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To pursue or abandon? India's options after the yet again China blow on Azhar listing as global terrorist



(News Track) Indians hold a scratched photo of Jaish-e-Mohammad group chief, Maulana Masood Azhar, as they shout slogans against Pakistan during a protest in Mumbai on February 15, 2019, the day after the Pulwama attack. China's 'hold' doesn't automatically kill the current proposal to list Azhar. Despite weeks of a diplomatic campaign after the Pulwama terror attack, China's decision to place a "hold" on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) listing of Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist has come as a setback to India. It will force New Delhi to reconsider its strategy on the issue and consider various options and priorities in the weeks ahead. Among those options are whether to continue to pursue the Azhar issue with China, to abandon the effort, or to lobby other UNSC members to try and change the veto system entirely, say various experts. To begin with, China's 'hold' doesn't automatically kill the current proposal to list Azhar as a global terrorist. China can maintain it for up to six months, according to the guidelines of the 1267 ISIL and Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee (Article 4(j)&k). After that, it can request one extension for up to three months. This means, if India chooses to pursue the issue, it could use the time to convince China of the importance of the move. Two decade-old effort. Clearly, this is easier said than done: the effort to list Azhar as a "Qaida Designated Individual (QDI)" is nearly two decades old, and China has not

budgeted on its position on Azhar once, even as it has allowed the listing of more than a dozen other terror groups and leaders based in Pakistan. China's opposition also comes despite the fact that the original listing of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) of 17 October 2001 specifically mentions Azhar as its founder, who raised funds from Osama bin Laden amongst others. However a diplomat engaged in negotiations with Beijing did tell The Hindu that this is "the closest that China has come to reconsidering the Azhar issue". 'Go for a more transactional approach'. If the Government of India wishes to make China change its stand, it must consider a more transactional approach, says former Ambassador to China and Pakistan Gautam Bambawale, who advocates identifying issues at the U.N., where China will want India's support or that of the U.S., the U.K. and France in return. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Wuhan summit with President Xi Jinping has failed to move China to align its position on terrorism to India's thus far, another opportunity will come for India when Mr. Xi travels to New Delhi for the next informal summit expected shortly after the general election. Still others suggest that India should work with other UNSC members to ensure that China is unable to stop the listing process as it has been able to do in the past four attempts to list Azhar. "The time has come to focus on the veto power of China in the UNSC being used cynically to oppose global counter terrorism measures," said Asoke Mukerji, former Indian Ambassador to the United Nations. He advocated that the UN General Assembly resolution on five areas of UNSC reform, including the question of veto, be

tabled now, especially in cases where the vast majority is held up by one or two members. Something similar may have been hinted at by a U.S. diplomat at the Security Council. He expressed some frustration at the end of the fortnight's efforts by the U.S. to convince China on the Azhar question. "If China continues to block this designation, responsible member-states may be forced to pursue other actions at the Security Council. It shouldn't have to come to that," he warned. Another track advocated by some is to shelve the Azhar plan entirely, and direct India's diplomatic efforts towards effecting real actions by Pakistan against terror groups. After all, Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed remains a free man 10 years after he was added to the list after the Mumbai 26/11 attacks. India will face a review of its actions at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and many say India's diplomatic efforts will be better employed in keeping the focus on those actions, which would include changing Pakistan's anti-terror laws to allow the prosecution of leaders like Azhar and Saeed, ensuring both and their groups are unable to address public rallies, or collect funds as they have been able to do until quite recently, and to see what the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) calls "credible, verifiable and sustained" actions to shut down the terror camps and other infrastructure inside Pakistan. China's role in this would be important, as its investments have the most to gain from the permanent shutting down of these groups. At the UNSC, India could also continue to pursue the listings of other leaders, and return to the question of Azhar at a later date.

UNSC may seek other possible action if China continues blocking Azhar listing as global terrorist: diplomat

(Day Today) In the aftermath of the Pulwama terrorist attack, three permanent members of Security Council — the US, France and the UK — had moved a resolution to designate Azhar a global terrorist. Pictured is a UNSC meeting. China on Tuesday placed a technical hold on the listing request for Azhar at the UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee. Outraged by China blocking for the fourth time a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) move to designate Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad's (JeM) leader Masood Azhar a global terrorist, Council members have warned that they "may be forced to pursue other actions" if Beijing continued with this policy. China on Tuesday placed a technical hold on the listing request for Azhar at the UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee. There is an "undeniable" case for listing Azhar as a global terrorist, according to a Security Council diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Pakistan has quite often depended on China to protect it from the listing of Pakistan-based terrorist groups and individuals in the UN 1267 sanctions committee. The case for designating Masood Azhar — the leader of a group the UN already calls an Al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist organisation — is undeniable," the diplomat said via an email statement. Rahul Gandhi targets PM Modi on Masood Azhar issue. Fourth time China has placed a hold on the listing. "This is the fourth time that China has placed a hold on this listing. China should not prevent the Committee from doing the job the Security Council has entrusted it to do. China's move to hold the listing is inconsistent with its own stated goals of combatting terrorism and furthering regional stability in South Asia. If China is serious about these goals, it should not protect terrorists from Pakistan or any other country from being held accountable to the Council," the statement said. The diplomat also warned of other possible actions at the UNSC should China continue to block Azhar's designation. "If China continues to block this designation, responsible member states may be forced to pursue other actions at the Security Council. It shouldn't have to come to that," he said. In the aftermath of the Pulwama terrorist attack on February 14 last that claimed



the lives of more than 40 CRPF personnel, three permanent members of Security Council — the United States, France and the United Kingdom — had moved a resolution to designate

Azhar as a global terrorist. Except for China, which wields veto power in the Council, all other members were on board with the move before the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee

. India has expressed disappointment over China's decision but said it will "pursue all available avenues" to bring to justice terrorist leaders involved in attack on Indians.

Sehwag declined BJP's offer to contest polls citing personal reasons, says Delhi BJP leader

(Day Today) Gautam Gambhir is "serious" regarding making a foray into politics and may contest the polls from Delhi. Former India cricketer Virender Sehwag has declined the BJP's offer to contest the Lok Sabha polls on party ticket citing personal reasons, a top leader of its Delhi unit said. He, however, asserted that Sehwag's former teammate Gautam Gambhir is "serious" regarding making a foray into politics and may contest the polls from Delhi. Sehwag's name was under consideration for the West Delhi seat that is currently being held by BJP MP Parvesh Verma. But, Sehwag refused the offer citing personal reasons, the leader said. He said, "Sehwag said he was not interested in politics or contesting elections." In February, there were reports that Sehwag might contest the polls on BJP ticket from Rohtak in Haryana. But the former India opener had posted on Twitter, "Some things never change, like this rumour. Same in 2014, and no innovation even in Rumour in 2019. Not interested now. #Baat Khatam #5Year Challenge (sic)." In July



last year, Union Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari had met Sehwag as part of the party's 'Sampark for Samarthan' initiative, giving rise to speculations that he may join the saffron party. The top leader of the BJP's Delhi unit said, "Gambhir has started attending meetings in the run up to the Lok Sabha polls. He attended one such meeting organised by a resident welfare association in Defence Colony earlier this week." When contacted, Gambhir told PTI, "I have no clue of it. As of now, they are rumours." After Gambhir announced his retirement from all forms of cricket in December last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sent him a congratulatory letter for his contribution to the sport as well for his efforts to bring "positive difference in the lives of the lesser privileged." "When you announced retirement from all forms of cricket, you left several well wishers of yours disappointed. However,

