the youth, the official added that the Pakistani authorities had taken action against his family due to the non-availability of valid documents and Ayan's father returned to Bangladesh with him in 2011. His mother, four brothers and four sisters, however, stayed back in Pakistan.

The youth claimed that recently he had gone to Kashmir and had unsuccessfully tried to cross into Pakistan.

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Love jihad spreading, take care of your girls: K'taka Cong Corporator and father of murder victim

Hubballi, (Karnataka) April 19 (IANS) Niranjan Hiremath, the Congress Corporator and father of MCA student Neha Hiremath who was killed on Thursday, stated on Friday that love jihad was spreading rapidly.

The bereaved father also made an appeal to mothers to take care of their college-going daughters.

Answering a question by the media on any agenda behind the murder, Niranjan Hiremath stated, "Yes. Incidents are taking place on these lines. When we see incidents around us, brutality is on the rise. I don't know why these youngsters are taking the wrong path and have such a mindset."

He added, "Our demand is that no girl should undergo this trauma. I feel that 'Love Jihad' is spreading rapidly. I appeal to all mothers, if you are sending your daughters to college, you should also go with them and ensure that no one is following them."

Presiding officer suspended for sharing pics

Bhopal, April 19 (IANS) A presiding officer in the Jabalpur Lok Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh was suspended on Friday after he clicked photographs inside a polling booth and shared them on WhatsApp.

Ratan Dagar was on duty at a polling station in the Panagar Assembly segment under the Jabalpur parliamentary constituency.

As per official sources, Dagar clicked photographs inside the polling booth and shared them on WhatsApp, which is a violation of the election rules.

Meanwhile, 45 per cent voter turnout was recorded till 1 p.m. in the six Lok Sabha constituencies where polling is being held in the first phase on Friday -- Chhindwara, Balaghat, Mandla, Sidhi, Shahdol, and Jabalpur.

Logistics man of Lawrence Bishnoi syndicate nabbed in Delhi

New Delhi, April 19 (IANS) A 20-year-old member of the Lawrence Bishnoi syndicate was arrested for allegedly providing logistic support to the gang after receiving instructions from its leaders, an official said on Friday.

Police said that they have also recovered seven stolen bikes from the possession of the accused, identified as Sunny a.k.a Prince, a resident of Katewara, which were meant to be supplied to gang members to execute the crime.

According to police, on April 14, specific input was received regarding the movement of an active gang member of the Lawrence Bishnoi, Kala Rana and Kapil Mann gangs in the Bawana area.

"A raid was conducted and Sunny was nabbed. When frisked, a loaded single-shot country-made pistol and two live cartridges were recovered from his possession," said the Deputy Commissioner of Police (outer-north) Ravi Kumar Singh.

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Empowers rural community, says Anurag Thakur on Himachal village getting mobile connectivity

Shimla, April 19 (IANS) Connecting Himachal Pradesh's remote hamlets with mobile connectivity for the first time means opening doors to a world of opportunities, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur said on Friday.

Responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's hearty talk with villagers of Spiti, which got connected to the rest of the country via telecom network for the first time, Minister Thakur in a post on X wrote, "I express my gratitude to the Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodi ji for bringing mobile connectivity to the village of Giu, Spiti in Himachal Pradesh for the first time."

"It not only bridges the digital divide but also empowers rural communities, opening doors to a world of opportunities. Listen to the interesting interaction between the Hon'ble PM and the villagers," said the Minister. The occasion was marked by PM Modi dialling villagers of Gue with whom he had a heart-warming conversation. Elated and ecstatic over their 'new-found connectivity', the villagers expressed their gratitude to PM Modi, saying, "Thank you for connecting us to the world."

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KOHIMA, A polling official administering indelible ink to a voter, at a polling booth, during the 1st Phase of General Elections-2024 at Kohima, in Nagaland on Friday.UNI

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