



Tribeni Barman, winner of Femina Miss India Assam 2017 visiting a Bata store, in Guwahati.

Naroda Patiya case: Ex-BJP minister Kodnani moves HC to call Shah as witness

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 20 /- The Gujarat High Court has sought the SIT's stand on former BJP minister Maya Kodnani's plea to summon BJP president Amit Shah and seven others as additional witnesses in the 2002 Naroda Patiya massacre case against her. A bench of Justices Harsha Devani and Biren Vaishnav asked yesterday the Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed by the Supreme Court to probe Gujarat riots cases, to file its reply to Kodnani's plea for summoning the eight as witnesses for adducing additional evidence "in the interest of justice."

CBSE withdraws affiliation of 3 UP schools, downgrades others

NEW DELHI, APRIL 20 /- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has withdrawn the affiliation of three private schools in Uttar Pradesh and downgraded affiliation of two others following complaints of irregularities. The Board has also debarred King N Queens World School, in Kanpur from taking admission in Class XI and XII for two academic sessions after an inspection committee found it guilty of admitting students without sanction. The schools had also concealed facts from the enrolled candidate during admission process, the committee found. Among the schools whose provisional affiliation has been withdrawn are The Pillars Public School in Gorakhpur, Rajni Public School in Bulandshahr and Sir Syed Public School in Varanasi. "The affiliation of Bal Niketan Junior High School in Varanasi and Noorul Huda English Medium

School in Lucknow, has been downgraded by CBSE from Senior Secondary level to Secondary level," an official order said. The schools could not be reached for their comments on the telephone numbers listed on internet. Cracking the whip against the private schools violating the CBSE by-laws, the Board has issued show-cause notices to seven private schools including two in the national capital asking why their affiliation should not be withdrawn for various violations including lack of sanitary facilities, non constitution of sexual harassment committee and irregularities in appointments among others. The defaulter schools in Delhi are DPS RK Puram and DPS Mathura Road for a number of violations, which have been served the notice for various violations including the re-appointment or extension of their principals. The authorities at the two schools, when con-

tacted, they have not received any such notices yet. Five other schools, which have been served the notices are DPS Bhopal, The Senior Secondary School in Tamil Nadu, Matoshree Kashiben Vajraly International Vidyalaya in Mumbai and Margadarshan Central School in Karnataka. "In the coming days more schools will be issued show-cause notices which have been found violating various affiliation rules of the Board," a senior official said. The Board had recently issued show-cause notices to over 2,000 schools affiliated to it across the country for not making certain information public. As per the norms, all CBSE schools are mandated to make details public right from the number of water taps, Wi-Fi facilities with speed details to a complete breakup of monthly fees of each class, admission results, reserve funds and balance sheets. (PTI)

SC allows NDMC to auction Taj Mansingh hotel

NEW DELHI, APRIL 20 /- The Supreme Court today allowed civic agency NDMC to auction five-star hotel Taj Mansingh, presently being run by Tata Group firm Indian Hotel Company Ltd (IHCL), in the heart of the national capital. A bench comprising Justices P C Ghose and R F Nariman allowed the plea of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) that the Tata Group firm cannot have the right to suspend in the auctioning of the hotel. The bench, however, asked the civic body to grant six months "breathing time" to the company in vacating the hotel in case they lose out in the auction. The court also said that the "blemish-free" record of Tata Group firm IHCL may be taken into account by NDMC while auctioning the iconic property. The civic body had on March 3 told the apex court that it

wants to e-auction the hotel. The court had earlier asked IHCL, which challenged a Delhi High Court order allowing auction of the hotel, to file objections, if any, within a week. The IHCL had told the apex court that it was "not clear" why NDMC wanted to auction the prime property which gave the "best revenue" to it. The company had submitted that NDMC expert report suggests that the council would "lose revenue" if the hotel was auctioned to other players. The apex court had on November 21 last year directed that status quo be maintained with regard to NDMC's auctioning process of Taj Mansingh hotel. The IHCL had on November 8 last year approached the apex court against the Delhi High Court's order that cleared the decks for auctioning of the property. (PTI)

Guj CM, ministers & babus remove red beacons from their cars

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 20 /- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, his ministerial colleagues and senior government officials today removed red beacon lights from their official vehicles. The move comes a day after the Union Cabinet's decision to remove "blatant" red beacons from all vehicles, including that of the Prime Minister and the President. Taking the lead, Rupani himself removed the red beacon light placed atop his official

SUV during his visit to Valsad district this morning. Union Minister Parshotam Rupala also took the beacon off his vehicle during his visit to Amreli district. Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel told reporters in Gandhinagar that almost the entire cabinet and other officials have implemented the Union Cabinet's decision. "Almost all the our cabinet colleagues, including myself, have removed