Tom Vadakkan, key Sonia Gandhi aide, joins BJP

(Day Today) Former Congress leader Tom Vadakkan with Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad after joining the BJP, in New Delhi on March 14, 2019. Attacks his former party's stand on the Pulwama terror attack and India's retaliatory air strike on Pakistan. Veteran Congress spokesperson Tom Vadakkan on Thursday joined the BJP in the presence of Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad in New Delhi. He met BJP president Amit Shah later. Mr. Vadakkan's induction into the BJP caused a big surprise as he had been known as a long-time loyalist of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi. He was a part of the first media committee set up by Ms. Gandhi in the late 1990s when she became the party president. Though not considered a political heavyweight, Mr. Vadakkan was considered a member of the All India Congress Committee inner circle in New Delhi. "Deeply hurt by Congress reaction after Pulwama terror attack", On joining the BJP, which he had consistently taken on when he was the Congress spokesperson, Mr. Vadakkan said he took the decision because he was upset over the way the Congress reacted after the Pulwama terrorist attack that claimed the lives of over 40 CRPF personnel on February 14 last. "I left the Congress party because when Pakistani terrorists attacked our land, my party's reaction to it was sad, and hurt me deeply. If a political party takes such a position that is against the country, then I'm left with no option but to leave that party," he said. Mr. Vadakkan alleged that there was a "use and throw" policy in the Congress, that there were multiple power centres in the party and that it was "blinded" by dynasty politics. Sources in the BJP said Mr. Vadakkan was keen on contesting the coming Lok Sabha election from Kerala — from Thrissur, Ernakulam or Idukki. The party has been working on a plan — in areas where the local units have not been able to come up with strong candidates with the appropriate community base, they have been



poaching at will from other parties. In Kerala, the BJP had made many overtures to the Syrian Christian Church and tried to form a joint front against the

alleged Islamic radicalisation of youth in Hindu and Christian communities. Just before Mr Vadakkan's entry, Trinamool Congress MLA from Bhatpara

Arjun Singh joined the BJP. He wanted to contest the Barackpore seat, but it was again given to former Union Minister Dinesh Trivedi.

Rafale documents cannot be produced in court without permission of dept. concerned, government tells SC

(News Track) A Rafale jet performing, during the AERO INDIA 2019 at IAF station Yelahanka, in Bengaluru. File. Hearing is on before a Bench headed by CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S.K. Kaul and K.M. Joseph. The Central government on Thursday claimed privilege over documents pertaining to the Rafale fighter jet deal and asserted that no one can produce them in the court without the permission of the department concerned. Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, appearing in the Supreme Court, referred to section 123 of the Evidence Act and provisions of the RTI Act to buttress his claim. The Central government on Thursday claimed privilege over documents pertaining to the Rafale fighter jet deal and asserted that no one can produce them in the court without the permission of the department concerned. The hearing is on before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S.K. Kaul and K.M. Joseph.



Editorial

Heavy-handed order: on contempt law

(Day Today) The Meghalaya High Court's order finding the Editor and Publisher of Shillong Times guilty of contempt, and asking them to "sit in a corner" till the rising of the court and imposing a fine of ₹2 lakh each, is a heavy-handed response to comments in the newspaper on the court's earlier orders. What makes the order even more unfortunate is the explicit threat to ban the newspaper and jail them if they fail to pay the fine. While courts are indeed empowered to decide whether a publication scandalised or tended to scandalise the judiciary or interfered with the administration of justice, there is no legal provision for an outright ban on it. The origin of these contempt proceedings appears to be the State government's unilateral decision to withdraw certain facilities to retired judges without consulting the court administration. After the matter was not resolved on the administrative side for two months, the court initiated suo motu proceedings and issued some directions. It was because of a news item, accompanied by a commentary on the court's directions, that the contemptors had incurred the court's displeasure. The offending comments appeared to imply that the directions regarding extending facilities, including protocol services and domestic help, and reimbursing communication bills up to ₹10,000 a month and a mobile phone worth ₹80,000, to retired judges amounted to "judges judging for themselves". It is a moot question whether the court ought to have taken umbrage at this remark or ignored it. It would serve the cause of preserving the dignity of the higher judiciary if overzealous comments made by activists or journalists were ignored. In 1999, the Supreme Court had brushed aside some adverse remarks by activists by saying, "the court's shoulders are broad enough to shrug off their comments." However, in the case of Patricia Mukhim, the Editor of Shillong Times, the court has made sweeping remarks that the newspaper had always attacked individuals and institutions, had published propaganda calling for bandhs and "was always working against judges and the judicial system". While courts are indeed empowered to decide whether a publication scandalised or tended to scandalise the judiciary or interfered with the administration of justice, there is no legal provision for an outright ban on it. The origin of these contempt proceedings appears to be the State government's unilateral decision to withdraw certain facilities to retired judges without consulting the court administration. After the matter was not resolved on the administrative side for two months, the court initiated suo motu proceedings and issued some directions. It was because of a news item, accompanied by a commentary on the court's directions, that the contemptors had incurred the court's displeasure. The offending comments appeared to imply that the directions regarding extending facilities, including protocol services and domestic help! The defence argued the court should frame specific charges before convicting them for contempt. However, the matter was tried summarily. While it is open to the court to try a case of contempt in a summary manner, the use of personalised views of the publication's past record to hand down the verdict puts a question mark over the decision-making process. While there may be a need to curb tendentious criticism of the judiciary and self-serving comments on ongoing proceedings in mainstream and social media, there is a compelling case to use the contempt law sparingly, and avoid the impression that it is being used to stifle free speech or dissent. Lenience, not anger, ought to be the primary response of a detached judiciary.

I avoid watching TV precisely to protect myself

(News Track) In the Golden Age, the air was clean, there were no traffic jams, and beef was available in plenty. How many of you have seen those commercials where 10-year-old 'adults' peddle life insurance? Or TV ads where suit-clad fake adult males with stuck-on moustaches and sari-clad fake adult females hawk everything from mutual funds to e-commerce? And having seen them, how many of you puked on the spot? I do, all the time. I personally don't believe in hell or heaven. But if I did, I would petition for a special place in hell for parents who let their children act as fake adults in ads. I avoid watching TV precisely to protect myself from inadvertent visual contact with ads, which tend to have a hyper-inflationary effect on my BP. But I do have an idiot box at home. As my father says, which idiot doesn't? But it's a 'smart' idiot box that has neither cable nor DTH — only YouTube. And you can't avoid ads on YouTube. Imagine you're living in a dictatorship of dinosaurs. Your supreme leader is a dinosaur, and your government is of the dinosaur, for the dinosaur, and by the dinosaur. What would TV be like in such a country? My home is that country. The 'smart TV' is used exclusively to play dinosaur videos for Kattabomman, who, at the ripe old age of 2.8 years, has already realised that civilisation on planet earth will never again scale the heights it did during the Jurassic Age. Those were the good old Acche Din! There was, of course, the terrifying Tyrannosaurus Rex, but there was also the gentle Diplodocus, and the graceful Pterodactyls. Most importantly, humans occupied their rightful place in the food chain. During the Dinosaur Era, the would-be humans were still wannabe-primates. In the evolutionary ladder, they had only reached a level slightly above cockroaches but below bandicoots. Had I been god, I would have capped their evolution right there. But I didn't exist back then, and humans ended up evolving to a level beyond their moral



competence. Today, they have become the biggest threat to planetary well-being that planetary well-being has ever faced. For about 170 million years, when the care and maintenance of the planet was in the hands of majestic dinosaur kings, all the world's species enjoyed peace, prosperity, and consistently high GDP growth. The air was clean, there were no traffic jams, and beef was available in plenty. This was the Golden Age, or the Satya Yuga that our Puranas talk about. And then, demonisation happened to dinosaurs, and humans took over. Though the humans were (and continue to be) physically small, their egos were 56 times the size of the largest dinosaurs. They believed they were the masters of all they surveyed, and that all the plants and all the animals, including cabinet ministers, cops, judges, and journal-

