



Picture shows the media team from these islands calling on the Lt. Governor of Puducherry, Kiran Bedi on Saturday.

Right to contest polls from jail is not a right to campaign: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 /-/- The right to contest an election from jail does not give anyone the right to be released for campaigning, the Delhi High Court today said while rejecting custody parole to MLA Mukhtar Abbas Ansaari to canvass for himself in the UP Assembly polls. "A right to contest the election cannot imply that the candidate gets a right to be released from jail for canvassing as a candidate for being elected. If the candidate is in custody for an alleged offence, it would be the discretion of the court to release him or not, depending on the facts and circumstances of the case," Justice Mukta Gupta observed. Setting aside the trial court's decision to grant custody parole to Ansaari, the judge, in a 28-page order, said "when a person in custody fills up nomination as a candidate, he does not get a vested right to be released for canvassing. He runs the risk of not being released on bail to contest election from custody." Ansaari, an MLA who recently joined the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) to contest from Mau Assembly seat in UP, was given custody parole by a trial court on February 16 till March 4, enabling him to campaign in the election. The order was stayed by the high court after Election Commission of India (ECI) moved a plea seeking cancellation of his parole on the ground that he may influence witnesses in the 2005 murder case of BJP MP Krishnanand Rai in which he is facing trial in a Delhi court. The High Court observed that "the legal right of a candidate to contest an election does not translate into a legal right to canvass for his candidature."

ATA GLANCE

Ex-Union minister P Shivshankar passes away

HYDRABAD: Former Union minister P Shivshankar, an influential Congress leader during the governments of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, passed away here today. He was 90. Shivshankar died this morning due to old age-related health issues, his son Vinay Kumar told news agency PTI. Shivshankar served as a judge in the then Andhra Pradesh High Court, but resigned from his job and practised law in the High Court and Supreme Court, he said.

Modified pellet guns for J&K

NEW DELHI: With pellet guns leaving hundreds of protesters in Jammu and Kashmir with severe eye injuries, a modified version of the weapon will now be used to ward off any protest ahead or during any anti-militancy operations. CRPF Director General K Durga Prasad, who is retiring tomorrow, said the paramilitary force had taken the decision of modifying the pellet guns to minimise injuries. The modified version of pellet guns will have a "deflector," an attachment on the muzzle end to prevent the pellets from going up.



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee at the inauguration of Kamal Nayan Shankar Netralaya at Rajarhat

Mamata asks pvt hospitals to make a new start, gives them 10 days

KOLKATA, FEB 27 /-/- West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today again targeted private hospitals and nursing homes saying they cannot be turned into places of business and "kasaikhana" (abattoir). Mamata said the private health facilities should not "ignore" poor patients and serve them with a smile. "I don't disagree you have to look for money because you have invested here, but that does not mean that while trying to make profit you will turn the hospitals into abattoir (kasaikhana)," she said while inaugurating the second centre of Sankara Netralaya at Rajarhat here. The chief minister, however, said that all were not bad and acknowledged getting complaints against only a few. Mamata, who is also the health minister of the state, advised the hospital authorities to open fair price medicine shops and diagnostic centres. "What has happened has happened. Let us start a new beginning... Take seven to 10 days' time," she said. Last week she had announced setting up of the West Bengal Health Regulatory Commission, for which a bill is due to be tabled on March 3, to monitor complaints of inflated billing by private health facilities while severely criticising their wayward functioning. At a meeting with the representatives of the private facilities, she had accused them of overcharging patients, negligence in treatment, keeping patients in ICUs and on ventilators for long periods without justification and not releasing bodies if the bills were not settled.

'Moonlight' hogs limelight on Oscar night

ANNOUNCEMENT MIX-UP STEALS THUNDER OF SHOW

LOS ANGELES, FEB 27 /-/- Barry Jenkins' "Moonlight" walked away with the top award at the Oscars but its thunder was stolen by a bizarre announcement mix-up

that initially declared "La La Land" as the best picture winner. The final moment of the 89th Academy Award ceremony was full of confusion as Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway mistakenly announced "La La Land" as the winner because they had the wrong envelope. The producers of "La La Land" were almost through their acceptance speech when the error was detected and Jordan Horowitz, one of the producers, graciously called the team of "Moonlight" onstage. "I'm sorry, no, there's a mistake. 'Moonlight,' you guys won best picture. This is not a joke," Horowitz said. A shocked Jenkins said: "...even in my



Barry Jenkins takes a picture of his engraved Oscar — Reuters

Govt smells 'anti-nationalism' in martyr's daughter's FB post

■ BJP MP compares Gurmehar Kaur with Dawood for her campaign against violence, Rijju says 'polluted' mind ■ Cong rushes to her defence

NEW DELHI, FEB 27 /-/- Opposition parties rushed to the defence of a Kargil martyr's daughter after she came under harsh criticism today from BJP members for her campaign against violence in the name of nationalism.

