



## OUTDOORS

**Forecast:** Sultry weather. Rain likely  
Rainfall Nil  
**TEMPERATURE**  
Max: 37.1 (+1)  
Min: 25.5 (0)  
**HUMIDITY**  
Max: 87% | Min: 30%  
**SUNRISE**  
05:16 hrs  
**SUNSET**  
17:58 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Opening of a new book of account (*halakata*) on Pola Baisakh at Kalighat temple on Tuesday. = Biswajit Ghoshal

**Petrol price cut:** The price of petrol was cut by 70 paise a litre, excluding local levies, the second reduction this month.

**Navy Chief:** Vice-Admiral R K Dhawan may be the next Navy Chief as the Defence Ministry has recommended his name to the PM.



## POLL WARM-UP

■ **EVM worry:** Election officials in Bengal are worried over too few EVMs for too many candidates in some LS seats. **P5**

■ **Nitish candidate:** Nitish Kumar's candidate withdrew from race in favour of Congress to ensure the BJP's defeat. **P2**

■ **Gowda confident:** Former PM and JDSC candidate Deve Gowda is confident of winning rather retaining the Hassan LS seat. **P4**

## INDICATOR

<b>Sensex</b>	-144
<b>22,484</b>	▼
<b>Nifty</b>	-43
<b>6,733</b>	▼
<b>Gold</b>	-40
<b>28,235</b>	▼
<b>Silver</b>	-550
<b>43,000</b>	▼

## Cong, BJP spar on Rajnath's meeting with Muslims

SNS & PTI

New Delhi, 15 April

The Congress and the BJP today sparred over Rajnath Singh's meeting with Muslim clerics in Lucknow with the ruling party accusing the BJP of "double-speak" and the Opposition party hitting back.

Attempting to reach out to the Muslim community, Mr Singh had met some prominent Muslim religious leaders yesterday in the UP capital from where he is fighting the Lok Sabha election. "Congress wants to ask BJP if the Shahi Imam comes to Congress president's residence it is communalism, then what they would call when the BJP chief goes to Muslim clerics and makes promises to them? Is it not communalism?" Congress general secretary Ajay Maken said.

Mrs Sonia Gandhi's meeting with the Shahi Imam had invited strong reaction from the BJP with its Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi leading the attack. Modi has accused her of spreading the "poison of



IT'S NOW  
MODI  
VS  
GANDHIS

P7



NIGHT OUT  
FOR RIDERS

IPL VII TO MAKE THE  
DESERT BOOM

P12

SRINIVASAN  
HITS BACK

P12

VIJAY  
SESHADRI  
WINS PULITZER

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# 'TRANSGENDERS THIRD GENDER'

SC RULING BRINGS CHEERS TO TRANSGENDERS, ASKS CENTRAL GOVT TO PROVIDE JOB QUOTA AND FACILITIES TO THEM

OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
New Delhi, 15 April

In a historic judgment that has wide implications, the Supreme Court today acknowledged transgenders as a third gender that is neither male nor female and directed the government to ensure that they would get job reservation and facilities, including a voter card, passport and driving licence. This ruling comes four months after the same court reinstated a colonial-era ban on gay sex, in a widely criticised decision.

The apex court said the group would be considered as socially and economically backward classes and as such entitled to reservation in jobs.

The Centre and states were also directed to take steps for bringing the community into the mainstream by providing adequate healthcare, education and employment.

Recognising them as third category or third gender, a Bench of Mr Justice K S Radhakrishnan and Mr Justice A K Sikri in their judgment directed the Centre and the state governments to include them for reservation in jobs and education.

## HISTORIC JUDGMENT

*Recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not merely a social or medical issue but a human rights issue. Centre should treat transgenders as "socially and economically backward", to enable them to get reservations in jobs.*

SUPREME COURT

"Recognition of transgenders as a third gender is not merely a social or medical issue but a human rights issue," it said and asked the Centre to treat transgenders as "socially and economically backward", to enable them to get reservations in jobs and education.

"Transgenders are also citizens of India. It is the right of every human being to choose their gender. The spirit of the Constitution is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential, irrespective of caste, religion or gender," the court said. Expressing concern over transgenders being harassed and discriminated in society, the bench passed a slew of directions

for their social welfare. It also said they are citizens of the country and have equal rights to education, healthcare and employment opportunities like other people belonging to male and female gender.

Though respected earlier in society, transgenders today face discrimination and harassment, the court said, adding that misuse of Section 377 of IPC by police and other authorities against them and their social and economic condition is far from satisfactory.

The Bench said they are part and parcel of society and the government must take steps to bring them in the mainstream of society. The court said both the Centre and the state gov-



Transgenders celebrate after the Supreme Court created the "third gender" status for transgenders in the Capital on Tuesday. = Vikas Choudhary

ernments would have to frame welfare schemes for them. The Bench, however, clarified that its verdict pertains only to eunuchs and not other sections of society like gay, lesbian and bisexuals who are also considered under the umbrella term 'transgender'.