ists, were expressly created by god to serve their bidding. They destroyed every institution that had been lovingly and painstakingly built by Mother Nature over millennia. They either killed and displaced minority species, or locked them up in concentration camps. Vital institutions such as lakes, rivers, mountains, forests, and air met the same fate as the CBI, ED, RBI, CAG, EC, UGC, Rajya Sabha, and so on. The earth's constitution suffered the same atrocities that the Indian Constitution would suffer many millennia later. And now Mother Nature is seeking revenge. She is planning an epic surgical strike on humanity in the form of climate change. What has been humanity's response? To put a glass wall between itself and the world. This wall screens out what we don't want to see, which is why it's called a 'screen'. This

screen takes many forms — TV, laptop, iPad — but the most popular is the cell phone screen. What comes through the screen is a magnetic force that deactivates the critical faculties of the brain and keeps the human beings suspended like plankton in a sea of disinformation and non-information masquerading as 'content'. Of course, the origin of both disinformation and non-information is advertising, and what is advertising but the progenitor of fake news, created from 'facts' and 'authorities' that have been paid for? And having seen them, how many of you puked on the spot? I do, all the time. I personally don't believe in hell or heaven. But if I did, I would petition for a special place in hell for parents who let their children act as fake adults in ads. I avoid watching TV precisely to protect myself from inadvertent vi-

sual contact with ads, which tend to have a hyper-inflationary effect on my BP. But I do have an idiot box at home. As my father says, which idiot doesn't? But it's a 'smart' idiot box that has neither cable nor DTH — only YouTube. And you can't avoid ads on YouTube. Imagine you're living in a dictatorship of dinosaurs. Your supreme leader is a dinosaur, and your government is of the dinosaur, for the dinosaur, and by the dinosaur. What would TV be like in such a country? My home is that country. The 'smart TV' is used exclusively to play dinosaur videos for Kattabomman, who, at the ripe old age of 2.8 years, has already realised that civilisation on planet earth will never again scale the heights it did during the Jurassic Age. Those were the good old Acche Din! There was, of course, the terrifying Tyrannosaurus Rex, but there was also the gentle Diplodocus, and the graceful Pterodactyls. Most importantly, humans occupied their rightful place in the food chain. During the Dinosaur Era, the would-be humans were still wannabe-primates. In the evolutionary ladder, they had only reached a level slightly above cockroaches but below bandicoots. Had I been god, I would have capped their evolution right there. But I didn't exist back then, and humans ended up evolving to a level beyond their moral

competence. Today, they have become the biggest threat to planetary well-being that planetary well-being has ever faced. For about 170 million years, when the care and maintenance of the planet was in the hands of majestic dinosaur kings, all the world's species enjoyed peace, prosperity, and consistently high GDP growth. The air was clean, there were no traffic jams, and beef was available in plenty. This was the Golden Age, or the Satya Yuga that our Puranas talk about. And then, demonisation happened to dinosaurs, and humans took over. Though the humans were (and continue to be) physically small, their egos were 56 times the size of the largest dinosaurs. They believed they were the masters of all they surveyed, and that all the plants and all the animals, including cabinet ministers, cops, judges, and journalists, were expressly created by god to serve their bidding. They destroyed every institution that had been lovingly and painstakingly built by Mother Nature over millennia. However, one domain that has remained somewhat immune to commodified fakery is the imaginative world inside a child's head. Which is why it's revolting to have a child dressed as a fake adult giving fake adult reasoning to convince another fake adult about the fake merits of a fake financial product. It's like watching one chicken convince another chicken that the best place to hang out with other chickens is KFC. That is distasteful. So, excuse my strong feelings on this subject. At least my outrage is not fake.

Any art needs the patronage of the system

(Day Today) Fifty years in the industry, and the veteran actor has gone back to his first love, painting. When actor-filmmaker Amol Palekar tried to praise the Ministry of Culture for organising a retrospective last month, it was interpreted as a "backhanded compliment" by one of the hosts. "Their apprehension of criticism triggers the gagging and pre-empt what would follow... Good, bad, ugly," says Palekar, whose speech at the National Gallery of Modern Arts (NGMA) was rudely interrupted when he expressed concern that some advisory committees were being unilaterally disbanded and that two retrospectives had been cancelled. The actor thinks that what happened to him was just "one dot in the extended arrow aimed at suppressing the subversive text". "In the last four years, a definite, consistent pattern of interference with a specific agenda does emerge," says Palekar. "Any art needs the patronage of the system that ought to nurture, preserve and cherish it. The system ought to include the artist community as insiders and refrain from controlling them and their art. In our country, no matter which political party is in power, this abstinence is axed."



and any adverse move will attract action from the tax department, or police, or you will be labelled an urban naxal or you may be lynched — that is new. The silence now is overwhelmingly loud. "The veteran of over 50 films was last seen in a TV series in 2015, and says he has found consolation in the "blank canvas". "Very few know that I am a professional painter from J.J. School of Arts. Over the years, with the change in the filmmaking scenario, I have moved away. I stopped acting as I lost interest in it. Recently, I did accept an interesting role in a Hindi web series," Palekar, through his roles, made the mundanity of middle-class life likeable in the 1970s and 1980s. His ascent, which began in 1971, coincided with the reign of Amitabh Bachchan. Among the best 'meta' moments of Hindi cinema is in Gol Maal, when Ram Prasad, his character, is shown stealing the attention of the autograph-hunting schoolgirls as Amitabh Bachchan stares with a despondent look. (Incidentally, Palekar won the Filmfare Award for his role, outmanoeuvring Bachchan.) However, apart from these affable roles, Palekar also essayed negative characters, like that of

the obsessed lover in Agni Pareeksha. "After starting my career as hero in three silver jubilee hits — Rajnigandha, Chhoti Si Baat and Chitchor — I played a negative role in Shyam Benegal's Bhumika and a murderer in Khamosh. And, if I may point out, my loveable portrayal in Gharonda (and in a much less seen film Spandan) had quite a few negative shades. I tried to swim against the mainstream." Among Palekar's most frequent collaborators were filmmakers like Basu Chatterjee and Hrishikesh Mukherjee, who made 'middle-of-the-road' cinema. So, has the space for such cinema expanded with the arrival of streaming portals? "I think middle-of-the-road or parallel cinema of the 70s offered a different viable financial model that gave filmmakers the necessary breathing space to deal with the little problems of the common man. Their films chose not to be larger than life, not to be melodramatic, not to dazzle people, and yet were entertaining enough to get the audiences hooked. Digital cinema and online streaming portals have opened platforms that offer similar or even bigger freedom to young filmmakers." Palekar, who filmed Thoda Sa Roomani Ho

Jaayen entirely in verse — in a throwback to the Kaifi Azmi-scripted Heer Ranjha — has spoken the language of poetry rather than prose through most of his directorials. "I have always been fascinated by Hollywood's musical genre, which offers seamless narration from prose to free lyrics to music. West Side Story, The Sound of Music, My Fair Lady, Carmen, all these old classics. The aged Bollywood situations break into songs when in love, when in despair, while celebrating. "Their apprehension of criticism triggers the gagging and pre-empt what would follow... Good, bad, ugly," says Palekar, whose speech at the National Gallery of Modern Arts (NGMA) was rudely interrupted when he expressed concern that some advisory committees were being unilaterally disbanded and that two retrospectives had been cancelled. The actor thinks that what happened to him was just "one dot in the extended arrow aimed at suppressing the subversive text". "In the last four years, a definite, consistent pattern of interference with a specific agenda does emerge," says Palekar. "Any art needs the patronage of the system that ought to nurture, preserve and cher-

ish it. The system ought to include the artist community as insiders and refrain from controlling them and their art. In our country, no matter which political party is in power, this abstinence is axed."

