

# On first outing after a week, Gujarat MLAs meet governor

Bengaluru, Aug 5 /- Gujarat Congress legislators today ventured out for the first time from a private resort on the city outskirts where they have been camping for about a week and met the Karnataka Governor, besides visiting the state secretariat here. The Congress had sent its 44 legislators here on July 29 to fend off what it alleged were "poaching" attempts by the BJP ahead of the August eight Rajya Sabha polls in Gujarat in which Ahmed Patel, political secretary to Congress President Sonia Gandhi, was contesting. The MLAs were driven from the luxurious resort to Raj

Bhavan in a state transport bus, where they met Governor Vajubhai Vala. Congress sources said it was a courtesy visit, as Vala also has to be in Gujarat and had served as Assembly Speaker and Finance Minister there. He enjoyed good rapport. "Karnataka Gov Hon Vajubhai Vala met each of us, the 44 Gujarat Congress MLAs individually. This is a warm and friendly spirit of #Democracy," Congress national spokesperson and Gujarat MLA Shaktisinh Gohil said in a tweet. From Rajbhavan, the MLAs were taken to Vidhana Soudha, the state secretariat, where they

were joined by Karnataka Minister D K Shivakumar, who is facing the Income Tax department heat with searches at multiple locations in the state and his house here. Shivakumar, who is overseeing the arrangements to keep the flock together, emerged out of his house today after undergoing grilling by the Income Tax officials for three consecutive days. During the first evening of the resort, the MLAs along with Shivakumar visited Mahatma Gandhi statue, next to the Vidhana Soudha, and staged a symbolic protest against what they alleged were "attempts to poach

them by the BJP" and sang "Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram". After this, the MLAs were escorted inside Vidhana Soudha by Shivakumar. "All the MLAs are happy and together..." Shivakumar told reporters. Shivakumar was at the resort when the search began on Wednesday. IT sleuths even visited the resort to escort the Minister to his residence for questioning, which the Congress alleged was an attempt to threaten Gujarat Congress MLAs. The legislators in the last couple of days took part in "orientation classes" at a host of topics including the "party's achievements in the

last 60 years" and the "BJP's lies and the truth" among others, conducted by Dr Suresh Sharma and Naushad Paramar of Jawaharalal Nehru Leadership Institute, New Delhi. Earlier, the itinerary of MLAs during their stay here included visit to some tourist destinations and religious places, but it was scrapped following accusations against the lawmakers of "abandoning" voters when their constituencies were affected by floods. Six of the 57 Congress MLAs in Gujarat have resigned from the party recently with three joining the BJP on July 26. The party has

apprehensions about Patel's election to the Rajya Sabha, if more MLAs defect. Meanwhile, after being grilled by the Income Tax sleuths for three consecutive days in connection with an alleged tax evasion case, Karnataka Minister D K Shivakumar today said he has not violated the law and the truth will eventually come out. In a swoop down that raised a political storm, the IT department on Wednesday began its searches on various properties linked to Shivakumar, who is hosting 44 Gujarat Congress MLAs at a resort on city outskirts to forestall alleged attempts by

the BJP to poach on them ahead of the Rajya Sabha polls. Ahmed Patel, political secretary to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, is locked in a bitter fight in the election. "I'm not the kind of person that violates the law and the Constitution... the truth will come out," he told reporters after emerging from his residence at a posh locality here. Without divulging any details on the searches conducted at various properties linked to him, the power minister said, "Only after I get the entire panchanama and the documentation will I speak to you." (PTI)

## Security forces kill 3 LeT militants in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, AUG 5 /- Security forces today killed three Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants in an encounter in Sopore area of north Kashmir, a police officer said. Two of the killed militants were locals while one was yet to be identified. The gunbattle took place after security forces launched an operation following information about the presence of militants in Amargarh area of Sopore in Baramulla district, a police official said. As the security forces were closing in, the militants opened fire, which was returned, the official said. Two slain militants were identified as David Ahmed Dar of Baramulla and Abid Hamid Mir of Bandipora, the police said. Three AK rifles and two magazines were recovered from them, the police added. Meanwhile, three persons were injured in Bandipora district when Army personnel allegedly opened fire on a group of stone-pelters who targeted them, police said. A mob pelted stones on Army vehicles which were passing through SK Bala locality in Sumbal area of Bandipora this morning, a police official said. He said the Army personnel allegedly opened fire to disperse the mob, resulting in injuries to three persons. (PTI)

