

### NEARLY 2.5 LAKH Pilgrims visit Chaardham Shrines in Two Weeks



**32,700 devotees** visited Badrinath on first day


**80,931 devotees** paid obeisance at Badrinath by May 10

**54,639 devotees** visited Kedarnath since it reopened

**Gangotri and Yamunotri** temples received 42,709 and 57,707 devotees, respectively, in the first 13 days after their reopening


**Chamoli District** Magistrate Vinod Kumar Suman said figure likely to cross 10 lakh mark

### H'yana Village to Bear Daughters' Nameplates



**GURUGRAM:** Residents of a village in this district have decided to nail nameplates of their daughters on their houses. Residents of Alipur village near Sohna, some 17 km from here, have started putting nameplates of their daughters at the main entrance of their houses. Alipur is one of the five villages (four in Gurugram and one in Mewat) that have been adopted by President Pranab Mukherjee for making them model villages under the Adarsh Gram Yojana initiative launched last year. —PTI

### No Holiday on Annivs of Icons in U'khand Too



**DEHRADUN:** Taking a cue from UP, the Uttarakhand government is preparing to do away with the tradition of having holidays in schools and colleges on the birth anniversaries of national and state icons. Uttarakhand MoS for higher education DS Rawat said: "It is being felt that by closing our schools and colleges on the birth anniversaries..., we deprive the younger generation of a chance to know about them." —PTI

### 3RD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

#### Countdown to May 26 Begins

**10-odd booklets** would be used by BJP to take message to the masses

**Govt likely to initiate offensive on May 26**

**A beginning** is likely to be made with a press conference on May 27 by senior ministers Arun Jaitley and M Venkaiah Naidu

**A SENIOR MINISTER TOLD ET**

In poll-bound states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat, the Centre would also concentrate on tribal-dominated areas



## Modi Govt to Go Big on Success of Demonetisation

Planning meticulous offensive to tackle Oppn with statistics on its achievements

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New Delhi: The Narendra Modi government will showcase demonetisation as a revolutionary step that helped uproot corruption, black money and terrorism in the run-up to its third anniversary celebrations.

The government is also planning a meticulous offensive in an attempt to tackle the Opposition with statistics on its achievements. As first reported by ET on March 30, the government is not shying away from counting demonetisation as an achievement. The literature being prepared would talk about demonetisation as a step taken to ensure corruption-free good governance. "A revolutionary step where entire nation came together to uproot the cancer of corruption, black money and terrorism," reads the note prepared on demonetisation. "It broke the backs of the corrupt and those who threatened national security," it says.

The Modi government is also preparing 10-odd booklets, which would be used by BJP to take the message to the masses, to disseminate how it had improved governance across board. The booklets would be on decisive, bold and action-oriented governance; corruption-free good governance; government for *gaon, gareeb, mazdoor, kisan*; harnessing youth and *nari shakti*; *samvedna* (caring and considerate governance); government of the people, by the people and for the people; development of infrastructure and economy; vision for long-term development; and securing India's future and promoting brand India.

The government is likely to initiate the offensive on May 26 and it would spread across the country. A beginning is likely to be made with a press conference on May 27 by senior ministers Arun Jaitley and M Venkaiah Naidu. After this, other Cabinet ministers would fan out to state capitals and important places

## NEW HAJ POLICY Modi govt planning 15 cruise trips for pilgrims between Mumbai and Jeddah, with about 5,000 pilgrims in every trip

# Don't Worry About Air Turbulence, Just Cruise to Haj from 2018



**Our Political Bureau**

**New Delhi:** As part of the new Haj policy, the Modi government is planning 15 cruise trips for pilgrims from 2018 onwards. The "world class" ships would ferry worshippers between Mumbai and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, with about 5,000 pilgrims travelling in every trip, Union minority affairs minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said.

The minister added the cruise would be equipped with "world class facilities" and would take only about 3-4 days to reach Jeddah. Naqvi said the option was now being weighed in the

### 'Govt Created Atmosphere of Trust for Minorities'

light of a 2012 Supreme Court order asking the Centre to abolish by 2022 the subsidy offered to the Haj pilgrims who travel by air. "We don't want the poor pilgrims to suffer because of this. Hence, we are reviving the sea route as part of our new Haj policy."

