



(Left to right) Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi offering prayers at Somnath Temple. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing Gujarat Vikas Rally as part of the election campaign for the upcoming state assembly polls in Morbi on Wednesday.

PM coins 'Grand Stupid Thought' to counter Rahul's 'Gabbar Singh Tax'

MORBI, NOV 29 /-/ Continuing his high decibel campaign in poll-bound Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for calling GST 'Gabbar Singh Tax' and said those who looted the country could only think of dacoits. In a stinging rebuttal to Rahul's repeated criticism of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), a key economic reform of the NDA government, Modi said a recently emerged 'economist' was propagating a 'grand stupid thought' by suggesting that GST rates capped at 18 per cent. Making a fresh bid for power in his home state, where the BJP has ruled for over two decades, Modi also listed various development works by the government on water conservation, agriculture and development of the Saurashtra re-

gion. Addressing a huge rally in Morbi town in the region, which goes to polls in the first phase on December 9, he accused the Congress of taking credit for minor schemes, like providing hand-pumps, while saying that the BJP rule brought in major works like the Narmada project. Making a strong appeal to the people to vote for the BJP in this Patidar community stronghold, the Prime Minister said his party should not be voted out for 100 years. "Today, some so-called smart people, some new economists have emerged who are misleading people," he declared in his speech in Gujarat. "Those who have looted people throughout their life, they can only remember dacoits." Modi said in a reply to Gandhi's 'Gabbar Singh Tax' jibe, recalling the iconic villain from the Bollywood blockbuster "Sholay". He

said Gandhi was propagating a 'grand stupid thought' in the name of GST, telling people that they will slash all tax rates and make it 18 per cent. This means 18 per cent tax on salt and 18 per cent tax on luxury cars costing Rs 5 crore, he noted. "What kind of madness is this... how such an economist has emerged here? You want to make goods used by the poor like clothes, footwear and food costlier and you want to make cigarettes and liquor cheaper," he said, ripping into the "anti-poor" Congress over its criticism of the tax reform. The Prime Minister went on to say that making cigarettes cheaper means bringing cancer in every home and asked which rich people would benefit by making liquor cheaper. He also brought up Rahul's grandmother, the late Indira Gandhi.

Rahul attacks Modion Rafale deal

VISAVADAR, NOV 29 /-/ Rahul Gandhi today began his two-day visit of poll-bound Gujarat with a visit to the famous Somnath temple, reached out to the Patidar community, and attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his silence on the Rafale fighter jet deal. Rahul addressed an election rally at Visavadar in Junagadh district after offering prayers at the shrine of Lord Shiva in the afternoon in Gir Somnath district. Referring to the 2015 quota stir in which 14 members of the Patidar community were killed in police firing, Gandhi said if anyone raises his voice he either gets beaten up or has to face bullets in Gujarat. "All the communities are raising their voice here against the government. But what do you get if you raise your voice in Gujarat? You are beaten up, you have to face bullets," he said. "I asked Modi three questions (on the Rafale deal). First, is there a difference in the cost of the planes in the first and the second contract (signed with a French firm), please give the reply in yes or no. "Why was the contract given to private industrialist friend instead of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)? And did you seek the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Security for the deal?" Gandhi asked. Stepping up his offensive against Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of the Gujarat elections, Congress president Rahul Gandhi today sought to make the state's ruling BJP accountable for its promises in the last polls. Rahul also brought up the BJP's 22-year rule in Gujarat and said people were demanding answers. 22 saloon ka hisaab, Gujarat mange jawab (Gujarat demands answers for 22 years of BJP rule), he tweeted. Seeking to pin the government down on the issue of housing, the Congress leader asked the Prime Minister whether it would take 45 more years to provide new houses to Gujaratis. Giving numbers to buttress his argument, he said.

Bengal has another chance to lead: Prez



President Ram Nath Kovind meeting President of Ramakrishna Mission and Math at Belur Math in Howrah

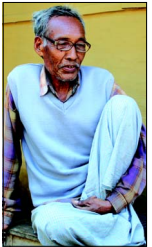
KOLKATA, NOV 29 /-/ President Ram Nath Kovind today said West Bengal, which had been among the country's earliest industrial and manufacturing economies, has been given another opportunity to lead with the explosion of digital technologies in cutting edge disciplines. Kovind, who was addressing the centenary celebrations of Bose Institute here, said the state with its legacy and top educational institutions should have led the IT revolution in the country. "But for whatever reasons it was a slow starter in IT and IT-enabled services and IT moved to other states, such as those in south. Now Bengal has another chance, we are in the midst of an explosion of digital technologies," Kovind said in his address. "With cutting edge disciplines like precision manufacture and bio-informatic changing the way we think and robotics changing the way we live, it throws up great opportunities for Bengal in science and for its rich talent pool of young scientists," Kovind said. Like the way Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, who was an innovator and scientist of world class distinction and had laid the foundation for revolutionary technology like modern wireless communication, it would be appropriate for Bengal to embrace this new era of innovation, he observed. Kovind said that in the first half of 20th century Kolkata was the scientific capital and technology hub of the country and research in physics and chemistry in pharmaceuticals and tropical diseases was carried out here and cited across international borders. "As the leading centre of science and engineering education, young engineering students from other parts would not complete their education without a visit to Kolkata," he said. Referring to the construction of the iconic Howrah Bridge, he said "Made by a local company it was a feat of civil engineering. Bengali scientists proved science cannot be limited to labs. The pioneering Bengali scientists were the earliest entrepreneurs who wanted to do something for the country."