The order was passed on a PIL filed by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

urging the court to give separate identity to transgenders by recognising them as a third category of gender.

The case was filed in 2012 by a group of petitioners including prominent eunuch and activist Laxmi Narayan Tripathi seeking equal rights for the transgender population under the law.

Welcoming the Supreme Court decision, Lakshmi

Narayan Tripathi, transgender rights activist said, "the progress of the country is dependent upon human rights of the people and we are very happy with the judgement as the Supreme court has given us those rights". DMK president M Karunanidhi hailed the SC verdict recognizing transgenders as third category of gender.

## INFLATION SOARS TO 3-MTH HIGH OF 5.7 PER CENT

New Delhi, 15 April: The country's wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation rose to a three month high of 5.7 per cent in March as its downward trend was halted by rise in prices of potatoes, onions as also fruit.

The inflation in the food items, based on WPI, shot up by 9.9 per cent in March as against 8.12 per cent in the previous month, according to official data released here today. The overall WPI inflation, which was on the decline since December, had dropped to a nine-month low of 4.68 per cent in February. The January inflation number has been revised upward to 5.17 per cent as against the earlier estimate of 5.05 per cent.

Meanwhile, Corporate India today said the revival of high inflation called for supply side measures to raise farm productivity.

The CII said the demand in the economy is weak, as is evident from all indicators of growth. The Rupee has also strengthened. Therefore, this rise in WPI inflation has to be attributed to supply side constraints in the agricultural side, it said, reacting to the developments. **SNS**

DETAILS ON PAGE - 8

## Priyanka rejects claim on 'super PM'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Amethi/ New Delhi, 15 April

Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh continued to maintain their silence about claims in a recent book about two power centres in the UPA but Priyanka Gandhi today joined issues to say that only he was the "super PM".

Amid a storm over a tell-all book by PM's former media adviser Sanjaya Baru that had raised questions over the political authority of the Prime Minister, Priyanka made a strong defence of the Congress.

"Only Manmohan Singh was super PM..." she told reporters in reply to a question on the views expressed in the book 'The Accidental Prime Minister' that "It is no secret that Sonia Gandhi was the super Prime Minister. (...)", Dr Singh's daughter Upinder Singh termed



Only Manmohan Singh was super PM. Allegations levelled in Sanjaya Baru's book are baseless.

PRIYANKA GANDHI

Baru's account of his days in the PMO as "nothing but a stab in the back". She accused him of "violating" the PM's trust and branded the book an "unethical", "mischievous" exercise.

Upinder, who teaches history in Delhi University, said Baru has pieced together "gossip" and unverified quotes, including some of her father's, and used them as statements of fact.

In an interview to *The Indian Express*, she also questioned the timing of the book, which has hit the stands in the midst of elections, much to the embarrassment of the PMO and the ruling Congress.

She said it could not be described as an "objective" book. "It is an audacious account with so-called quotes, of even the Prime Minister, which have been recorded as facts. Reported speech has been used as direct speech. Is this ethical?" Upinder was quoted as saying by the newspaper today. She said he was never part of the decision-making process in the PMO.

"He is holding forth and projecting himself in the centre of events which is not true and he had no access to files. It is not as if he was the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. So what are the sources he has used?"

I spot an element of self-promotion in these assertions," the PM's daughter said.

She said she was not speaking on behalf of the PM but added that, "we are extremely angry at the exaggerated level of access the author has ascribed to himself". The family, Upinder said, was aware that the book was in the offing but when she had asked Baru when it would be out, he said, "Naturally, after the elections". Rejecting the author's claim that the book's publisher chose the timing, she said she had written several books and knew that authors have a say in the timing of the release.

"To me, there are other reasons for the timing. It is absurd to say there is no political motive. Sanjaya Baru cannot describe himself as a well-wisher of the PM".

THE SYCE'S WHIP

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## EC asks officials to act against hate speeches immediately

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi, 15 April

The Election Commission has directed field officials to take immediate action against politicians who violate the atmosphere during electioneering. The EC's fresh directives to CEOs of states comes close on the heels of the poll body initiating action against senior politicians, including Amit Shah, Azam Khan, Beni Prasad Verma and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for their controversial speeches while campaigning for Lok Sabha elections.

"...In some cases lack of prompt intervention and follow up is noticed... such speeches have the potential to vitiate the peaceful, free and fair election process, it is imperative on the part of



district and state level authorities to initiate prompt legal action without any delay..." a strongly-worded directive of the EC said.

Taking serious note of the delay on part of field poll authorities, the EC has asked officials to closely monitor and videograph all campaigns as per existing instructions "without any deviation".