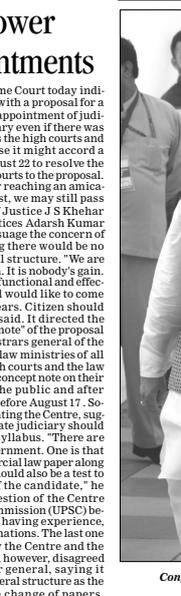
## Chidambaram hits out at BJP for not condemning attack on Rahul

NEW DELHI, AUG 5 /- Veteran Congress leader P Chidambaram today asked the BJP leadership why it was yet to condemn yesterday's attack on Rahul Gandhi in Gujarat and said "abuse, false charges and violence" would not help the saffron party achieve a "Congress-ruled (Congress-free) India." "Why has national leadership of BJP not condemned the attack on Rahul Gandhi's car (sic)?" he wrote on Twitter. "Abuse, false charges, suppression of protests and now violence: nevertheless, BJP will not succeed in making Congress-mukt Bharat (sic)," the former Union finance minister wrote in another tweet. Earlier in the day, the Congress accused the BJP-RSS of being behind what it described as a "murderous attack" on its vice-president in Gujarat's Banaskantha district and claimed that it was a "pre-planned conspiracy." (PTI)

## SC for centralised system for lower judiciary appointments

NEW DELHI, AUG 5 /- The Supreme Court today indicated that it was inclined to go ahead with a proposal for a centralised selection mechanism for appointment of judicial officers in the subordinate judiciary even if there was no amicable consensus among various high courts and the states. It said that if the need arose it might accord a day-long hearing on the issue on August 22 to resolve the objections of various states and high courts to the proposal. "We are inclined to pass an order after reaching an amicable consensus. If the objections persist, we may still pass the orders," a bench headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar said. The bench, also comprising Justices Adarsh Kumar Goel and A M Khanwilkar, tried to assuage the concern of various states and high courts, saying there would be no breach and interference in the federal structure. "We are trying to do some service to the nation. It is nobody's gain. No country can progress if there is no concept of an effective judiciary. No person from abroad would like to come to India and contest this case for 15 years. Citizen should have confidence in the judiciary," it said. It directed the apex court registry to send a "concept note" on the proposal allaying the objections to all the registrars general of the high courts and the secretaries of the law ministries of all the states. The bench said that the high courts and the law ministries should put the concept note on their websites to seek suggestions from the public and after analysis forward it to the apex court before August 17. Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar, representing the Centre, suggested that examination for subordinate judiciary should have a commercial law paper in the syllabus. "There are four suggestions from the Union government. One is that the examination should have a commercial law paper along with other subjects. Secondly, there should also be a test to check the technology proficiency of the candidate," he said. Kumar said that the third suggestion of the Centre was that the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) being a professional independent body, have expertise that could be entrusted to hold such examinations. The last one was that the cost should be shared by the Centre and the states on a fifth-fifty basis. The bench, however, disagreed with this suggestion of the solicitor general, saying it would amount to interfering in the federal structure as the syllabus for the exam. It said these change of papers, marks, syllabus are small changes which could be given effect by modifying the order, when the need arises. Senior advocate Kalyan Bannerjee, appearing for the West Bengal government, the state had some objections to the proposal. It would amount to a breach of the federal structure. "Every thing would happen from Delhi. My Calcutta High Court or the state government would not have any say in the appointment of judicial officers in the subordinate judiciary," he said, adding that the high court has been conducting the examination regularly, but there were vacancies in the high court. To this, the bench objected to Bannerjee calling, "My Calcutta High Court" and said it was not "my, but it is our Calcutta High Court." "You should not make it political. You should rest assured there will be no interference in the federal structure," it said. The court said that it wanted professional people to come into the judiciary so that they could do something for the institution. On July 29, the apex court had said it would issue a "concept note" on its proposal for a centralised selection mechanism after some high courts expressed their reservation over any such move. It had asked senior advocate Arvind Datar, assisting the court as an amicus curiae, to prepare the concept note on the proposal after Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhanda and Calcutta high courts raised their objection on account of language and reservation criteria. The bench had clarified that the centralised process would not affect their rules, reservation or language and it would be like a UPSC examination. The apex court was hearing a case taken up on its own after a letter was written to the secretary general of the court by Secretary (Justice) Snehlata Shrivastava at the Centre. According to a report earlier issued by the Supreme Court - "Indian Judiciary Annual Report 2015-2016" - a whopping 28 crore cases were pending in the district courts across the country which were short of nearly 5,000 judicial officers. The report had suggested increasing the judicial manpower "manifold" - at least seven times - to overcome the crisis by appointing about 15,000 more judges in the coming years. Another apex court report - "Subordinate Courts of India: A Report on Access to Justice 2016" - had also highlighted that nearly 15,000 more judges would be required in the next three years to overcome this critical situation. (PTI)