NGMA Director General Adwaita Gadaniyalkar later clarified that the two advisory committees had not been scrapped; their term had ended, he said, and new panels are in the process of being constituted. Palekar calls it a "good face-saving effort". "Artists have complained to me about the ministry's arbitrariness... even when they convene the committee, they will appoint a stooge who will parrot their songs." Palekar, who has called these acts of gagging a "war against humanities", has been part of the industry for almost 50 years. He regards most of the film fraternity as "conformists". "When you expect a quid pro quo from the system or some patronage in the form of awards or assignments or appointments, you cannot afford to say anything against those who will sanction what you are seeking... So it is a choice an artist has to make: whether to succumb to the dictates of the system or to speak up." So what's new? "What is new is the fear factor! The deterrent is that someone is watching your moves all the time and any adverse move will attract action from the tax department, or police, or you will be labelled an urban naxal or you may be lynched — that is new. However, the Hollywood musical offers mundane situations like arguments, discussions and debates in a lyrical manner. I explored this exciting form first in the TV serial Kachhi Dhoop in 1987. It was immensely appreciated by audiences. So I created the musical Thoda Sa Roomani. Both these creations were supported wholeheartedly by Doordarshan, which at that time was free from the clutches of market-driven commercial forces. "Challenging gender hierarchies and a unidimensional and heteronormative notion of sexuality has been a theme Palekar has stressed in his films. Daayra had as its central character a transvestite; Anahat was a period drama where a woman seeks sexual fulfilment outside marriage while Quest was about homosexuality. Could we see Palekar make more such films, now that there is a more in-

formed audience? "In most of my films, I explored the theme of a man-woman relationship and its various dimensions through a subversion of cumulative silence and prototypes of exploitation. My protagonists march towards love and empathy. I

also chose to depict unconventional female characters who seek to challenge providence. Lachchi, a rural girl in Pabehi, accepts a lover knowing he is not her husband. Binni in Thoda Sa Roomani proclaims that marriage is not the ultimate aim for

a girl. My female characters strive to break their alienation and assert themselves against the mainstream dominance. Maybe a retrospective of my directorial journey will reach the more informed audience of today!"

Books for the Obsessive or the Merely Curious'

(News Track) I have been steadily buying rare and fine books for several years now from online antiquarian sellers, and find I don't miss the 'bookshop experience' at all. One of my earliest online rare books transaction nicely eased me into it: I discovered 'ReadInk', a used, rare and out-of-print online bookstore, by chance when I was looking for a book that didn't turn up in the bookstores I frequented. It was Ira Levin's suspense classic, A Kiss Before Dying. I couldn't afford a first edition but knew that a book club edition would be within my means — if only I could find one in a decent condition. And I found it in ReadInk (I was going to say out but with some online booksites, the feeling is as if you've stepped into a bookshop), whose website was, unlike large book-search and marketplace sites, personal and cosy and idiosyncratic. "Books for the Obsessive or the Merely Curious" it read. Now, if you come across such a sign just under the name of a bookshop you were passing by, wouldn't you dash in right away? I spent a good hour or so browsing, taking in the bookplate-like graphic of the store's patron saint, The Bookman, whose credo announced: Vita sine libris mors est ("Life without books is death"). I wrote to the bookseller asking for details about the back-jacket photo of Levin on the book, and received my first email from Howard Prouty, the owner. He assured me it was the edition I wanted ("yes, that is the photo — young beardless Levin — on the rear panel of the jacket"), so I placed the order. It arrived promptly and, though my purchase was inexpensive, was packaged with great care. Impressed, I wrote him asking for a few tips about protecting dust jackets, and I was more than gratified when he responded in gen-



erous detail with instructions on how to preserve a book in collectible condition. With an online rare bookseller like Howard, you don't even miss handling the books: the accuracy, knowledge and the care with which he describes a book you're interested in is close to having a face-to-face conversation in a physical bookstore with an impassioned book dealer. And his stock wasn't high-end or bargain-driven, but carefully chosen, highly desirable editions that one could save a few paychecks towards. A few months later he sent me ReadInk's first printed catalogue, and I remember spending at least half a day looking and reading through it. He had titled it 'Objects of Obscure Desire' and each bibliographical entry in it, description, notes and condition of an item, felt definitive, honest and restrained and showed the obvious bibliographical pleasure the bookseller had taken in writing it. One item in particular that caught my attention for the way it was described was the paperback first edition of Jim Thompson's noir classic, The Killer Inside Me. After carefully describing the book's condition,

Howard writes: "A pretty damn good-looking copy of a damn good book. Thompson's nihilistic masterpiece... Would it be going too far to call this the greatest paperback original in modern American literature? You wouldn't get an argument from me." Like many bibliophiles, Howard one day woke up to the fact that he had too many books. To remedy that, he bought more books and stared ReadInk when he discovered that "the Internet made it possible for me to sell my books and get decent prices." When I asked him to say something about his success as a rare book dealer online, he answered unpretentiously: "I'm afraid I don't have anything very profound to say about the subject. I just cannot remember a time when I haven't loved being immersed in books — to me it's a natural state of existence — and being a bookseller gives me the perfect excuse to live that way." Browsing and buying rare and beautiful books online has turned out to be a rich and expansive experience for many collectors today; and, as I discovered, the experience can be every bit as invigorating as being in an actual bookshop.

Sabita Reddy all set to join Telangana Rashtra Samithi



(Day Today) The suspense over Congress MLA and former Home Minister P. Sabita Reddy joining TRS was broken on Wednesday after her nearly two-hour meeting with Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu at his camp office. After the meeting, Ms. Reddy's son Karthik Reddy who was among the three siblings to accompany their mother told the media that they would formally join TRS at a public meeting at Chevella as part of the Chief Minister's campaign for Parliament elections. Sources said the family bargained for TRS ticket for Mr. Karthik Reddy to contest from Chevella LS constituency in consideration for joining the party which Mr. Rao conceded. In fact, Mr. Karthik Reddy had lost in 2014 elections from the same constituency at the hands of TRS candidate K. Visweswara Reddy who switched over to Congress before the Assembly elections. Ms. Sabita and Mr. Karthik Reddy joining the TRS was seen as a consequence of Mr. Visweswara Reddy being almost certain to be fielded by Congress from Chevella and the denial of the party ticket to Karthik Reddy to contest from Rajendranagar Assembly constituency recently. Ms. Sabita all along denied any such move on their part and she even addressed the public meeting of Congress president Rahul Gandhi at Shamshabad on Saturday last. The day after Mr. Gandhi's meeting, the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin president Asaduddin Owaisi and an industrialist arranged a meeting of Ms. Sabita with TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao and Nizamabad MP K. Kavitha at Mr. Owaisi's residence where it was decided that the former Minister meet the party president K. Chandrababu Naidu later to discuss their demands. In a bid to prevent her from deserting the party, the Telangana Congress committee president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Leader of Opposition M. Bhatti Vikramarka and other Congress leaders met her. It appeared that she was unlikely to quit Congress when another Congress leader A. Revanth Reddy also mediated but Ms. Sabita had other thoughts, sources said. An industrialist Ranjit Reddy who aspired for TRS ticket from Chevella made a vain attempt to meet KCR at the camp office. Ms. Sabita was the fifth Congress MLA heading to join the TRS.

