

Effective steps being taken to counter social media propaganda from Pak: Singh

JAMMU, MAY 12 /-/ Union Minister Jitendra Singh said today that "studios" have been set up in Pakistan to promote propaganda and manage content on social media to mislead the people of Kashmir, but the Centre is taking effective steps to



counter them. The minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office said "perception is created in these studios on a daily basis and false messages are spread". "Intelligence agencies have intercepted recorded false messages like encounter (between militants and security forces) has started and people are requested to reach the spot (to help militants escape)," Singh told reporters here. "It is a reality that studios were set up in Pakistan under a well-planned strategy to manage propaganda on social media to mislead the people of Kashmir," he said.

Replying to a question on the challenges posed by social media, especially in Kashmir, Singh said the Union Home Ministry has taken a serious note of the matter and is chalking out a strategy to counter the spread of false information. On the Karnataka Assembly elections, he expressed confidence that the BJP would form the next government in the state. The Union minister said the people of Karnataka have made up their mind to vote for BJP to power in the state. "Rahul Gandhi has unveiled himself by stating he is ready to become the prime minister of the country and thus spoke of the dynasty rule," he said, referring to the Congress president's assertion on Wednesday that he is ready to occupy the post if his party emerges as the "biggest" party in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Singh said the youth constitute India's 70 per cent population and they have "tasted the real democracy" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule. "I have full faith that the people of Karnataka will express their faith in the leadership of Modi and help him to take India to new heights... by becoming part of the New India," he said. Voting for the state polls are underway today. The results would be declared on May 15. (PTI)

Parties advocating ceasefire playing politics over Ramzan: Jitendra Singh

JAMMU, MAY 12 /-/ Parties advocating a unilateral ceasefire by the Centre in Jammu and Kashmir are playing politics over Ramzan, Union Minister Jitendra Singh today said and asserted that the government had a consistent policy with regard to Pakistan and terrorism. I want to ask question to those who are suggesting a unilateral ceasefire whether they are true followers of Islam? As long as we understand Islam and Holy Quran, those who observe fast it is imperative for them not to indulge in any type of violence or harm anyone. Instead of advising them (militants), suggesting others means that you are not faithful to Ramzan but you are playing politics over it, Singh told reporters here. On May 9, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said the Centre should consider a unilateral ceasefire in the state

starting from Ramzan in mid May till the completion of the Amarnath Yatra in August. She made the remarks after chairing an all-party meeting, which was convened to discuss the present situation in Kashmir Valley, especially after a tourist from Chennai was killed in stone pelting on May 7. "Everyone (all parties) agreed that we should appeal to the Centre to consider a ceasefire like the unilateral ceasefire in (former PM Atal Bihari) Vajpayee's time during Ramzan (later this month) till Amarnath Yatra and Eid," she had told reporters. The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the BJP, which is sharing power with Mufti's PDP, opposed her call for a unilateral ceasefire claiming such a step was not at all in "national interest". An opinion came up during the discussion for a unilateral ceasefire on the

lines of one declared by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. We have a strong view. Unilateral ceasefire in the present situation is not in national interest at all," BJP state unit's chief spokesperson Sunil Sethi earlier said. Sethi said that militants were demoralised due to the Army's action and a unilateral ceasefire would ease pressure and allow them to re-emerge. Union Minister Singh asked why those advocating unilateral ceasefire on the pretext of Ramzan had not advised the terrorists. They (terrorists) are observing fast and in the Holy Quran they are directed not to indulge in any act of violence or harm anyone during fasting. They need to make understand this, he said. He said ceasefire was never one-sided. If the other side makes a mercy plea, then it makes

a sense, he said. Singh said the Centre had not received any proposal with regard to a ceasefire from the state government so far. It is their personal view (ceasefire during Ramzan) and there are people who make statements to address their constituencies. Home Minister Rajnath Singh has made it clear that there is no such proposal, he said. On Mufti's repeated plea for resumption of dialogue with Pakistan, he said it was the prerogative of the Centre. Every day it is being said (hold talks with Pakistan) but we have not done it till date. The Modi government is the only (dispensation) in the country which has taken a stand on Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir and terrorism) and has shown consistency and commitment, the Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office said. (PTI)



President Ram Nath Kovind attending the International Nurses Day Celebration at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Saturday.