4 terror suspects belonging to ISIS arrested

MUMBAI/LUCKNOW, APR 20 /- Four suspected terrorists belonging to the ISIS Khorasan module were arrested today for allegedly planting a major strike while six others were detained in a joint operation by police teams of Delhi and five other states. Raids were carried out this morning in Mumbai (Maharashtra), Jalandhar (Punjab), Narkatiaganj (Bihar), and Bijnor and Muzammar (both in Uttar Pradesh) in a special cell, the Anti-Terrorism Squads of UP and Maharashtra, and the police

of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Bihar, an official said. Inspector General of the UP ATS Aseem Arun, in a statement in Noida, said that four were arrested from their charges of hatching terror conspiracies. He said that the accused, associated with the IS-Khorasan module, were planning to launch a major terror attack in the country. Mufti Faizan and Tanveer, who are connected with the ISIS, were arrested from Bijnor district. Nazim Shamsah Ahmed (26), who hails from Bijnor, was nabbed from Muzammar township in Thane district ad-

joining Mumbai. Muzammar was arrested from Jalandhar district of Punjab. He said important documents relating to the ISIS were seized from them. According to an UP ATS statement in Lucknow, six others have been taken into custody and they are being questioned in Noida. The accused had got in touch with each other over the internet, Arun said, adding that central security agencies played an important role in the operation. According to the IG, the UP ATS had seized some important documents after the March 7 encounter in

Lucknow in which a suspected terrorist belonging to the Khorasan module was killed. Following this, the probe was expanded to five states, with the ATS having received information that the ISIS had been expanding its network in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Bihar and some youths from these states had joined the terror organisation. "All those arrested are in the age group of 18 to 25 years and were living in different places, like Mumbai, Jalandhar and UP. We have also found that they were definitely influenced by the material available on the

internet," UP ADG (Law and Order) Daljit Chaudhary said in Lucknow. Investigators said that one of them wanted to finance the group's activities, but he was continuously communicating with each other about carrying out some major strike in the near future. But police and other agencies of different states with the help of surveillance made the arrests before they could carry out any such attack, the ADG said. A spokesperson of the UP ATS said those arrested were suspected to be looking for potential recruits in Bihar. UP and Maharashtra. (PTI)

Nitish meets Sonia, calls for opposition unity to take on BJP

NEW DELHI, APRIL 20 /- The Supreme Court today asked the Calcutta High Court to expeditiously decide the plea relating to the constitutional validity of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act and an agreement promising transfer of powers from West Bengal government to the local authority. The apex court also re-manded to the High Court the pending plea of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) seeking implementation of the GTA Act and the 2011 tripartite memorandum of agreement (MoA) on transfer of powers. If the High Court says that the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act is unconstitutional and it does not survive then the entire MoA will be null and void. The Supreme Court will be to-

SC to CalHC: Decide pleas on Gorkhaland law, agreement forthwith

tally futile," a bench of Chief Justice J S Khehar and Justices D Y Chandrachud and S K Kaul said. The order to remand back the plea of GTA came after the apex court perused the orders passed by the High Court in various petitions challenging the validity of the GTA Act and the MoA. "We are informed that the vires/constitutional validity of the GTA Act and the MoA have been assailed before the Calcutta High Court.," "Having given our thoughtful consideration, we are of the view that firstly, the issue of validity of the GTA Act and the MoA are needed to be determined and only after that the implementation of the Act and MoA can be dealt with," the bench said and directed the High Court to decide the petitions as "expeditiously as possible". The apex court, on April 18, had asked the West Bengal government to file on record the orders passed by the High Court in matters challenging the constitutional validity of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act. Senior advocate P Rao, appearing for GTA, had said it was an elected body and the state government was not holding even the civic polls in the areas falling under it. Prior to this, GTA had moved the top court seeking implementation of the Act and MoA. West Bengal government's refusal to transfer administrative power and various subjects to it, in spite of a tripartite agreement that was reached between the Gorkha agitators, the state and the Centre in 2011. The apex court had agreed to

Sena MP Gaikwad engages in 'verbal spat' with cops

MUMBAI, APRIL 19 /- Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Gaikwad allegedly had a heated argument with cops after his functioning of ATMs at Latur in Maharashtra region, police said. Videos of the alleged heated argument between Gaikwad, his supporters and police personnel at Latur in Maharashtra region, have gone viral on social media. In the visuals, Gaikwad is purportedly seen arguing with a police officer during a protest over non-functioning ATMs at Latur. The Lok Sabha member from adjoining Osmanabad constituency, Gaikwad, who reached