Jana Sena releases the first list of candidates for Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies



(News Track) Jana Sena candidates for Rajahmundry and Amalapuram Lok Sabha constituencies Akula Satyanarayana and D.M.R. Sekhar with party president Pawan Kalyan in Vijayawada Jana Sena Party (JSP) has released the first list of candidates for four Lok Sabha (LS) and 32 Assembly constituencies a few hours before the party's formation day celebrations began at Rajahmundry on Thursday. ONGC former executive director D.M.R. Sekhar has been chosen for Amalapuram (SC) LS constituency and former MLA Akula Satyanarayana, who had defected from the BJP, has been chosen for Rajahmundry LS seat. Businessman and philanthropist Gedela Srinibabu is the JSP candidate for the high-profile Visakhapatnam LS constituency while party general secretary Chintala Parthasarathy is being fielded from Anakapalli. For the Assembly constituencies, former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Nadendra Manohar is the most prominent one being fielded from Tenali. Former MLA Ravela Kishore Babu, who quit TDP, has been picked up for Prathipadu (SC) seat in Guntur district. Former minister Pasupuleti Balaraju has got the nomination from Paderu constituency in Visakhapatnam district.

Pollachi case: Students protest, demand action against accused

(Day Today) Hundreds of college students, lawyers and members of women's organisations in the State took to the streets on Wednesday demanding action against the accused in the Pollachi sexual abuse case. Students boycotted classes and staged sit-ins demanding stringent punishment. Protests rippled across Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts condemning the offenders and seeking protection for women. Students of the government arts colleges in Coimbatore and Udumalpet in Tiruppur boycotted classes and staged a demonstration seeking

the arrest of all the persons involved in the scam. In some places, the students had to be removed by the police by evening. Advocates practising in Coimbatore staged a demonstration outside the court complex seeking an inquiry committee with a woman judge of the Madras High Court as its head to probe the case. In Chennai, over 300 students from Pachaiyappa's College, students from New College and Government Arts College, Nandanam, Dr. MGR University protested on the road seeking action against the perpetrators. In Tiruvannamalai, more

T.N. hands over Pollachi sex abuse case to CBI



(News Track) TIRUCHI, TAMILNADU, 13/03/2019:- Demanding stringent punishment for the accused involved in Pollachi sexual abuse case, members of Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) staged a demonstration at the entrance of District Collectrate in Tiruchi on Wednesday. Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit has accorded consent to the transfer of the Pollachi sexual assault and blackmail case to the CBI. On Wednesday, the State government issued an order, invoking Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (Consent of State to exercise of powers and jurisdiction). The order, issued through the State Home Department, permitted the extension of powers and jurisdiction to members of the Delhi Special Police Establishment in the whole of T.N. The CBI will investigate the two cases which were originally registered at the Pollachi East Police Station, Coimbatore district, bearing the

crime numbers of 59 and 60/2019. The development follows a proposal sent by Director General of Police T.K. Rajendran to the State government. Earlier on Tuesday, the Crime Branch-CID was entrusted with investigation of the cases. The DGP wanted the CBI to handle the cases, as the nature of crime "is extremely serious," demanding "specialised attention" and requiring "more laborious and dedicated investigation with technical expertise." The police chief, according to the GO, pointed out that the investigation "involves technical issues including analysis of Facebook data, I.P. logs/addresses and internet usage logs, communication with Facebook service providers and other internet service providing places in various countries." Giving an account of the genesis of the sexual assault episodes, the order, quoting the DGP's letter to the government, stated that on February 24, a college girl submitted a

complaint that she was both "physically and sexually harassed" and robbed of her one sovereign gold chain, worth ₹20,000, by a group of men inside a car. Subsequently, the case was registered at the police station against four persons. While three persons - Sabarirajan, Sathish and Vasanthakumar - were arrested the next day, the police picked up the fourth person, Thirunavukkarasu, on March 5. All the four are now in judicial custody. On February 26, the girl's brother handed over a complaint to the police station that he had been assaulted with a threat to his life by four persons - Senthil, Babu, Mani alias Manivannan and Vasanth akumar (who is different from the one arrested in the other case). Senthil, Babu and Vasanth akumar were arrested and released on bail while Nagaraj alias Muthusamy, was arrested on February 27 and remanded to judicial custody, the order added.

Gowda family cries in unison as Prajwal is declared candidate for Hassan seat

(News Track) Former PM H.D. Deve Gowda, his grandson Prajwal Revanna were in tears at Mudalahippe after the latter was declared as the party candidate for Hassan seat. PWD Minister H.D. Revanna was also seen wiping his tears on the same dais. Photo by Prakash Hassan BJP mocks it as 'drama'; former Prime Minister seeks people's blessings for his grandson. Top men in the Janata Dal (Secular) are not particularly famous for fighting against gender stereotypes, but they never shy away from shedding tears in public, which "real men" are not supposed to do as hidebound traditions go. Public show of emotion was at an all-time high on Wednesday, with tears rolling down the cheeks of three generations of leaders — party supremo H.D. Deve Gowda, his son and Public Works Minister H.D. Revanna, and grandson Prajwal Revanna. Videos of this scene were shared widely on social media and the Opposition BJP mocked this as "drama". As the former Prime Minister sought people's blessings for his grandson in the Lok Sabha polls, tears rolled down the cheeks of the third-generation leader of the party. Mr. Revanna was seen wiping his tears. By then, Mr. Gowda was already in tears, recalling his career as a politician. Earlier, MLA for Shravanabelgola C.N. Balakrishna also wept at the programme. Mr. Balakrishna said he could not control his emotions the day when Mr. Gowda said it would be his last speech in Parliament on the last day of the budget session. "I could not sleep that night. I can't imagine politics without him. I wish he continues to remain in active politics and guide us," he said,



wiping his tears. Mocking this, the BJP said in a tweet soon after, "If crying was an art, Sri. H.D. Deve Gowda and his family would hold the record for mastering the Art of Crying to constantly fool people for decades. Matter of

the fact is before elections Deve Gowda & his family cries. After elections people who vote this family cries." In the long political career spread over five decades, Mr. Gowda has often wept in public. He is often re-

ferred to as someone with the skill to connect to the voters' hearts through tears. Mr. Kumaraswamy too has often wept in public. In July last year, Mr. Kumaraswamy wept at a party programme in Bengaluru saying that he became Chief Minister only to complete his father's unfulfilled dream, but not for any personal gain. Even during the election campaign in 2018, Mr. Kumaraswamy wept many times in public meetings. While addressing the workers at Mudalahippe on Wednesday, Mr. Gowda said he had been instrumental in bringing many leaders to politics over the years. "I have given representation to all castes and communities, yet people allege that I have supported only my family members," he said. It is not yet clear if Mr. Gowda will contest this election at all. As the former Prime Minister sought people's blessings for his grandson in the Lok Sabha polls, tears rolled down the cheeks of the third-generation leader of the party. Mr. Revanna was seen wiping his tears. On Wednesday, during his visit to Mudalahippe, Mr. Gowda gave different statements on this issue. Earlier in the day, he said he had decided not to contest to avoid criticism of supporting dynasty politics. Addressing the public, he said he decided to field his grandson from Hassan as it would be difficult for him to work in the next five years as he did in the past. Later speaking to press persons, however, he said he had not yet decided on his contest.