The practice of ferrying devotees between Mumbai and Jeddah was stopped in 1995 after MV Akbari, the ship which was used for transporting pilgrims, grew old. "It used to take 10-15 days to reach Jeddah then," Naqvi said. The pilgrims will also be trained in "dos and don'ts", which would mainly look at norms of prayers during pilgrimage. "Now, we send our

**New Delhi:** The Modi government's policy of empowering minorities "without appeasement" has created an "atmosphere of trust" among these communities over the last three years, Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Thursday. The comments by the MoS for minority affairs come against the backdrop of often-levelled allegation that an "atmosphere of fear" is prevailing among minorities under the present BJP-led dispensation. Speaking to reporters here ahead of

trainers to different embankment points across states to train pilgrims."

Naqvi said the government would come out with a new Haj policy next year, under which even poor Muslims would be able to undertake pilgrimage within their budgets.

Ministry sources said a high-level committee studied the option of sending pilgrims via sea route to Jeddah. "The shipping ministry has approved it and Saudi Arabia has welcomed it too," Naqvi said, adding that various people from the Muslim community were also asked for their opinions on this. "The community is excited about

**MORE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Present govt has created more educational infra than its predecessor: Naqvi

the NDA government's third anniversary, Naqvi said it had worked to uplift the minorities by providing them education and skill-based training to ensure that they become

this. The cost would come down significantly. It costs a pilgrim ₹2 lakh via air. Via sea route, the cost will come down to ₹60,000."

Saudi Arabia had earlier this year increased India's Haj quota from 1.36 lakh to 1.70 lakh. A total of 1.35-lakh Indian devotees undertook the pilgrimage last year. The decision was taken during the signing of bilateral annual Haj agreement between India and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah on January 11, 2017. This year, a total of 1,70,025 people will go for the pilgrimage from India.

beneficiaries of mainstream development. He sought to score a point over the previous Manmohan Singh dispensation, claiming the present government has created more educational infrastructure than its predecessor. The ministry has decided to launch a programme 'Ustaad Samman Samagam', marking the birth centenary of BJP-RSS ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, with an aim to encourage artisans from the minority communities and offer them market exposure. —PTI

**MUKHTAR A NAQVI**  
Union Minister

We don't want poor pilgrims to suffer... We are reviving sea route that will be a part of our new Haj policy



## GRAND WELCOME Lankan PM, ministers receive Modi at Colombo Airport

# PM in Lanka on Two-Day Trip, Visits Oldest Buddhist Temple



**PM Modi at Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo; signing the 'Golden Book'; after leaving a temple in Colombo — AFP**

**Our Political Bureau | PTI**

**Colombo | New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Colombo on a two-day visit aimed at reinforcing the traditional connect between India and Sri Lanka at a time when China seeks to make inroads into the island nation. Sri Lankan premier Ranil Wickremesinghe and several senior ministers, including foreign minister Mangala Samaraweera, were at the Colombo International Airport to receive the PM.

Wickremesinghe's gesture highlighted the warmth in friendship between two neighbours. The Lankan PM had visited Delhi last month when the two sides announced a com-

prehensive economic agreement, including Indo-Japan joint development for the Trincomalee Port, oil refinery and use of tankers by Indian Oil Corporation in the port area.

"As Sri Lanka proudly celebrates International Vesak Day, I warmly welcome Indian premier @narendramodi who will grace the occasion," tweeted president Maithripala Sirisena.

Later, the PM visited one of Lanka's oldest Buddhist temple, Seema Malaka, and took part in the traditional lamp-lighting ceremony. The two PMs prayed and offered flowers, which is a part of the 120-year-old Gangaramaya Temple. The temple situated in the bustling inner-city Colombo, nearby the scenic Beira Lake, is a popular tourist attraction.

### HAPPY TO BE IN LANKA



Happy to be in Sri Lanka, where I will join the International Vesak Day Celebrations: PM Modi

₹150-crore assistance and address Indian-origin Tamils against the backdrop of India's insistence that Sri Lanka should undertake devolution of power to the ethnic community as part of reconciliation.

The visit to re-emphasise traditional connect between India and Sri Lanka, particularly in the context of Buddhism, assumes significance since China is aggressively trying to establish links in Sri Lanka. It has already developed the Hambantota port, where its submarines have been making calls, much to India's discomfort. Prior to his departure, the PM said in a Facebook post, "my visit brings to the fore one of the most abiding links between India and Sri Lanka — the shared heritage of Buddhism."