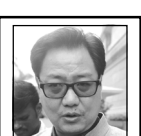
One BJP MP, Pratap Simha of Karnataka, compared Gurmehar Kaur to wanted gangster Dawood Ibrahim, while Union minister Kiren Rijju suggested her mind was "polluted". One person, on Facebook, threatened to rape her. "You may not like what the person thinks but... mindless threats, trolling emanating from people whom the Prime Minister of India follows (sic). This is the worst form of state intimidation and this is not how democracies and democratic countries function," said Congress spokesman Manish Tiwari. The 24-year-old Kaur's social media campaign, promoting free speech and condemning violence in the name of nationalism, has also won her massive support and caught the imagination of many young people. Reacting to the BJP MP's remarks against her, he said: "Such a gentleman certainly does not deserve to be in Parliament. Someone who has no respect for the families of martyrs..."

For the pain of a young lady who grew up without a father because her father laid down his life to protect the unity and integrity of the country... Such a gentleman definitely has no right to sit in the highest seat of India's democracy. "Tewari said that unfortunately, this is an ethos which has become intrinsic to the BJP



because it flows from the top. "When you have the Prime Minister of India referring to the media as 'bazaar', ministers referring journalists as 'pressministers', front organisations of the RSS and BJP perpetrating violence then obviously their MPs also feel that possibly by insulting the family members of Kargil martyrs, they may also find a place in Modi's Cabinet," he said. On Rijju's remarks, Tewari said: "This is an example of fascist culture. She is just not anybody. She is the daughter of a Kargil martyr. Her family understands the meaning of sacrifice. If she condemns violence and you treat her like that... it is a perfect example of fascist mindset." In her campaign, Kaur has blasted the ABVP, the RSS-aligned students wing, for instigating violence at Noida's Shaheed Rajguru College last week. "The brutal attack on innocent students by ABVP is very disturbing and I should have stopped. It was not an attack on protesters, but an attack on every notion of democracy in this nation," Kaur said in a Facebook status. Taking on the Delhi University student, the BJP MP said that the ABVP did not use the crutches of his father's name to justify his anti-nationalist stand. "To my knowledge, he has also posted a photograph showing Dawood with the message, 'I didn't kill people in 1993. I was a student of Shaheed Rajguru College. I also took to Twitter to take a dig at her. "Who's polluting this young girl's mind?"

Strong armed forces prevent a war. India never attacked anyone but a weak India was always invaded," the minister of state for home affairs said. Talking to newsmen, Rijju later said: "One should not say things which could demoralise the countrymen and the forces. Everybody has freedom but that does not mean that you raise slogans to weaken the country." In a related development, minister of state in Prime Minister's Office (MoS PMO) Jitendra Singh today said the country will not allow freedom of debate to liberate democracies of the world including the US and UK have drawn bottom line for it. "Freedom of debate doesn't allow debating to instigate anti-India activism and there is a need to draw a bottom line to check such activities."



One should not say things which could demoralise the countrymen and the forces. Everybody has freedom but that does not mean that you raise slogans to weaken the country — MoS Home Kiren Rijju



This is an example of fascist culture. She is just not anybody. She is the daughter of a Kargil martyr. Her family understands the meaning of sacrifice. If she condemns violence and you treat her like that... it is a perfect example of fascist mindset — Manish Tiwari, Cong

LOCAL NEWS

Rangat Post Office building in dire straits



V SENTHIL KUMAR

RANGAT, FEB 27 /-/- One of the oldest and reliable institutions of the country - the Indian Postal Department has a different style of functioning in these islands. Though the Andaman and Nicobar Circle of India Post has accommodation facilities and office buildings constructed in different parts of these islands, lack of proper maintenance has become a major source of concern for the employees of the department, particularly those posted in out-station islands. The instant case is about the Sub-Post Office at Rangat in Middle Andaman. An outside look of the Post Office building, which recently received fresh coats of paint, gives one the impression that the building is in perfect condition, but the situation inside is completely contrasting.

According to reports, the office-um residence building of Sub-Post Office, Rangat has four residential quarters in the first floor - all of which are in bad state making them fully unfit to live in. Presently, only two accommodations have been occupied by staff, while the others have remained deserted for the past several months. Despite several letters to the higher authorities, the Central Government agency has taken no steps to initiate repair and maintenance of the building leading to misuse of government facilities. "Immediate attention is required for the Post Office building here. The condition of the building is deteriorating day by day. The roofs of the residential quarters leak, walls have begun to crumble, electrical appliances have gone defunct and those occupying the quarters are having sleepless nights. Owing to the wrecked condition of the quarters, Post Masters of Long Island and Betapur Sub-Post Office have opted for rented accommodations at Rangat. Moreover, the office space in the ground floor also requires attention. The higher authorities in the Postal Department should act immediately and carry out repair and renovation of the Post Office building in the interest of the employees posted in the region," said some postal customers speaking to this correspondent.