

## Centre to push for educational empowerment of minorities

**New Delhi , May 11** : Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Thursday said the Centre will be launching a campaign to educationally empower the poor and marginalised sections of the society.

Stressing the Narendra Modi government's commitment towards providing quality education to students belonging to minority communities Naqvi said the ministry will be establishing five world class educational institutions across the country. Tehrik-e-Taalmi (campaign for education) will be launched on the occasion of late President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's 86th birth anniversary on October 15 Naqvi told the media here.

Aimed at educationally empowering the most poor and backward sections of the society the campaign will be launched in 100 districts across the country which have been identified as lacking in education awareness. Besides spreading awareness about education and various government schemes we will be building schools and educational institutions to develop educational infrastructure in these areas he said. The five new institutes will be imparting education in the fields of technology medical Ayurveda Unani etc. A high-level committee constituted to frame the roadmap including places where these institutes will be established will soon submit its report. Our target is to start academic sessions in these institutes from 2018 Naqvi said adding that 40 per cent reservation for girls in these institutions has been proposed. About 100 Navodaya Vidyalyaya type schools will also be opened in minority concentrated areas in the coming months he said. Speaking about the achievements of the ministry in the last three years of Modi's government Naqvi said that scholarships worth Rs 4 740 crore were given to 1.82 crore students besides contributing towards infrastructure development including building 33 colleges 97 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) 16 polytechnic institutes 1 102 school buildings and 1952 drinking water facilities.

## Will prove how EVMs can be tampered, says AAP ahead of all-party meet



**New Delhi , May 11** : A day before the all-party meeting called by the Election Commission, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday threw a fresh challenge before the poll panel and said that given a chance it could prove how voting machines used in the assembly polls were pre-programmed to favour a particular party.

AAP lawmaker Saurabh Bharadwaj urged the Election Commission to form a panel of representatives of all political parties and experts from the poll panel to examine Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

"We will demonstrate and prove before the panel how EVMs can be tampered with the help of its ROM (read only memory)," Bharadwaj told the media.

He said the AAP would urge the

Election Commission in an all-party meeting on Friday to form the panel.

He said he could find out from an EVM ROM which party a particular voter had polled for and the sequence in which votes were cast.

Bharadwaj explained that the proposed panel may randomly pick five booths where they suspect rigging had taken place.

One voter from each of those booths could be cross-examined by a judicial magistrate in an in-camera proceeding and asked which party did he or she vote for.

"We can find by reading the ROM of that EVM where the voter's vote went and if his or her statement is corroborated by the EVM then no rigging has taken place. If not, then it proves our point (that voting machines were being tampered with)," Bharadwaj said.

The AAP's new challenge came two days after Bharadwaj, an IT engineer, on Tuesday demonstrated in Delhi Assembly by using a look-alike machine how EVMs could be manipulated by tampering with its code and changing its motherboard.

"The EC used to say that an EVM is a stand-alone machine and not connected to any network so it can't be tampered, but we tampered with a replica of EVM in Delhi Assembly on Tuesday by a secret code," he said.

The AAP leader said their doubts about the EVM gained ground when during municipal polls in Maharashtra a candidate claimed that he did not even get his own vote that he had polled for himself.

He also recalled how a demo in Bhand in Madhya Pradesh "proved" votes were going to the BJP irrespective of any EVM button pressed.

"This raised our doubts about EVM tampering," he said, adding it was surprising to know that the BJP was winning almost all elections after the November demonetisation though no one was happy in the country with the move of recalling Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes.

"If the Election Commission wants, we can find the truth behind EVM tampering. The AAP will do whatever it takes to save democracy. If the truth behind the doubts cast over the credibility of EVMs isn't revealed then the country will slip into dictatorship which is very dangerous for any democratic republic," the AAP leader said.

## UP government declines to try CM Adityanath in 2007 riot case

**Lucknow , May 11** : The Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday told the Allahabad High Court (HC) that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath cannot be prosecuted in a riots case involving a 2007 hate speech.

Yogi was then a Lok Sabha member from Gorakhpur constituency.