### No Case Against CM as CD Found Tamped

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**New Delhi:** The UP government has said that no case for prosecution can be made against CM Yogi Adityanath for a speech delivered in Gorakhpur in 2007 as a forensic lab of the Central Bureau of Investigation had found that the CD submitted as evidence was "tamped with and doctored".

Based on CBI's Delhi forensic lab report, the UP government told its CB-CID wing that there was no case and chief secretary Rahul Bhatnagar communicated the same to the Allahabad high court.

"The CBI forensic lab gave us a report which said the CD was totally tamped with and doctored. The entire case was based on the CD which has been found to be tamped. This is what we have told the court today," Bhatnagar told ET.

Yogi Adityanath had once broken down in Parliament, saying allegations that he had triggered riots in Gorakhpur in 2007 were baseless.

### ₹1,400 CR FOR 11,107 ROADS Work has to be completed by June 15

## Yogi Sarkar Launches Drive to Repair Roads in 40 Days

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**New Delhi:** UP has launched a drive to fill up potholes on as many as 11,107 roads within 40 days, with the Yogi Adityanath government allotting nearly ₹1,400 crore for the work.


The state government earmarked the money on May 6. The work has to be completed by June 15, that is before the onset of monsoon rains in the state, as per the target fixed by the chief minister. The Lucknow zone, which includes the state capital and surrounding districts, has emerged as the region with the largest number of potholed roads at 1,632.

Faizabad, Allahabad, Azamgarh, Agra and Gorakhpur come in next on the list, official orders seen by ET show. These six zones also come on top for getting the money budgeted for the repair job. The condition of roads seems to be comparatively better in the Jhansi and Moradabad zones.

A survey carried out by the UP Public Works Department for a month had found potholes on 85,943 kilometres, or about a third, of roads in the state. The CM ordered that a strict watch be kept to ensure that

### Tracking The Route

Zones	Total Roads to be Repaired	Funds Earmarked (₹ in cr)
Lucknow	1,632	199.78
Faizabad	1,605	217.05
Allahabad	1,135	144.19
Azamgarh	1,111	107.58
Agra	1,106	152.45
Gorakhpur	901	126.82
Kanpur	842	97.30
Bareilly	622	73.43
Varanasi	610	91.67
Meerut	529	62.49
Jhansi	508	71.27
Moradabad	506	51.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,107</b>	<b>₹1,395.15</b>




only good-quality material is used to repair the roads and that construction is video-graphed in the presence of a prominent public representative. "The CM noted that UP's image has taken a beating as roads are potholed as soon as a person crosses over into UP from other states. He wants UP's roads to be of better construction quality than roads of adjoining

states," said the minutes of a recent review meeting held by CM.


The CM and other ministers are expected to conduct surprise checks at locations where the repair work is being carried out. The state is also setting up a UP Road Construction Corporation to carry out construction works in future on the lines of the system in Madhya Pradesh.

### THIRD EYE




### Toast of the Town

Yogi's minority affairs minister Mohsin Raja was the toast of electronic mediapersons at BJP headquarters in Delhi. Raja, who was in Delhi for the meeting of Haj Committee, visited party HQ and found himself in huge demand. He was busy giving sound bites to electronic mediapersons against the backdrop of SC hearing on triple talaq that began on Thursday. Mohsin was happy to oblige.



### A regular Affair

Third Eye told you last month that a few ministries have been asked to hold press conferences every Friday in the run-up to the third anniversary celebrations of the Modi government. Now, it seems that the government is so happy with the response the Friday conferences are generating that these would be made a regular feature till 2019 elections.



### No Reasons to Complain

It raked a controversy in 2015 when annual Chief Justices Conference was held on a Good Friday under the aegis of then CJI HL Dattu. In 2016 again, then CJI TS Thakur cried foul in front of all chief justices, chief ministers and the prime minister. But expect no such controversy this year as the annual conference is unlikely to happen this year and the MiLords are not complaining.



### The Case of a Missing File

The officials of the social justice and empowerment ministry are a worried lot these days. As it is preparing for a mega ceremony for Dr Ambedkar National Award on May 26, a file with all records — names of candidates and shortlists — sent to the jury has gone missing. The officials are hoping that these records are not called for and the award ceremony passes off without any controversies.

