



**Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull looks at damaged and flooded areas from aboard an Australian Army helicopter after Cyclone Debbie passed through the area near the town of Bowen, located south of the northern Queensland town of Townsville in Australia.**

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## RSS gameplan for Bengal: Copies of its Coimbatore resolution on Islamic Jehadis to be distributed among all households

### To 'sensitise' bureaucrats, academics, political leaders too



File photo

SABYASACHIBANDOPADHYAY

**KOLKATA, MARCH 30** /- After the stunning success in Uttar Pradesh, it's mission West Bengal for the Sangh Parivar, it seems. Though panchayat elections are due just next year, and Lok Sabha elections due in 2019, the Sangh is preparing the ground for the BJP to challenge the Trinamool Congress in the coming elections and for what it is trying to make the most of the process of religious polarisation that, applied in UP, to reap rich dividends.

Close on the heels of the Coimbatore conference of its pratinidhi Sabha held from March 19 to March 21, where the RSS has adopted a resolution condemning jihadi activities in West Bengal, its Bengal unit has now started working full throttle to make people from all sections of the society aware of the danger of Muslim fundamentalism. While every household of West Bengal will get a copy of the Coimbatore resolution, copies will also be distributed among decision makers of the state who include IAS and IPS officers, academics, political leaders etc. To distribute the copies while our shakhs at 274 blocks will do the job, for the remaining 67 blocks out of the 341 in West Bengal, we will rely in our like minded organisations like the BJP, the VHP, the Jagaran Manch etc. And we are also trying to sensitise decision makers of the state about the lurking

danger of Islamic jihadis spreading their tentacles by distributing copies of the resolution among them, inviting them for talks etc." Jishnu Bose, General Secretary of RSS Bengal unit told Echo of India. For the sensitisation programme of decision makers the Sampark Bibhag (PR department) is taking all steps to make it a success. Bose also said from now on if any case of atrocity against any member of the Hindu community was committed by any Muslim fundamentalist group and the Government turned a blind eye to that as they had allegedly done earlier, the RSS would hit the streets to protest against it. "People have seen how jihadis committed mayhem at places like Kaliachak and

Dhulagarh. If such things happen we will protest against them in a democratic manner," Bose said. The RSS official made it clear that their aim was to rid West Bengal of the menace of all fundamental activities. "We are not against any religion, caste or creed. India belongs to all, Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc. We are against jihadis, who are out to create mayhem in the state and push us back to medieval era," Bose said. However the Trinamool Congress said no act of religious polarisation will succeed in the state. "Whatever efforts are done by BJP or the Sangh, the people of West Bengal do not want any divisive forces rule the roost here. They will resist it tooth and nail," Saugata Roy, party MP told Echo of India.

## SC to hear pleas challenging triple talaq on May 11

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 30** /- The Supreme Court today fixed May 11 for commencement of hearing on pleas challenging the validity of triple talaq, 'nikah halala' and polygamy among Muslims. A bench comprising Chief Justice S Khehar and Justice D Chandrachud said the matter will be heard by a Constitution bench during the summer vacation. On March 27, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) told the Supreme Court that the pleas challenging such practices among Muslims were not

tober 7 last year, had opposed in the Supreme Court the practice of triple talaq, 'nikah halala' and polygamy among Muslims and favoured a relook on grounds like gender equality and secularism. The ministry of law and justice, in its affidavit, had referred to constitutional principles like gender equality, secularism, international covenants, religious practices and marital law prevalent in various Islamic countries to drive home the point that the practice of triple talaq and polygamy needed to be adjudicated upon afresh by