Malappuram boy diagnosed with West Nile fever

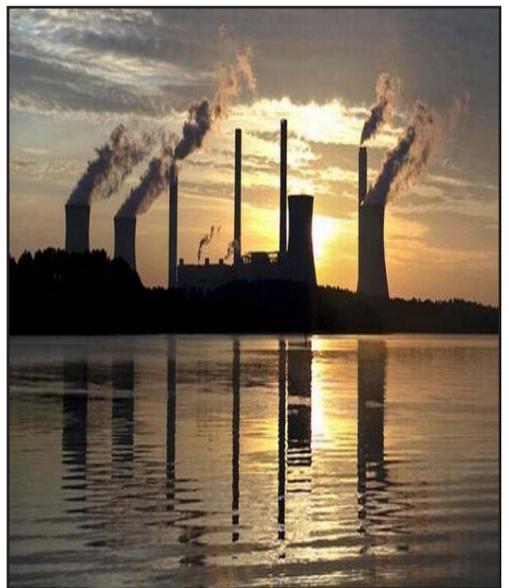
(Day Today) A seven-year-old boy from Malappuram district has been diagnosed with West Nile fever, a relatively unknown viral infection in the Malabar region in recent times. This comes around seven months after a woman from Kozhikode district was admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital here with suspected systems. Her blood results, however, did not confirm the presence of the virus. Mohamed Ismail, Deputy District Medical Officer, Malappuram, said the boy was undergoing treatment at the ICU of the medical college hospital. He had fever and cold since mid-February. West Nile fever is spread by Culex mosquitoes and the infection could be confirmed only if the second samples test positive. Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body, and swollen lymph glands. The World Health Organisation (WHO) says West Nile virus transmits to humans through bites from infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Dr. Ismail said in 90% of the patients, the virus would not show any symptoms and the blood samples would be sent to laboratory only if patients developed complications. This comes around seven months after a woman from Kozhikode district was admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital here with suspected systems. Her blood results, however, did not confirm the presence of the virus. Mohamed Ismail, Deputy District Medical Officer, Malappuram, said the boy was undergoing treatment at the ICU of the medical college hospital. He had fever and cold since mid-February. West Nile fever is spread by Culex mosquitoes and the infection could be confirmed only if the second samples test positive. Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body, and swollen lymph glands. The presence of West Nile fever was first raised in Kerala over a decade ago in Kottayam and Alappuzha. Health Department staff believe the source of Culex mosquitoes could be an uncovered pipe leading to the septic tank on the premises of the patient's residence at Malappuram. Vector-control measures had been taken up in the area, Dr. Ismail added.

Don't use Sabarimala to garner votes, says CEO



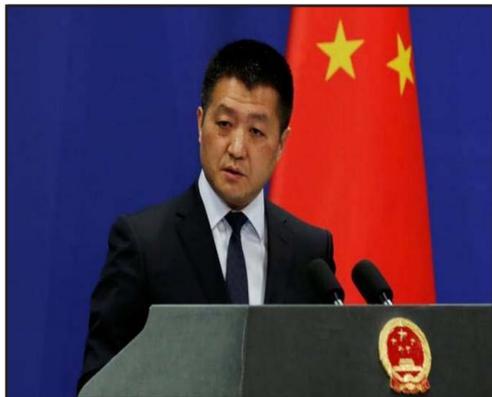
(News Track) Chief Electoral Officer Teeka Ram Meena holds discussions with representatives of political parties in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. Asks parties to ensure that Election Commission's model code of conduct is strictly followed for Lok Sabha election. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Teeka Ram Meena asserted on Wednesday that he had not banned discussion on any issue in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election, but using Sabarimala in a "religious context" to garner votes would constitute a clear violation of the model code of conduct. Lobbied the ball into political parties' court, Mr. Meena said it was up to them to ensure that the line was not crossed. "The responsibility lies with them (political parties) as to what extent they will use the issue. I've told them that it is up to them," he told reporters after holding discussions with political parties here. "Sabarimala is a religious place. You should not invoke Lord Ayyappa's name to get votes. It is very clear," he said, citing the stipulation. "No use of temples/mosques/churches/gurudwaras or any place of worship for election propaganda, including speeches, posters, music, etc., or electioneering." "It (using Lord Ayyappa's name to appeal for votes) has a religious connotation. As for the rest, they are free to discuss any issue," he said, asserting that the election process is a thoroughly secular exercise. Stating that his office would be "ruthless" in enforcing the model code of conduct, Mr. Meena said he intended to examine each potential case of violation on the basis of reports filed by the police and the returning officer. At Wednesday's meeting, Mr. Meena briefed political parties on the use of VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail), the cVIGIL app and the enforcement of green protocol. Political parties, on their part, expressed concern regarding the expenditure that would be incurred on placing media advertisements on the criminal antecedents of candidates, Mr. Meena said. Political parties and candidates are required to publicise the details of criminal cases involving their candidates through television and newspapers on three separate occasions. The costs would be added to the election expenditure of the candidates.

India could save trillions in healthcare costs if Paris climate goals are met: Global Environmental Outlook



(News Track) The Paris Agreement aims to keep global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. India could save at least \$3 trillion (₹210 trillion approx.) in healthcare costs if it implemented policy initiatives consistent with ensuring that the globe didn't heat up beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius by the turn of the century, says the sixth edition of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO), prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme. "Damage to the planet is so dire that people's health will be increasingly threatened unless urgent action is taken.... Unless environmental protections were drastically scaled up, cities and regions in Asia, the Middle East and Africa could see millions of premature deaths by mid-century," a press statement accompanying the report noted. India's stated commitment is to lower emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% compared to 2005 levels by 2030; increase total cumulative electricity generation from fossil free energy sources to 40% by 2030, and create additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons through additional forest and tree cover. India is on track to achieve two of these goals — of emissions intensity and electricity generation — according to independent climate-watch site Climate Tracker. However these actions are only enough — and provided other countries too live up to their commitments — to limit temperature rise to 2 degrees. For India to leapfrog onto a 1.5-degree pathway it would have to "abandon plans to build new coal-fired power plants," said Climate Tracker's most updated analysis as of Dec 2018. The landmark Paris Agreement of 2015 aims to keep a global temperature rise this century well to "... below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius." Unless environmental protections were drastically scaled up, cities and regions in Asia, the Middle East and Africa could see millions of premature deaths by mid-century," a press statement accompanying the report noted. India's stated commitment is to lower emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% compared to 2005 levels by 2030; increase total cumulative electricity generation from fossil free energy sources to 40% by 2030, and create additional However there has been limited progress by countries since then in committing to greenhouse gas emissions cut since then. Currently environmental ministers and delegates from around the world are participating in a UN conference in Nairobi to discuss issues such as stopping food waste, promoting the spread of electric mobility, and tackling the crisis of plastic pollution. The GEO report, made public Wednesday, for its assessment on health benefits to India relied on a modelling study by group of scientists and published by Lancet Planetary Health in March 2018. The report advises adopting less-meat intensive diets, and reducing food waste in both developed and developing countries, would reduce the need to increase food production by 50% to feed the projected 9-10 billion people on the planet in 2050. At present, 33% of global edible food is wasted, and 56% of waste happens in industrialised countries.