BJP using Governors to impose its political interests: Vijayan

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 20 /- Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan today hit out at the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre and alleged that the saffron party was "using Governors to impose its political interests in states." "BJP's attitude is to use Governors for its purpose and what happened in Goa and Manipal is the best example for it," he said while inaugurating a seminar on 'Centre-State relations' here. Referring to the formation of BJP-led governments in Goa and Manipal, Vijayan said Governors of these states did not even invite the party (Congress), which got a majority in the polls, and instead handed over power to a party (BJP) which came second. "It was an undemocratic move and not in tune with the spirit of Constitution. Centre-state relations have become very bad under the BJP government. The position taken by the Centre, especially towards the non-BJP led state governments, is a clear indication of tension between the Centre and states on certain issues," he said. Re-calling his meeting with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal yesterday, Vijayan said the Centre has not even recognised him (Kejriwal) as the Chief Minister. "Some Central leaders have come out openly stating that he had only the role of an advisor," Vijayan said. He alleged that the Centre was implementing the RSS's policies that challenge the federal system and were taking steps to "centralise powers while talking about decentralisation." "Alleging that the Centre was making the states weak, the Left leader said the most anti-democratic step was the unilateral dissolution of the Planning Commission. "Another unilateral step was the cutting down of the state's share of resources to 60-40 from 80-20," he said. Vijayan alleged that the agenda was to replace the federal system with "Central authority" in the country. Referring to the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Kerala Chief Minister said many states have said that they have a problem with the tax regime. Opposition leader in the state Assembly Ramesh Chennithala. (PTI)

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan addressing a seminar on center-state ties at AKG center at Thiruvananthapuram.



Sen MP Gaikwad engages in 'verbal spat' with cops



Latur yesterday, had sent his aide to withdraw money from an ATM at Latur. However, the aide returned empty-handed, saying the ATM had run out of cash. This happened with a few other ATMs, prompting the Sena MP to go out and stage a protest with his supporters outside an ATM. When policemen arrived and requested Gaikwad to discontinue his protest as it was hampering the vehicular traffic, the Sena MP allegedly shouted at them, police said. Giving his version of the incident, Gaikwad said, "There is no money in the ATMs for the last 15 days. I had asked them to do it" (the BJP-led government) asked us to give them 50 days (after demonetisation, for formalisation of financial transactions). We gave them 100 days, then 200 days. It is the job of the (Union) Finance Minister and the Finance Minister of Maharashtra. It is also the job of the Guardian Minister of Latur district to rectify the situation." (PTI)

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RSS leader Indresh Kumar (2nd R) along with Seami Chinmyanand (L) and Maulana Hamidul Hadrah (2nd L) and Maulana Kaubk Muztabba Abdi (2nd R) at a meeting on Ayodhya issue organised by Muslim Rashtriya Manch, in Lucknow.

Dhinkaran asked to appear before Delhi Police on Saturday

CHENNAI, APRIL 20 /- AIADMK deputy chief T V Dhinkaran has been asked to appear before the Crime Branch of Delhi Police on Saturday in a case of alleged bribery to EC officials for retrieving the party's 'two leaves' symbol. The Delhi Police had last night served summons to him in the case. Assistant Commissioner Sanjay and another official served legal summons to Dhinkaran at his Besant Nagar residence here. The Delhi Police had also issued a lookout notice against Dhinkaran yesterday. The lookout notice was issued in the wake of inputs that Dhinkaran was an NRI and country to flee the country. The Crime Branch had on April 16 arrested an alleged middleman, Sukesh Chandrashekar in New Delhi in connection with the case. He

claimed that he had told Dhinkaran that he will get a favourable verdict from the Election Commission of India in the party symbol case, he said. It has been learnt that he had allegedly struck a deal for Rs 50 crore for helping the AIADMK faction keep the 'two leaves' symbol. Dhinkaran, the nephew of jailed AIADMK general secretary V K Sasikala, is facing a revolt by an influential faction of the party led by Chief Minister K Palaniswami and a host of ministers, who had on Tuesday declared the ouster of the once powerful aunt-nephew duo, and extended a hand of friendship to the Pannelsavam camp. Meanwhile, Senior AIADMK leaders M Thambidurai and D Jayakumar today separately called on Tamil Nadu Governor Ch Vidyasagar

Rao, but insisted their meetings were not political. Thambidurai, also the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, said Rao was his "friend" and described the meeting as a "courtesy call," while Finance Minister Jayakumar, who also holds Fisheries portfolio, discussed the issue of Vice-Chancellor's appointment to the Tamil Nadu Fisheries University. "There is no political significance in the meeting. We did not speak of friendship," said Thambidurai said when asked if he appraised the Governor of the ongoing rumblings in the ruling AIADMK. Thambidurai said Rao has been his friend since the former was a minister in the AB Jayapayee cabinet in 1998-99. "It was a courtesy call," Thambidurai said, adding, he used to meet Rao, also Governor of

Maharashtra, whenever he visited Mumbai. Thambidurai's meeting with the Governor assumes significance as it came in the wake of changing dynamics in the ruling AIADMK where ministers in the V K Sasikala faction had revolted against their leader TTV Dhinkaran, deciding to keep his family away from the party. They had also initiated the modalities of merging their faction led by Chief Minister Palaniswami with the other led by former Chief Minister O Pannelsavam. After meeting the Governor, Jayakumar said it was an official one. "He is the Chancellor of the Fisheries University and I'm the Pro-Chancellor or the Fisheries Minister. I discussed with him the appointment of a V C for the university," he said. (PTI)