

PMaccuses Congress of practicing vote bank politics; dividing people, Rahul hits back

AJMER/MORENA, OCT 6 /--/ In a scathing attack on the Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today accused the Opposition party of practising vote bank politics and dividing people to get into power. The Prime Minister made the charge at a rally here just ahead of the announcement of assembly election dates for Rajasthan and four other states in November and December. He asked people not to let the Congress get into power again. Modi said vote bank politics is not limited to elections now. Political parties which do vote bank politics divide the bureaucracy when they are in power and this badly affects governance, he said. They allocate the budget as per vote bank politics and therefore overall development does not happen, he said at the meeting which marked the end of Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje's state-wide political 'yatra'. The Congress has established this tradition in the past 60 years, Modi said. "With great difficulty, the country has picked the right direction now after 60 years. Don't give them another chance again, he stated and added that the Congress leaders' high command is a family and they can do politics only by revering it. He accused the party low-level politics. The Congress leaders were questioning the surgical strikes by the Army across the Line of Control two years ago and insulting soldiers, he said. They should be ashamed of indulging in such politics, Modi said. The rally marked the end of Raje's Rajasthan Gaurav Yatra', an outreach exercise by the Bharatiya Janata Party. The Prime Minister's rally ended shortly before the Election Commission's press conference in Delhi announcing the polling dates for Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana. Meanwhile, Congress president Rahul Gandhi today accused the ruling BJP of working for the interest of a few rich people and ignoring the farmers and other sections of the society. Rahul also raked up the multi-billion Rafale fighter jet deal with France to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Congress president said his party will ensure implementation of the tribal rights bill if voted to power in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, which go to polls in November and December. "If you want to help out the rich, do it...but also help the farmers and other poor sections of the society. If Rs 3 lakh crore of the rich can be written off, then why not give such concessions to farmers and other poor sections of the society?" he asked. (PTI)

# Assembly polls in 5 states between Nov 12 and Dec 7, results on Dec 11

## CHHATTISGARH TO VOTE IN 2 PHASES

NEW DELHI, OCT 6 /--/ Assembly polls in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana will be held between November 12 and December 7 in what may be a virtual semi-final to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Counting of votes will be taken up together in all the five states on December 11, the Election Commission announced today. While Chhattisgarh will go to the polls in two phases on November 12 and 20, elections in Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram will be held on November 28. Polling in Rajasthan and Telangana will be held on December 7. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) OP Rawat announced. The Congress, which is ruling in Mizoram, is trying to wrest power from the BJP in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In Telangana, the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) had dissolved the assembly on September 6, paving way for early elections. Like in the past, Chhattisgarh will have elections in two phases. In the first phase, 18 seats in south Chhattisgarh affected by left wing extremism will go to polls and in the second phase voting will be held in 72 seats in the northern parts of the state, Rawat said.

Responding to a question, the CEC defended the decision to have two phases, saying in the past too, voters, political leaders and security personnel have been targeted by Naxals and it was necessary to



Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat announcing the poll dates for the assembly elections in five states in New Delhi

**CHHATTISGARH**  
NOVEMBER 12,  
NOVEMBER 20

**MADHYA PRADESH,  
MIZORAM**  
NOVEMBER 28

**RAJASTHAN,  
TELANGANA**  
DECEMBER 7

**COUNTING**  
DECEMBER 11

have polls in multiple phases. The model code of conduct, which bars the ruling party and even other parties from disturbing level playing field, came into force in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram immediately. The term of the Madhya Pradesh assembly is ending on January 7, Rajasthan on January 20, Chhattisgarh of January 5 and Mizoram

on December 15. After a recent EC decision to impose model code immediately in states where assemblies are dissolved prematurely, Telangana is already under the poll code. The term of its assembly was to end in June, 2019. Much is at stake in the polls in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan as the BJP and the Congress are in a direct contest in the three states af-

ter the saffron party had trounced its arch-rival in 2013 and then gone to decimate it in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls as well. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and its president Amit Shah, the BJP has since 2014 got better of the Congress in every major state polls where both were the main rivals. In 2013, the BJP had won 165, 163 and 49 seats Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh assemblies respectively, with the Congress securing 58, 21 and 39 seats. The corresponding strength of these assemblies are 230, 200 and 90. In Telangana, the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi is seen to be going strong and will face contest from the Congress and the BJP. After winning 63 seats in the 2014 assembly polls, the TRS ranks have swelled with members of rival parties joining it over the years. The state assembly has 119 seats. In Mizoram, the Congress has been in power since 2008. In the hill state with 40 assembly seats, Congress has been in fight against stae parties Mizo National Front and Mizo Peoples Conference. Putting in place security arrangements for the polls, the Union home ministry has ordered for the deployment of about 25,000 troops for election duties in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. These paramilitary and state police personnel, part of the additional 250 companies to be sent in for the polls, have been asked to take position by October 15 in states assigned to them. (PTI)