## Tendulkar, Rekha cast votes in VP elections



Congress MP Rajeev Shukla and actress Rekha coming out after casting their votes for Vice Presidential election at Parliament house, in New Delhi on Saturday

## India will be free of illiteracy in 5 years: Javadekar

JAIPUR, AUG 5 /- Illiteracy would be eradicated from India in five years, Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said here today. As part of efforts to achieve that, the students of classes to 12 would be in and trained to teach their illiterate parents and grandparents at home, he added. "In five years, there will be no illiteracy in India. When we get freedom, our literacy rate was just 18 per cent. It is close to 80 per cent today and with the introduction of a noble concept, there will be no illiteracy in the country in the next five years," said Javadekar. He was speaking at the inauguration of the "Festival of Education", jointly organised by the Rajasthan government and Gems Education India. Talking about roping in youngsters, Javadekar said, "It will be a moment of pride for the students as well as their parents or grandparents." He emphasised on making learning enjoyable. "Unless you make learning enjoyable, there will always be a percentage of students dropping out of school," he said. He added that the HRD minister. He added that the enrollment target in the state-run schools had been achieved over the country and the government would now focus on imparting quality education in these schools. "To ensure this, the examinations in classes 5 and 8 are being reintroduced. This will also help check the dropout rate in class 9. Twenty-four states have already given their consent. Currently, the state-run schools follow an retention policy and promote all the students up to class 8. Javadekar expressed hope that the government's efforts to improve the quality of education would result in a healthy competition between state-run and private schools in the next five years." (PTI)

## Prez Kovind meets Rashtrapati Bhavan's military wing officers

NEW DELHI, AUG 5 /- In a first, President Ram Nath Kovind today called a separate meeting of officers of the President's Military Wing within days of assuming office to acquaint himself with them, a Rashtrapati Bhavan statement said. Underlining that the entire country looks at Rashtrapati Bhavan with great hope, Kovind urged the officers and staff to rise to these expectations by fulfilling their respective responsibilities. He said they should focus more on duties rather than rights and develop the values of sacrifice and discipline, the statement from the president's Press Secretary Ashok Malik said.

## MP: Polling booths to display criminal cases, assets details of nominees

BHOPAL, AUG 5 /- Details like assets, liabilities and criminal cases, if any, of candidates fighting the ensuing elections in 37 local bodies of Madhya Pradesh will be put up outside polling stations to allow voters to take an informed decision before they exercise their franchise. Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission (SEC) has issued a circular directing officials engaged in the election process to display large flex hoardings outside polling booths highlighting assets, education, liabilities and criminal cases, if any, of candidates as mentioned in their affidavits. The hoardings, to be put up outside every booth, will display the affidavits of the contestants voting for the posts of president and councillor in the August 11 polls, said a public relations department officer. This arrangement has been made for the polls in 37 local bodies - 14 municipalities and 23 Nagar Parishads - on an experimental basis, he said. The SEC has taken the decision to empower voters and allow them to check antecedents of candidates, before they cast their ballot, the officer said. "This way, voters would be able to see the relevant details of candidates before exercising their franchise." Activists fighting for voter rights welcomed the move. "We welcome the move as it will allow voters to take an informed decision. Voters will now be able to check antecedents of candidates before entering the polling station," said Rolly Shivhare, Madhya Pradesh convener of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). Shivhare said a delegation of the ADR, an NGO fighting for poll reforms, had earlier called on State Election Commissioner P Parsum in this regard and he promised to come with this initiative. "It would be better if this practice is adopted in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections as well," she added. Shivhare said Madhya Pradesh is the second state, after Maharashtra, to adopt this practice. (PTI)