The directive said in case of any provocative and inflammatory speech made by any campaigner, the district electoral officer - which

in most cases is the DM and SP of the district should initiate simultaneous measures. "After verifying the factual evidence, the district electoral officer and SP shall ensure that legal course of action on the FIR like filing of FIR under relevant sections is initiated without any delay... the action taken shall be brought to the notice of the CEO immediately and also to the public knowledge through media briefing," it said.

The EC has also directed the CEOs to promptly respond to media reports about such violations. It said organisers of the events should be asked in writing to provide two copies of CDs carrying unedited versions of speeches of leaders. The EC had recently admonished Siddaramaiah for his remarks on Modi.

## GOPAL GANDHI SLAMS CBI

New Delhi, 15 April: While

terming the CBI a "department of dirty tricks (DDT)", West Bengal's ex-Governor, Mr Gopal Krishna Gandhi, today justified criticism of the CBI for its alleged high-handedness, lack of sensitivity and unethical leaks to the media in real time during the course of investigation. "It (CBI) is often called DDT, meaning not dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane, the colourless, tasteless, odourless insecticide it should be, but the Department of Dirty Tricks," said Mr Gandhi, while delivering the 15th D P Kohli Memorial Lecture titled "Eclipse at Noon: Shadows over India's Conscience". He questioned the CBI's role in protecting some senior bureaucrats.

Mr Gandhi said: "There is justified criticism of CBI highhandedness and lack of sensitivity to loss of reputation of top members of the bureaucracy against whom needless inquiries can be initiated". He advocated autonomy to the CBI under the Lokpal and said it should be brought under RTI. **SNS**



communalism" in election. "It shows BJP's double-speak, double-face and dual character," Mr Maken said. Rejecting the Congress' charge, BJP said Singh had met them like he had been meeting other groups of people and did not ask them to make a political appeal for him or the party as Gandhi had "done" in her meeting with the Imam Bukhari.

BJP spokesperson Prakash Javadekar said Singh's meeting could not be equated with Gandhi's.

"She met a delegation of Muslims clerics led by the Shahi Imam and appealed to him that Muslim votes should not split. Seeking votes in the name of religion is wrong. Rajnath has done nothing wrong. Every candidate meets people in their constituency," he said. The BJP said there was no political discussion at the meet.

## SHAHI IMAM'S DIKTAT ON MINORITY VOTERS QUESTIONED

# Rezzak, Nazrul slam Didi-Bukhari

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
Kolkata, 15 April

Mr Abdur Rezzak Mollah, former state minister and expelled CPI-M leader and retired IPS officer Nazrul Islam today questioned the propriety of the call of the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid, Delhi to Muslims to vote for the Trinamul Congress in the Lok Sabha polls. They urged Muslim voters of the state to support whoever they felt would look after the needs of the community. Addressing a Press conference organised by Udar Akash, the duo said there was no need to pay any heed to the Shahi Imam's call.

Citing the reasons why Muslim voters should not support Trinamul candidates, Mr Mollah, the sitting Canning (east) MLA, said out of the 42 Trinamul LS candidates from the state, only five are from

the Muslim community. "This is a secular country, but the Imam's call is communal as he is asking people to vote on religious lines," he said.

"The Jama Masjid Imam's call to the Muslims to vote for Trinamul candidates should be rejected outright and condemned as he is not empowered to give such a call," Mr Mollah said. "As we had no role in the installation of the Shahi Imam, he has no business to dictate whom our community should vote for," said Mr Islam who had once enjoyed chief minister Mamata Banerjee's confidence but later took up cudgels against her regime.

Mr Islam moved the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) for not being considered for posting as DGP. The CAT set aside appointments of five IPS officers, including the DGP. However, later Calcutta High Court

## WHO SAID WHAT



ABDUR REZZAK MOLLAH  
FORMER WEST BENGAL MINISTER

*Muslims should vote for secular parties like the Congress and the Trinamul Congress in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.*



NAZRUL ISLAM  
RETIRED IPS OFFICER

set aside the CAT order. Mr Islam retired as an ADG on 28 February.

*This is a secular country, but the Imam's call is communal as he is asking people to vote on religious lines.*



MAULANA SYED AHMED BUKHARI  
SHAHI IMAM OF JAMA MASJID

*The Shahi Imam has no business to dictate whom our community (Muslims) should vote for.*

Rubbishing the Shahi Imam's call to vote for the Trinamul, the former

IPS officer said the chief minister's promises of development, including job reservation for Muslims and quota for them in medical and engineering courses had turned out to be "hoaxes". "There is no reason for the Muslims to vote for a party led by a person who has no proper understanding of the applications of expressions - *Khuda Hafiz*, *Inshallah* and *Salam Aleikum* -", but uses them frequently," Mr Islam said.

"I unsuccessfully tried to draw the chief minister's attention to the chit fund scam in which the Muslims were the worst sufferers," he regretted.

In another development, the MP unit of the All India Milli Council today urged people of the state to cast their votes for those who walk on the secular path with faith in the Indian Constitution.