### Petrol price cut

#### FM questions commitment of Cong president, his allies

NEW DELHI, OCT 6 /--/ With non-BJP ruled states refusing to cut taxes on fuel, Union finance minister Arun Jaitley today questioned Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his "reluctant allies" if they are only committed to tweets and television bytes when it comes to giving relief to the common man. In a Facebook post titled 'The oil prices and the hypocrisy of the opposition', Jaitley accused the government critics of doing a 'volte face' by terming the cut in petrol and diesel prices by Rs 2.5 per litre by the Centre as 'bad economics'. He said states collect extra taxes when oil prices go up since their taxes are ad valorem. "Yet we have a situation where a number of non-BJP non-NDA States have refused to pass on any benefit to the consumer. What are the people supposed to conclude? "Are Rahul Gandhi and his reluctant allies only committed to tweets and television bytes when it comes to give relief to the common man," the finance minister said. Jaitley said the challenges thrown up by the increase in the international price of crude oil is serious and cannot be resolved by either the tweets or television bytes of some Opposition leaders. "Must not the non-BJP States be candid with the people and tell them that both in 2017 and 2018 they refused to give any relief to the people even from their higher revenues. They sent out tweets and gave television bytes but when it came to performance, they looked the other way," Jaitley said. The government had on Thursday announced a Rs 2.5 per litre cut in petrol and diesel prices, of which Rs 1.5 per litre is on account of reduction in excise duty and the remaining Rs 1 per litre would be absorbed by oil marketing companies. It also appealed to the state governments to cut VAT rates. BJP-ruled states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Assam, Jharkhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh followed suit. Non-BJP ruled states like Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal have refused to cut taxes. Jaitley said the political crisis in Venezuela and Libya has adversely impacted oil producing countries and the US sanctions on Iran also have increased uncertainties over supplies. He said the high cost of crude oil has also impacted the currency situation. "India's macroeconomic fundamentals with regard to its fiscal deficit, inflation, foreign exchange reserves etc. are fairly stable. Tax collections are encouraging," Jaitley said. However, a high cost of crude oil adversely impacts the current account deficit. That, in turn, impacts the currency. Additionally, the hardening of the dollar has further impacted most global currencies. (PTI)

## PM put pressure on poll panel to delay PC, alleges Cong; CEC rubbishes claim

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, OCT 6 /--/ The Congress today alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "put pressure" on the Election Commission (EC) to delay its press conference to announce poll dates in five states as he was scheduled to address a rally in Rajasthan, a claim rubbished by the poll panel chief. Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat said in Delhi that the EC does not work under pressure and listed three reasons for the nearly three-hour delay in giving out the schedule. In Kolkata, senior Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala accused the prime minister of "putting pressure" on the EC to delay its press conference. He also said the CEC's explanation is "preposterous" and wondered whether BJP is the "super EC". The EC was set to hold a press conference at 12.30 pm but had rescheduled it subsequently to 3.00 pm. The five states where Assembly polls will be held in November-December are Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana. "There is no pressure... EC does not work under pressure... if someone thinks concessions have been made, they are free to complain," Rawat told newsmen in New Delhi. On shifting of the press conference's timing, the CEC listed three reasons - last-minute assessment of timeline for publication of Telangana electoral rolls, a High Court direction that Telangana electoral rolls be shown to it before final pub-