**KOLKATA, MARCH 30** /- Two persons were suffocated to death while 31 others were rescued after a fire broke out in a hotel at upmarket Ho Chi Minh Sarani in the city today. Police have arrested the owner and the manager of the hotel. A senior police officer said the fire broke out at 3.25 AM, probably in the ground floor kitchen of Golden Park hotel in the city's high-security zone. The US Consulate and the British Deputy High Commission are also located in the area. "Smoke from the kitchen spread to the other parts of the hotel through the ducts of the centralised air-conditioning system. Most of the guests were sleeping when the fire broke out and the panic-stricken people were clueless as regards how to get out," the officer said. Ten fire tenders brought the blaze under control while the firefighters rescued 31 people, including guests and hotel staff, he added. Acting on a complaint lodged by a Fire Service department official, police from the Shakespeare Sarani station arrested the hotel owner, BS Gujral, and manager Gautam Majumdar. Both have been booked under the WPS Act as well as IPC sections 304 (causing death by negligence), 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) among other relevant provisions. Eyewitnesses said guests on the second and third floors of the hotel tried to jump out of the windows in panic. Firefighters and disaster management personnel had to break

open the glass windows of the hotel to let out the thick smoke, the officer said. Besides, ladders and sky lifts were used to rescue those inside the hotel, he said, adding that the fire was brought under control after nearly three hours. The two deceased were identified as Anup Agarwal (53) from Gujarat and Chamar Kishan (52) from Odisha. "Both were declared brought dead by doctors at the nearby SKM hospital. Going by the nature of their death, it seems they died due to suffocation caused by the thick smoke. The post-mortem report is awaited," the officer said. "Initially, we could not identify Kishan and mistook him



for another guest. Later, his identity was established from the hotel records," he added. Two other guests of the hotel are being treated at a private hospital and three others, including a security guard of the hotel, were discharged from SKM hospital after treatment. State Fire Minister and city Mayor Soven Chattopadhyay and senior Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) officials visited the site of the fire mishap. "We are checking whether the hotel had a proper fire-fighting arrangement. As per fire officers, the fire alarm did not work during the incident. We are checking it," a KMC officer said. (PTI)



maintainable as the issues fell outside the realm of judicially. The Board had also said that the validity of Mohammedan Law, founded essentially on the Holy Quran and sources based on it, cannot be tested on the particular provisions of the Constitution. It had said there was a need for "judicial restraint" before going into constitutional interpretation of these unless such an exercise becomes unavoidable. The apex court had earlier said it would decide issues pertaining to "legal" aspects of the practices of triple talaq, 'nikah halala' and polygamy among Muslims but would not deal with the question whether divorce under Muslim law needs to be supervised by courts as it falls under the legislative domain. The Centre, on Oc-

the apex court. The apex court had taken suo motu cognizance of the question whether Muslim women faced gender discrimination in the event of divorce or due to other marriages of their husband. The apex court had earlier said it would decide issues pertaining to the legal aspects of the practices of triple talaq, 'nikah halala' and polygamy among Muslims but would not deal with the question whether divorce under Muslim law needs to be supervised by courts as it falls under the legislative domain. The Centre, on Oc-



(T-B) Broken window panes of the hotel that caught fire. Fire brigade officials bringing out an injured person from the hotel on Ho Chi Minh Sarani — Shyamal Maitra

## Jaitley invites suggestions to make political funding cleaner

**New Delhi, March 30** /- Finance minister Arun Jaitley today threw an "open invitation" to the opposition in the Lok Sabha to suggest steps to make electoral funding cleaner and more transparent. "I have an open invitation to all, please suggest to me a better system which will ensure clean money and transparency to the extent possible," he said. Jaitley said although the opposition was opposing the provisions of the Finance Bill related with electoral bonds, but they have not come out with a "single suggestion" to deal with the

issue. "I am only hearing adjectives like it must be clean, it must be transparent. Please give me ideal combination of the two. We are willing to consider it. I will wait for a specific suggestion," he said while replying to a debate on amendments proposed by the Rajya Sabha to the Finance Bill 2017. These were later rejected by the Lower House. The Opposition accused the Government of "running roughshod by opening doors for 'political extortionism' and passing 'draconian' provisions in the Finance Bill. (PTI)