## MP: Polling booths to display criminal cases, assets details of nominees

NEW DELHI, AUG 5 /- Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and actor Rekha, who have often been criticised for their low attendance in the Rajya Sabha, today cast their votes in the Vice Presidential election. Rekha and MPs of the Upper House were accompanied to the voting room by Congress Rajya Sabha MP Rajeev Shukla. Dressed in an elegant cream saree, Rekha arrived around 11.15 am and after casting her vote, she had a brief chat with Dimple Yadav, Lok Sabha MP and wife of Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav. Tendulkar arrived later. "Not only here, but whenever voting takes place, every citizen should vote," the Little Master told reporters after casting his vote. Tendulkar, an MP since 2012, has an attendance of 1 per cent while Rekha, also a member since 2012, has clocked only 5 per cent attendance, according to research body PRS Legislative. In the past, Samajwadi Party MP Nandish Agarwal had said Tendulkar and Rekha should resign if they were not interested in attending the House. Boxer Mary Kom and BJP leaders Renuka Ganguly and Subramanian Swamy, the three other nominated members in the Rajya Sabha, also cast their votes. (PTI)

# Trump to get rakhis from women of a remote Haryana village



Women gather to listen to a speaker next to a poster with the image of US President Donald Trump during a ceremony at Marora village, which has been unofficially renamed 'Trump Village', about 100km from New Delhi.

GURGAON, AUG 5 /- He may have not heard of Rakhi, but the women and girls of a remote Muslim-dominated village "symbolically" named it by an NGO after US President Donald Trump will send him 1001 sacred threads on the Hindu festival that celebrates the brother-sister bond. The gesture by the residents of Marora village in the backward Mewar region represents the "wish of the people that ties are further strengthened between India and the US", says the NGO, which has adopted the village. The village had come into limelight after Sulabh International Social Service Organisation (SISSO) chief Bindeshwar Pathak had announced to name it "Trump's village". The district administration had later said the move to rename the village was "illegal", forcing the

organisation members to remove boards mentioning the new name. They said signage boards and banners were removed from the village and image of Trump had been removed by the organization. The village, with a population of 1,800 people, lies under Panhaua Tehsil, some 60km from Gurgaon. "The NGO has been conducting many welfare programs for women and girls in the village," Monica Jain, vice president of the NGO, said. "These students have made 1001 rakhis with photos of Donald Trump and 501 rakhis for Narendra Modi. Women and girls of the village consider them their elder brothers," she said. The consignment of rakhis was sent yesterday through cargo so that it reached the US president on Raksha Bandhan on August 7. The villagers are also

sending invitations to the two leaders to visit the village. Widows of the village have also expressed a desire to meet Modi on Raksha Bandhan at his residence in the national capital and tie rakhis. "I have made 150 rakhis within three days for Trump bhayya. I also written in a letter to be sent to the White House that the girls of your village want you to visit it with PM Modi," said 15-year-old Rekha Rani, a resident of the village. Sulabh has recently constructed 95 toilets in Marora to implement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship program to make every village in the country open defecation free. The village has 140 houses and only 45 of them were equipped with toilet facility. Sulabh constructed the remaining 95 toilets, Jain said. (PTI)

During the meeting, Military Secretary to the President, Major General Anil Khosla introduced the Military Wing of Rashtrapati Bhavan to Kovind, comprising the DMSP, ADCs, the Ceremonial Section, Invitation Section, Tour Section, Visitor's Management Cell, Household Section, Sanitation Section, the President's Bodyguard, and the Ceremonial Guard Battalion.

This is for the first time that within just a few days of assuming office, the President of India has called a separate meeting to acquaint himself with the President's military staff," the statement said. (PTI)