PM trying to 'influence' K'taka voters with Nepal temple visits: Cong

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 /-/ The Congress today accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of trying to influence voters in Karnataka on the polling day through his temple visits in Nepal. Modi today prayed at Nepal's most sacred and oldest temple of Shiva (Pashupathi) in Nepal. Polling is underway in 222 out of 224 seats in Karnataka which is witnessing a three-cornered contest. Senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot alleged that the prime minister had timed his visit to the Himalayan nation on the Karnataka poll date, and was "giving a message to Hindus" in the southern state. Alleging violation of the model code of conduct, he said Modi's temple visits in Nepal were being aired on the day of polling in Karnataka. This is not a good tradition in a democracy. In Gujarat also, he held a road show after voting. Today, he has adopted a new path. When Karnataka is polling today, he has gone to Nepal and is worshipping in temples there, as he could not do so in the southern state due to elections," Gehlot said. The AICC general secretary said Modi, through his temple visits, was giving out a message to voters in Karnataka of how religious he was and that he was a Hindu. "If one asks him (Modi), no other person is Hindu, except the BJP and RSS people, besides him and Amit Shah," he said. On the Nepal visit being planned earlier, the former Rajasthan chief minister reiterated that the prime minister had timed his Nepal visit to coincide with the Karnataka polls. (PTI)

Frivolous cases should not reach apex court: AG to additional solicitors general

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 /-/ Law officers should ensure that frivolous appeals planned by ministries related to service matters of individuals do not reach the Supreme Court and special leave petitions are filed only in cases where a policy decision of the government is involved, the Attorney General is learnt to have told additional solicitors general. The AG told additional solicitors general at a recent meeting that when the Law Ministry refers proposals of various ministries to file SLPs in the top court challenging a high court order relating to service matter of individuals, the law officers should ensure that frivolous pleas are not allowed to reach the apex court. Sources aware of the meeting said the move is aimed at checking unnecessary government litigation in the top court. If a SLP has to be filed by a central ministry or a department, it approaches the Law Ministry which seeks the opinion of one of the additional solicitors general. If the opinion of the AG is positive, the SLP is filed. According to the Law Ministry, the central government is a party to 46 per cent of cases pending in courts and is hence one of the biggest litigants, a tag it wants to shed. Over 3.14 crore cases are pending in courts across India. "I will not take risk - this attitude is one of the major reason that (central) government is a party to lakhs of cases pending in courts. If quick decisions are taken by government departments and ministries, most of the issues would not reach courts," explained a Law Commission functionary who had worked on one of its reports on the proposed national litigation policy. In 2010, then Law Minister M Veerappa Moily had come out with a national litigation policy but the policy could not take off. Successive law ministers have worked on the policy but the Centre so far has not been able to evolve one. In a letter addressed to his cabinet colleagues heading various ministries, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had recently said, "The government must cease to be a compulsive litigant... The judiciary has to spend its maximum time in tackling cases where the government is a party, and the burden on the judiciary can only be reduced if the cases are filed after taking a careful and considered view". Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also termed the government as the "biggest litigant" and had pushed for a need to lessen the load on the judiciary which spends its maximum time in tackling cases where the government is a party. (PTI)

International Nurses' Day: Prez Kovind calls nurses 'true nation-builders'

NEW DELHI, MAY 12 /-/ President Ram Nath Kovind today on International Nurses' Day lauded the dedication and contribution of nurses to the nation and stressed on the need for strengthening the nursing sector. He also conferred the prestigious Florence Nightingale awards to 35 nurses for their outstanding services at a function at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. "Nurses play a very important role in the lives of people and their dedication and services is recognised by all. Nurses are the true nation-builders," the president said. The entire nation is grateful to the nursing community for their vital role in keeping the country healthy, he said. "At present, there are 1.7 nurses per 1,000 people in India, and the world average is 2.5 nurses. In the past few years, the number of registered nurses and other health workers has crossed 27 lakh (till March 2017). But this number is not sufficient," Kovind said.

Indian nurses' services and dedication are recognised all over the world, especially in the Gulf region where they are employed in a large number, he said. The nurses who have been awarded today represent the country's diversity in unity, the president said. Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda and Union Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey gave away the awards to the nurses at the Florence Nightingale awards ceremony. The awards are given to outstanding nursing personnel employed with the Centre, states or Union Territories.

Nadda expressed confidence that the Florence Nightingale Awardees of 2018 will inspire the nursing fraternity to rededicate themselves to quality healthcare. "I congratulate all the awardees of the Florence Nightingale awards 2018, who have been honoured with this prestigious award for their exemplary service and thank each one of you for your yeoman service and contribution towards patient care and well-being of fellow citizens," Nadda said. He said India is proud to celebrate International Nurses Day 2018, acknowledging the strong commitment, compassion and dedication that nurses display in the practice of their profession. (PTI)