## India accuses Pak over inciting youths in valley

**NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD MARCH 30** /- Pakistan's agencies are instigating youths in Kashmir through false propaganda in social media, Union minister Jitendra Singh said today. He asked the civil society and Jammu and Kashmir government to make the youths understand the reality, instead of getting instigated by false propaganda by few people. "Pakistani agencies are using social media to instigate youths of Kashmir Valley through false propaganda in social media. I would appeal the youths there not to get carried away by such propaganda," the minister told reporters here. His assertion comes as normal life in Kashmir is still in the death throes of these persons and injuries to others, as well as to the security personnel. The Minister said that it is the responsibility of both the administration as well as the civil society to make the youth of Kashmir understand the reality, to stand up and hit back. The minister today accused India of interfering in its internal affairs and funding terrorism on its soil. Foreign Office Spokesperson Nafees Zakaria, at his weekly briefing, said the arrest of alleged Indian spy "Kulbhushan Jadhav" in Pakistan was proof of New Delhi's support to militancy.

for another guest. Later, his identity was established from the hotel records," he added. Two other guests of the hotel are being treated at a private hospital and three others, including a security guard of the hotel, were discharged from SKM hospital after treatment. State Fire Minister and city Mayor Soven Chattopadhyay and senior Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) officials visited the site of the fire mishap. "We are checking whether the hotel had a proper fire-fighting arrangement. As per fire officers, the fire alarm did not work during the incident. We are checking it," a KMC officer said. (PTI)

## Sushma over attacks on Indians in US

**NEW DELHI:** Every attack and death of Indians in the US should not be considered as "hate crime", external affairs minister said today after the Rajya Sabha voiced concerns over recent incidents of violence. Replying to a question, she said the government is aware of each and every death of Indians abroad and had all the figures. "We should not consider every attack or killing (in US) as hate crime," she told the members.

## Oppn attacks govt on political extortionism

**NEW DELHI:** The Opposition in the Lok Sabha today accused the Government of running roughshod by opening the doors to political extortionism and passing "draconian" provisions in the Finance Bill. The Opposition criticism came as the Lower House today passed the Finance Bill 2017 to consider the five amendments carried out by the Rajya Sabha for consideration by the Lok Sabha. Deependra Hooda (Cong) said this was a "historic" occasion as never in the past had the Rajya Sabha amended the Finance Bill.

## Taslima questions Srijato, Mandakranta's 'selective' stand

**KOLKATA, MARCH 30** /- Exiled Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasreen today said she supports the poets who were vilified for their criticism of Yogi Adityanath, but questioned their silence when she was "bundled out" of West Bengal in 2007. She said that she had always fought for freedom of speech but at the same time one cannot be "selective" while exercising that freedom. Her remarks came a day after a case was registered against unknown persons for threatening eminent Bengali poet Mandakranta Sen with gangrape for expressing solidarity with fellow poet Srijato who recently was

embroiled in a controversy after writing a poem allegedly hurting Hindu sentiment. "Where were these two when I was forced out of West Bengal by 'fundamentalists' for my writing in 2007?" Nasreen said in a telephonic interview. She said, "I stand beside Srijato for his views... and Mandakranta too. I have been vocal for freedom of speech and that's why I support both of them. But one cannot be se-

lective in asserting one's freedom of speech... Where were they when I was forced out of West Bengal in 2007?" A Hindutva group had lodged a police complaint against Srijato for posting a 12-line poem on Facebook on March 19, the day Yogi Adityanath was sworn in as the chief minister of UP allegedly hurting Hindu sentiments. Referring to the recent killing of Tamil Nadu

atheist and Dravidar Viduthala Kazhagam activist H Farook, Nasreen said, "Where were they when Farook was killed? I have not seen them spending a single word on that incident. Where were these people when so many persons, bloggers were hacked to death in Bangladesh?" Farook, a 31-year-old daily wage labourer, was hacked to death in Coimbatore last week, a fortnight after he had posted a photo of one of his children holding a placard with the handwritten slogan "Kadavu illai, Kadavu illai, Kadavu illai" (No God, No God, No God). (PTI)