State to get World Bank subsidy to buy 130 electric buses

KOLKATA, NOV 29 /-/ The West Bengal government has negotiated with the World Bank to avail subsidy to buy 130 electric buses for plying in Kolkata, Asansol and Durgapur, state transport minister Suvendu Adhikari told the Assembly. The World Bank has agreed to provide a subsidy of Rs seven lakh per bus, Adhikari said during the question hour. While 100 buses would ply in Kolkata, the remaining 30 would not complete their education without a visit to Kolkata," he said. Referring to the construction of the iconic Howrah Bridge, he said "Made by a local company it was a feat of civil engineering. Bengali scientists proved science cannot be limited to labs. The pioneering Bengali scientists were the earliest entrepreneurs who wanted to do something for the country."

Veteran Naxal leader of Naxalbari peasant movement passes away

SILIGURI, NOV 29 /-/ A veteran Naxal leader Khodan Mallick (79) who played vital role in the peasant movement during 60's at Naxalbari passed away on Wednesday at North Bengal Medical College and Hospital (NBMCCH). Mallick, close aide of Kanu Sanyal, was one of the daring leader during Naxalite move-



ment. He was chosen as the leader of gorilla force and provided training to the cadres how to fire gun and attack with bow and arrow inside Tukuria and Dalkha forest under Naxalbari. Mallick also had visited Beijing in China to meet Mao Se Tung along with Kanu Sanyal. Khokan Mazumdar and Deepak Biswas via Kathmandu in 1968 after hearing veteran Krishna Babdur Poudel from Kalimpong visited China on foot through Jelepote route carrying a letter for Mao Se Tung.

Police had burnt Mallick's house during movement when he was hiding in the forest. Mallick was admitted at NBMCCH since couple of days after suffering from various illnesses including hearting problem. Various leaders including his fan followers and common people paid tribute to the Naxal leader at NBMCCH. Later his dead body was taken to his residence at Dhulia Joke under Khorbari block. Abhijit Mazumdar, general secretary of CPI (ML) liberation expressed deep condolence over the death of Mallick. Mazumdar said: "He was an architect of Naxal movement. He fought for the sake of poor and underprivileged farmers who were deprived from their democratic rights."

STF nabbs ABT operative from Nepal border

KOLKATA, NOV 29 /-/ The Kolkata Police's Special Task Force (STF) has arrested a man for his alleged association with the banned Ansarulabha Bangla Team (ABT) from the India-Nepal border, taking the total number of people in custody for links with the Bangladesh terror outfit to five. Omar Farooq alias Mohammed Aftab Khan was arrested by the STF near the Nepal border when he was trying to escape to the neighbouring country, a senior official said. The sleuths had announced a reward for any information on Khan and two others - Shopon Biswas alias Tamim and Nayana Gazaliasafo. With Khan's arrest, the total number of people arrested by the Kolkata Police for their alleged links with the Bangladesh terrorist group has risen to five. Acting on the information obtained after grilling the four other arrested persons, a police team conducted a raid at a hideout near the India-Nepal border and nabbed Aftab. The accused was attached to the banned terror outfit's explosives wing and was an expert in preparing improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the official said. Aftab had entered India with the help of Mohammad Sahadat Hossain, who was arrested from central Kolkata last week, he said. The accused, along with Tamim, had stayed at a hotel in Howrah for a couple of days, the official said. The STF had last week arrested two ABT terrorists, Samsad Khan and Rizual Islam, along with an arms supplier, Monotosh Dey, from the Kolkata railway station and seized several fake identity cards and firearms from their possession. The terrorists were suspected to be behind the killing of secular bloggers and writers in Bangladesh.

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Terrorism, radicalisation greatest threats facing world: Rajnath

MOSCOW, NOV 29 /-/ Terrorism and radicalisation are the two greatest threats facing the world and India is making efforts to eliminate the menace, Indian home minister Rajnath Singh has said. Addressing the Indian diaspora here on Tuesday, Singh said his three-day visit to Russia had led to concrete outcomes to strengthen cooperation between the two countries in the field of security, counter-terrorism, counter-radicalisation, anti-drug trafficking, counterfeit currency, information sharing and on training specialists in these fields. Terrorism and radicalisation are the two greatest threats facing the world, he told the gathering. The home minister informed the gathering about the efforts of the Indian government in controlling terrorism and neutralising the infiltrating terrorists as well as about the determination of the Indian armed forces in responding to various provocations.

Biswa Bangla is my creation, I did not sell it to the state gov't: Mamata



A sketch of chief minister Mamata Banerjee made by power minister Sobhandeb Chatterjee while she was delivering her speech at the Assembly today

EOI CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, NOV 29 /-/ For the first time since BJP leader Mukul Roy triggered the controversy over the logo of Biswa Bangla at a party rally on November 16, the government has made the personal property of Mamata's nephew and party MP Abhishek Banerjee, the chief minister today said it was matter of Bengal's pride and in future all brands to be showcased by the West Bengal government would have the brand of Biswa Bangla. Mamata said this today in the state Assembly where the Opposition staged a walk-out on Tuesday after the government tabled the Biswa Bangla university bill. They alleged since there was controversy going on regarding it and cases were filed in High Court, the government should have refrained from tabling the bill. "I felt bad about it. Biswa Bangla is a matter of pride



CM Mamata Banerjee after laying the foundation of new state Assembly building —Shyamal Maitra

for the people of West Bengal. They are spreading calumny without any reason. This logo is my creation and I gave it over to the government. Just gave the ownership of the logo to the gov't. I have not sold it. This was launched on December 16, 2013. I will not let them go without managing the gov't and people will not forgive them too", the chief minister said. Later at a media meet minister for education Partha Chatterjee also asserted that the logo was a creation of the chief minister and she did not demand any royalty for that. The chief minister also used this occasion to attack the Opposition when the Congress party saying while she supported them in Delhi here for publicity they were boycotting the House. "In Delhi I am with you but here you are boycotting the House. This is not acceptable," the chief minister said.