*The EC's explanation for the delay is preposterous. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is guilty of pressuring the EC to delay its press conference as he was scheduled to address a rally. The EC was made to wait for Modi's rally*  
—Randeep Singh Surjewala

lication and request from a state to delay by-polls due to possibility of bad weather. Responding to a series of questions on Congress' accusation regarding postponing of the press conference, Rawat said: "Politicians are political creatures and they have to see politics in everything. We have no comments." He explained that the electoral rolls being punched into the system was proving to be a problem in Telangana and the engineers from C-DAC were on the spot to help personnel using the system. Now, the final publication of electoral roll will be made on October 12 instead of October 8. He said keeping in mind the delay in publication of electoral rolls, Telangana polls have been kept at the "fag end" of the schedule so that preparations are not affected. Telangana and Rajasthan will have elections in a single phase on December 7. He said EC officials will visit Telangana and Mizoram in the coming days, though usually such visits take place before announcement of poll schedule. Rawat said EC's team of officials had already been to the state and the poll

panel was satisfied that elections can be held there. However, Surjewala was not impressed with the CEC's reply. "The EC's explanation for the delay is preposterous. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is guilty of pressuring the EC to delay its press conference as he was scheduled to address a rally. The EC was made to wait for Modi's rally," he told reporters. The Prime Minister addressed a public rally at Ajmer. Surjewala also said that the EC had done a similar thing while announcing poll dates for Gujarat last year. "But both the BJP and the EC should remember that such tactics won't bear any results and the people of Rajasthan and India won't give in to any sort of allurements as they have made up their mind against the anti-people BJP government," he said. "In Gujarat, BJP IT cell tweeted the election dates even before ECI. ECI delinked Gujarat elections from Himachal to enable PM Modi to make a slew of announcements. ECI again deferred PC to enable PM Modi to do the same in Rajasthan. Is BJP the Super EC," Surjewala later said in a tweet.



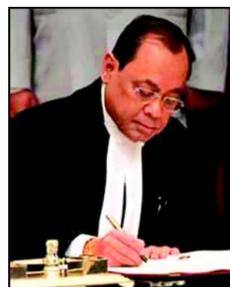
An artisan giving final touches to the idol of goddess Durga at Kumartuli on Saturday

## CJI disagrees with apex bar body's demand for lifting ban on lawyers' strike

NEW DELHI, OCT 6 /--/ Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi today disagreed with a suggestion by the apex bar body to lift a 16-year-old ban on strikes by lawyers, wondering why there should be a strike at all. Justice Gogoi's response came after Bar Council of India chairman Manan Kumar Mishra raised the issue of lifting the ban at a BCI event to felicitate the new CJI. The CJI's view was also shared by apex court's Justice Arun Mishra, who reminded the lawyers that their absence in court will affect people's liberty and deny

many of their rights. Justice Gogoi, who was sworn in as the CJI on October 3, said, "I don't think it is an issue at all. Why go into the legalities. Why should there be a strike? I am sure there won't be any". Echoing his views, Justice Mishra said that the strikes of the Bar can only be supported in "exceptional cases when the democracy is in danger" or for "saving the judicial system" but otherwise "it has no right to go on strike". "Can we afford jungle raj? Can we shut the doors for common man in rule of law. How many persons' liberty is affected when you are not in

court that day. How many persons are bereft of their rights that day," said Justice Mishra. Demanding lifting of the ban, the BCI Chairman said that if the mouth of lawyers is shut it will destroy the very democratic setup of the country". "The legal fraternity has a great faith on the CJI. We are sure that you will restore our freedom," he said. Justices N V Ramana and Mohan M Shantanagoudar, both apex court judges, were also present on the occasion. In a 2002 judgement, an apex court bench had held that lawyers have no right to go on strike or give a call for boycott, not



even a token strike. Justice Gogoi also expressed concern over the issue of large number of undertrials in the country. He said that the figure of undertrials in the country is very disturbing and added that a large segment of the country's young population is in jail. 67 per cent of the prison population are undertrials out of which 47 per cent are between the age of 18 and 30, said CJI. Out of this 67 per cent, 66 per cent belong to the Scheduled Caste and 71 per cent are below Class 10 and 28 per cent are illiterates," he added. (PTI)

### AT A GLANCE

#### Khaleda Zia in hospital

DHAKA: Bangladesh's jailed former Prime Minister and BNP chief Khaleda Zia was Saturday admitted to a specialised state-run hospital here for proper treatment following a court order as her health deteriorated. Zia, 73, is currently on trial for corruption charges in a makeshift courtroom inside a 19th-century British-built prison where she is the only inmate and is failing health.