Masood Azhar's designation should be based on trilateral consensus: China



(News Track) China's spokesperson said that there would be no lag in its diplomatic activism to get all the three countries on board. Hours after blocking a UN ban on Masood Azhar, China has made it plain that it would consider shifting its position on designating the head of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror group as an international terrorist only after reaching a consensus to do so among Beijing, New Delhi and Islamabad. Indians hold a scratched photo of Jaish-e-Mohammed group chief, Maulana Masood Azhar, as they shout slogans against Pakistan during a protest in Mumbai on February 15, 2019, the day after the Pulwama attack. analysis | To pursue or abandon? India's options after the China blow on Azhar. In response to a question, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Lu Kang signaled that Beijing was ready to back a triangular formula that would also involve Pakistan on designating Azhar as a global terrorist in the UN Security Council's 1267 committee. "I said earlier that only a solution that is acceptable to all sides could be fundamentally providing a chance of lasting solution to the issue," Mr. Lu said. In the aftermath of the Pulwama terrorist attack, three permanent members of Security Council — the US, France and the UK — had moved a resolution to designate Azhar a global terrorist. Pictured is a UNSC meeting. NSC may seek other possible action if China continues blocking Azhar listing as global terrorist: diplomat The spokesperson added that there would be no lag in its diplomatic activism to get all the three countries on board. "China is ready to communicate and coordinate with all sides including India to properly handle this issue," he observed. Mr. Lu's remarks follow Chinese state councilor and foreign minister, Wang Yi's assertion on Friday stating Beijing's intent to engage in "mediation efforts" to lower tensions between India and Pakistan, following the February 14 Pulwama suicide bombing, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed. Subsequently, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou visited Islamabad to discuss Indo-Pak tensions, which escalated following India's air strike on JeM's Balakote training camp on February 26. Masood Azhar, leader of Jaish-e-Mohammed, arrives at a reception in Rawalpindi on March 2, 2000. hina places hold on listing Azhar as designated terrorist. "China will continue to adopt a constructive and responsible attitude and communicate and coordinate with all sides relevant to properly handle this issue," Mr. Lu observed. "I said earlier that only a solution that is acceptable to all sides could be fundamentally providing a chance of lasting solution to the issue." "I said earlier that only a solution that is acceptable to all sides could be fundamentally providing a chance of lasting solution to the issue." The Chinese foreign ministry said that Beijing decided to place a "technical hold" on Azhar's designation at the 1267 committee on Wednesday, as it needed more time for deliberations on this issue. "The UNSC 1267 committee has clear standards and procedures for designating terrorist organisations and individuals. China conducts thorough and in-depth assessment of this application, and we still need time. Pictured is a UNSC meeting. NSC may seek other possible action if China continues blocking Azhar listing as global terrorist: diplomat The spokesperson added that there would be no lag in its diplomatic activism to get all the three countries on board. "China is ready to communicate and coordinate with all sides including India to properly handle this issue," he observed. Mr. Lu's remarks follow Chinese state councilor and foreign minister, That is why we put forward the technical hold," Mr. Lu said. He added: "This is in line with the rules of the committee and China sincerely hopes that relevant action taken by this committee will help relevant countries to engage in dialogue and consultation and prevent adding more complicated factors into regional peace and stability." "China will continue to adopt a constructive and responsible attitude and communicate and coordinate with all sides relevant to properly handle this issue," Mr. Lu observed. The Chinese foreign ministry said that Beijing decided to place a "technical hold" on Azhar's designation at the The spokesperson also stressed that China intended to carry forward the gains of last year's Wuhan informal summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "(President) Xi and (Prime Minister) Modi met four times. Particularly the Wuhan summit made great progress. China is full of sincerity and ready to work with India to build on the consensus of our leaders for greater progress in the bilateral relations." In response to a question on the Kashmir issue, Mr. Lu said China's position remained "clear and consistent". "This is an issue that is left over from between India and Pakistan. We hope that the two sides will engage in friendly dialogue consultation and solve this issue and other related issues".

Donald Trump announces plan to ground all Boeing 737 MAX planes



(News Track) A Boeing 737 flown by American Airlines passes by the Lockheed Martin building as it takes off from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Arlington, Virginia on March 11, 2019. U.S. President Donald Trump on March 13 announced a plan to ground all Boeing 737 MAX aircraft amid intense international and political pressure following the second deadly crash in less than five months. "We're going to be issuing an emergency order of prohibition regarding all flights of the 737 MAX 8 and 737 MAX 9," Mr. Trump told reporters at the White House. Boeing shares fell precipitously on March 13, moments after Mr. Trump's announcement. A Jet Airways Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft is seen parked inside a hanger at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport in Mumbai, India. Why are Boeing 737 flights being grounded? Shares had recovered early in the session, but lost 2.8% to \$365.24 shortly before 12.30 a.m. IST, putting the stock down 13.6% since before the March 10 crash of an Ethiopia Airlines flight, and wiping billions off the company's market value.

Lok Sabha election 2019 | NCP announces candidates

(News Track) The National Congress Party (NCP) announced the names of its candidates for 11 Lok Sabha constituencies, including the Lakshadweep seat. Raigad-Sunil Tatkar; Baramati-Supriya Sule; Satara-Udayanraje Bhosle; Kolhapur-Dhananjay Mahadik; Buldhana-Rajendra Shingane; Jalgaon-Gulabrao Devkar; Parbhani-Rajesh Vitekar; Mumbai Northeast-Sanjay Dina Patil; Thane-Anand Paranjape; Kalyan-Babajai Patil; Lakshadweep-Mohammad Faisal In Hatkanangle, the party has extended support to Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana's present MP Raju Shetty. - Alok Deshpande. TMC leader and four-time MLA Arjun Singh joins BJP. TMC leader and four-time West Bengal legislator Arjun Singh joins the BJP in the presence of party general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya and West Bengal BJP leader Mukul Roy. TMC leader and four-time legislator from West Bengal Arjun Singh, who has now joined the BJP. File photo. TMC leader and four-time legislator from West Bengal Arjun Singh, who has now joined the BJP. File photo. | Photo Credit: Akhilesh Kumar. Addressing the media at the BJP office, Mr. Singh says he was shocked at Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's comments on the Pulwama terror attack. "I gave 30 years to Mamata Banerjee. I was shocked at her comments on the Pulwama terror attack. Her statement has shaken the country. When the Indian Air Force carried out the strike, she demanded the body count of terrorists. If a leader does not have national interest on her mind then she cannot do any good to her voters," he says. The MLA from Barrackpore is likely to contest on a BJP ticket in the Lok Sabha polls against TMC heavyweights Dinesh Trivedi, say sources. - PTI Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Lok Sabha member Balabhadra Majhi resigns from the party claiming that he was "ignored and cheated." "I have tendered my resignation from the primary membership of the BJD as I felt ignored, neglected and cheated. I presumed the party no more requires me," Mr. Majhi, who represents Nabarangpur (ST), says. Mr. Majhi tells reporters that he was unable to meet Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik and submitted the resignation letter to political secretary of the party chief. "Somewhere, a gap has developed between I and you... may be designed by some persons envious of my achievements," Mr. Majhi says in his resignation letter to Mr. Patnaik. - PTI 'Shobha Karandlaje to contest from Udupi-Chikkamagaluru'



Vikhe-Patil said when asked whether he has resigned from the LoP post. The Congress core committee meeting is underway in Mumbai to discuss the further course of action. - Alok Deshpande National Conference says no to meeting with EC team. The National Conference (NC) has decided not to meet the Election Commission (EC) delegation arriving in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, saying the party has nothing more to add to its demand of having simultaneous Lok Sabha and assembly polls in the state. Three special observers appointed by the EC will be in Srinagar on Thursday to assess the ground situation for holding assembly elections. "Our demand of having simultaneous assembly and Lok Sabha elections in the state at our earlier meetings with the EC team remains as it is. We have, therefore, nothing more to add," the spokesperson said. Former Congress spokesperson Tom Vadakkan joins BJP at the party's headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday. Former Congress spokesperson Tom Vadakkan joins BJP at the party's headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday. | Photo Credit: Sandeep Saxena. Former Congress spokesperson Tom Vadakkan joins the BJP in the presence of Ravi Shankar Prasad. Mr. Vadakkan tells mediapersons that he quit the Congress since the party "questioned the integrity of the armed forces." He was "deeply hurt" by the Congress's stand on the