Black money charge sheets against us baseless allegation: Chidambaram family

CHENNAI/NEW DELHI, MAY 12 /-/ The family of former Finance minister P Chidambaram today said the Income Tax Department (ITD) charge sheets against them under the black money law were "baseless allegations" as the overseas investments under question were fully reflected in their IT returns. The chartered accountants for the senior Congress leaders' wife Nalini and the one for his son Karti Chidambaram, daughter-in-law Srinidhi and a firm Chess Global Advisory Services Private Limited issued two separate but identical replies in response to the tax department's action. "The Income Tax returns are prepared and filed on the advice of the chartered accountants. The investments in question were made through bank remittances. They were fully disclosed in the returns of income filed under Section 139 of the Income Tax Act for the relevant assessment year. It is totally wrong to allege there was a willful failure to disclose the investments. The returns of income are a complete answer to the baseless allegation," the two statements issued today said. The statements added that the ITD prosecution complaints, filed yesterday before a court in Chennai, would be "opposed in accordance with law." Four criminal complaints were filed by the department before a special court in Chennai under Section 50 of the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015. Nalini Chidambaram, Karti and Srinidhi and a firm linked to Karti (Chess Global) have been charged for allegedly disclosing either partly or fully, immovable assets like the one at Barton, Cambridge in the UK worth Rs 5.37 crore, property worth Rs 80 lakh in the same country and assets worth Rs 3.29 crore in the US, ITD officials had claimed. The charge sheets stated that the Florence Nightingale awards as also the firm which Karti is one of the directors - Chess Global Advisory - "did not disclose" these investments to the tax authority in violation of the black money law. The Chidambarams and the firm, on April 27, had sent four separate replies to the specified Income Tax Department authority in Chennai stating that they had not defaulted in disclosing these assets to the taxman, and in certain cases they had revised their Income Tax returns to reflect the said overseas properties. The case pertains to the assessment year 2016-17. The charge sheets were expected to be taken up by the court on June 11. Officials had said the charge sheet had been filed as the investigation of the case had reached its "logical conclusion" and thus it could be presented before the court. The Income Tax Department had slapped the Black Money Act on Karti last year after found that assets created by him abroad were in alleged violation of law. The new anti-black money law deals with cases of overseas illegal assets, which till recently were probed under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

'Anybody can be PM, Rahul popular with public', says Shatrughan as he fires fresh salvo at PM

PATNA, MAY 12 /-/ Firing a fresh salvo, disgruntled BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha today questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's criticism of Rahul Gandhi for expressing readiness to become PM, and alleged that he was indulging in "attention diversion politics" instead of answering the "pertinent" questions raised by the Congress president in a series of tweets on a day when assembly polls are being held in Karnataka, the Patna Sahib BJP MP said the Congress president, who has "matured in the past few years", was popular with the general public and asked what was wrong if the leader heading the biggest, oldest national party saw a possibility of becoming the next Prime Minister. "Anybody can become PM in our country. Naamdar, Kaamdar, Daamdar or for that matter

any average Samajdaar, if he has the numbers and support. "Why are we making such a hue and cry about it? After all, isn't it their internal matter and any PMship has to be through the will of majority," Sinha said in a series of tweets tagging both Modi and the BJP and signing off with slogans of "Jai Karnataka, Jai Hind!" Modi had mocked Rahul Gandhi's remarks that he is ready to become the PM if Congress emerges as the largest party in the 2019 general election, calling him immature and naamdar (dynast). "You (Gandhi) are naamdar", while I am kaamdar (ordinary worker)," he had said earlier. Sinha, who is at loggerhead with party leadership ever since being ignored in Bihar election in 2015, is frequently seen in company of former Union minister

Yashwant Sinha who quit BJP recently after consistently attacking Modi and BJP president Amit Shah. He went to meet jailed RJD chief Lalu Prasad and had also met West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee recently in the national capital along with Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, another vocal critic of Modi Government. Sinha, who served as Union minister in the NDA government of A B Vajpayee, said that instead of answering "pertinent questions" raised by Congress President "we go for attention diversion politics an art which we have mastered, far from development and other issues". "Sir, you received our full support along with media support and now you are raising slogans so that it isn't taken over? What's wrong if the president of the biggest, oldest

national party sees the possibility and wishes to become the next PM, if he wins the upcoming elections," Sinha said on Twitter, tagging the BJP. "By the way, the president of the oldest party has really matured in the past few years and has been raising some pertinent questions which we are refusing to answer or even entertain. The Neezar, the Lalit, the Mallays, the Bank, the Rafael deal and so on," Sinha said in another tweet, tagging both Modi and the BJP. "Instead of answering, we go for attention diversion politics an art which we have mastered, far from development and other issues." "However Sir, it's a matter of our people, our politics and our policies, so less said the better. With regards to you! Jai Karnataka, Jai Hind!" the BJP leader said in another tweet on the micro blogging site. (PTI)



Himachal Pradesh Governor Acharya Devraj inaugurates cleanliness, protection and conservation drive along the Kalka-Shimla railway track from Baba Bhalku Station Museum near Old Bus Stand, in Shimla on Saturday.