Balakote air strike. Nainital MP Bhagat Singh Koshiyari not to contest. BNP veteran and Nainital MP Bhagat Singh Koshiyari has said he will not contest the Lok Sabha elections this time. The former chief minister said he has informed the state party leadership of his decision and will convey it to the central leadership too, if asked. "I have decided not to contest as younger people should get an opportunity," Mr. Koshiyari told PTI. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will contest by-elections to all the three Goa Assembly seats, scheduled along with the Lok Sabha polls, on April 23. AAP Goa general secretary Pradeep Padgaonkar says the party was in the process of shortlisting its candidates for the Shiroda, Mandrem and Maspusa seats. Congress president Rahul Gandhi addressing the National Fishermen Parliament in Thrissur, Kerala on Thursday. Congress president Rahul Gandhi addressing the National Fishermen Parliament in Thrissur, Kerala on Thursday. | Photo Credit: K.K. Najeeb. Congress president Rahul Gandhi kick-starts the party's election campaign in Kerala by addressing the fisherfolk in the coastal State. At a 'Fishermen's Parliament' in Thrissur, he promises a ministry for fisheries, if voted to power. He also promises to bring legislation for 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and legislative assemblies. Mr. Gandhi wonders who was sponsoring the ad-

vertisement of Mr. Modi on television and in newspapers. "Around 15 big industrialists are marketing Mr. Modi and the Prime Minister is in turn protecting their interests," he alleges. ECI directs BJP MLA to remove Wg. Cdr. Abhinandan's picture. The Election Commission of India (ECI) issues a show-cause notice to Delhi BJP MLA Om Prakash Sharma for posting a picture on Facebook featuring him along with Indian Air Force officer Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman. The District Election Officer (East) asks Mr. Sharma to remove the post and submit a reply by 11 a.m. on Thursday. Mr. Sharma tells PTI that he has deleted the post mentioned by the ECI, but wonders why was the poll body was so "allergic" to a person cheering the heroic act of soldiers and rejoicing over an act of national honour. "The Election commission is biased against nationalist leaders like me," he alleges. Over Rs. 7 lakh in cash has been seized from a car during a drive to check unaccounted money. Circle Officer Yogender Singh says a car carrying Rs 7.47 lakh was intercepted on Wednesday under New Mandi Police Station area. The driver could not produce documents regarding the cash, following which it was seized. The officer says that when the Model Code of Conduct is in force, documents are required for carrying cash more than Rs 5,000.

Malaysia refuses to drop case against Vietnamese woman in Kim Jong-nam killing



(News Track) Vietnamese Doan Thi Huong (centre) is escorted by police as she leaves Shah Alam High Court in Shah Alam, Malaysia on March 14, 2019. Vietnamese Ambassador Le Quy Quynh said he was "very disappointed" with the Attorney General's decision. Malaysia's Attorney General ordered the murder case to proceed against a Vietnamese woman accused in the killing of the North Korean leader's estranged half-brother, prosecutors said in court Thursday. Prosecutor Iskandar Ahmad gave no explanation for the refusal to drop the murder charge against Doan Thi Huong, who is the only suspect in custody after the stunning decision to drop the case on Monday against Indonesian Siti Aisyah. "It does not speak well of our criminal justice system. It does not bring confidence to our criminal justice system," Mr. Teh said. The judge agreed to postpone it until April 1 but warned there should be no more delay. Vietnamese Ambassador Le Quy Quynh said he was "very disappointed" with the Attorney General's decision. He said Vietnam's Justice Minister had written to the Malaysian Attorney General seeking Ms. Huong's release and that Vietnam will keep lobbying Malaysia to free her. "We will request Malaysia to have fair judgment and release her as soon as possible," he said. A Vietnamese delegation said Ms. Huong told them she was happy for Ms. Aisyah but that she was also innocent. The two women were the only people in custody after four North Korean suspects fled the country the morning of Feb. 13, 2017, when Kim Jong-nam was poisoned with VX nerve agent. Ms. Aisyah and Ms. Huong have said they thought they were taking part in a prank for a TV show. A High Court judge last August had found there was enough evidence to infer that Ms. Aisyah, Ms. Huong and the four missing North Koreans engaged in a "well-planned conspiracy" to kill Kim Jong-nam. Lawyers for the women have previously said that they were pawns in a political assassination with clear links to the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, and that the prosecution failed to show the women had any intention to kill. Intent to kill is crucial to a murder charge under Malaysian law. Prosecutor Iskandar Ahmad gave no explanation for the refusal to drop the murder charge against Doan Thi Huong, who is the only suspect in custody after the stunning decision to drop the case on Monday against Indonesian Siti Aisyah. "It does not speak well of our criminal justice system. It does not bring confidence to our criminal justice system," Mr. Teh said. The judge agreed to postpone it until April 1 but warned there should be no more delay. Vietnamese Ambassador Le Quy Quynh said he was "very disappointed" with the Attorney General's decision. He said Vietnam's Justice Minister had written to the Malaysian Attorney General seeking Ms. Huong's release and that Vietnam will keep lobbying Malaysia to free her. "We will request Malaysia to have fair judgment and release her as soon as possible," he said. A Vietnamese delegation said Ms. Huong told them she was happy for Ms. Aisyah but that she was also innocent. Malaysian officials have never officially accused North Korea and have made it clear they don't want the trial politicized. Kim Jong-nam was the eldest son in the current generation of North Korea's ruling family. He had been living abroad for years but could have been seen as a threat to Kim Jong-un's rule.

Six U.S. nuclear power plants to be set up in India

(Gns. News) Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and U.S. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Andrea Thompson during the India-U.S. Strategic Security Dialogue, in Washington on Wednesday. Photo courtesy: Twitter/@IndianEmbassyUS. An agreement to cooperate in civil nuclear energy sector was signed in October 2008. New Delhi and Washington have agreed on a proposal to build six nuclear power plants in India. This was stated in a joint statement issued on March 13 at the conclusion of the 9th round of India-U.S. Strategic Security Dialogue in Washington, co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Andrea Thompson. "They committed to strengthen bilateral security and civil nuclear cooperation, including the establishment of six U.S. nuclear power plants in India," the joint statement said. India and the U.S. signed a historic agreement to cooperate in civil nuclear energy in October 2008. The deal gave a fillip to bilateral ties, which have been on an upswing since. A major aspect of the deal was the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) that gave a special waiver to India enabling it to sign cooperation agreements with a dozen countries. Agreements signed with many nations Post waiver, India signed civil nuclear cooperation agreements with the U.S., France, Russia, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Sri Lanka, the U.K., Japan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan and South Korea. On March 13, the U.S. reaffirmed its strong support to India's early membership in the 48-member NSG. Notably, China has blocked India's pending membership to the elite grouping that seeks to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on a wide range of global security and non-proliferation challenges and reaffirmed their commitment to work together to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to deny access to such weapons by terrorists and non-state actors. On March 12, Indra Mani Pandey, India's Additional Secretary for Disarmament and International Security Affairs, and Yleem D. S. Poblete, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, co-chaired the third round of India-U.S. Space Dialogue. "They committed to strengthen bilateral security and civil nuclear cooperation, including the establishment of six U.S. nuclear power plants in India," the joint statement said. India and the U.S. signed a historic agreement to cooperate in civil nuclear energy in October 2008. The deal gave a fillip to bilateral ties, which have been on an upswing since. A major aspect of the deal was the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) that gave a special waiver to India enabling it to sign cooperation agreements with a dozen countries. Agreements signed with many nations Post waiver, India signed civil nuclear cooperation agreements with the U.S., France, Russia, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Sri Lanka, the U.K., Japan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan and South Korea. On March 13, the U.S. reaffirmed its strong support to India's early membership in the 48-member NSG. Notably, China has blocked India's pending membership to



the elite grouping that seeks to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons. The two delegations discussed trends in space threats, respective national space priorities and opportunities for cooperation bilaterally and in multilateral fora.

Detained Saudi women activists appear in court

(News Track) Saudi women's rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul. Ten Saudi women detained last year in a sweeping crackdown on activists appeared in court on Wednesday, an official said, intensifying scrutiny of the kingdom's human rights record. Prominent activists Loujain al-Hathloul, Hatoon al-Fassi and Aziza al-Yousef were among those who attended Riyadh's criminal court after

being held for nearly a year without charge. The women would hear the charges raised against them ahead of a trial, court president Ibrahim al-Sayari told reporters and Western diplomats — who were not allowed to attend the first hearing of the trial. Amnesty International and Ms. Hathloul's family feared on Tuesday that the women's rights activist would be charged with terrorism.