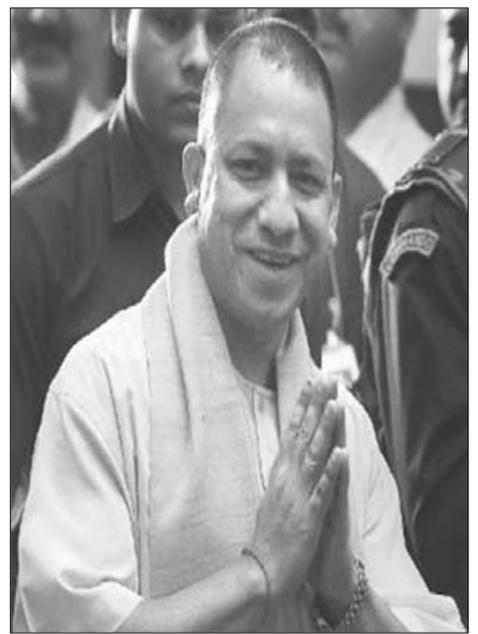
Chief Secretary Rahul Bhatnagar, who was summoned by the High Court, told it that earlier this month the state's home department had refused to grant permission for the Chief Minister's trial.

The top bureaucrat was summoned by the court to explain why the five people, including Adityanath, were not being prosecuted in a case of riots in Gorakhpur in 2007.

The court had also asked Bhatnagar to come armed with all relevant documents with regard to the matter.

Explaining the stand of the state government, the Chief Secretary apprised the court that a forensic test of the CD of Yogi Adityanath's alleged hate speech of January 27, 2007, showed it was tampered with.

The case was filed in 2008 by local journalist



Pervez Parwaz and social activist Asad Hayat, who is also witness to Yogi's speech.

The probe into the allegations was completed in 2015 but despite a government headed by the Samajwadi Party, no sanction was granted for Yogi's prosecution and the matter remained in limbo.

After the statement by the Chief Secretary, the petitioners said that they will move court again to challenge the government stand. They also scoffed at the development by saying that it was ridiculous that the man in-charge of the home department, Yogi Adityanath, has given himself a clean chit.

## Hizbul Mujahideen behind army officer Ummer Fayaz's killing: J-K police

**Srinagar , May 11** : The Jammu and Kashmir police have held a local module of the Hizbul Mujahideen responsible for the killing of a 22-year-old Army officer in South Kashmir's Shopian district on Tuesday night.

Inspector general of police Javed Gillani said investigators have recovered two empty INSAS rifle cartridge cases used for the crime. A probe was on to check if they were same cartridges snatched from policemen a few days ago, he added.

Gillani, however, refused to disclose the names of those behind Rajputana Rifles officer Ummer Fayaz's abduction and murder. "A local Hizbul Mujahideen mod-

ule was involved. Though we have identified the militants, their names cannot be revealed immediately," he said.

Lieutenant Fayaz was kidnapped from a relative's house in the midst of a wedding ceremony, and shot dead the same night. Witnesses said the army officer was taken away while he was sitting with the bride, even as more militants waited outside the house.

A farmer's son, Fayaz had been commissioned into the Indian army in December 2016.

"Although police are yet receive the post-mortem report, preliminary examinations revealed that there were no torture marks on his

body," Gillani said.

This was the most recent incident in a series of militant attacks witnessed by the strife-torn state since the beginning of this year. Five policemen and two bank guards were shot down by militants in an attempt to rob a cash van at the beginning of this month. On April 24, militants shot the PDP's district president for Pulwama, Abdul Gani Dar, with an assault rifle from a close range. A former public prosecutor affiliated with the National Conference was also killed in Shopian district the same month.

According to police, five political workers have been attacked in the Valley since March.

## Mayawati sought Rs 50 crore for BSP, alleges Siddiqui

**Lucknow , May 11** : A day after he was sacked from the BSP, former PWD Minister Naseemuddin Siddiqui on Thursday accused party supremo Mayawati and her brother of making illegal demands, including asking Rs 50 crore for the party.

Addressing a press conference, the former BSP General Secretary also alleged that Mayawati had called Muslims "traitors".

Siddiqui, who was expelled along with his son a day ago, said he had "ample proof" that Mayawati, her brother Anand and party General Secretary Satish Chandra Mishra made illegal demands to him.

Alleging that Mayawati had asked for Rs 50 crore from him, he said: "I asked from where can I get this amount, to which, she asked me to sell my property."

The expelled leader claimed he tried to explain to her that his property was not worth even a quarter of money she was asking for.

Siddiqui said after the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress cobbled an alliance ahead of the February-March assembly elections, he told Mayawati the Muslims were drifting towards the alliance.

"An upset Mayawati called the Muslim community 'gaddar' (traitors)," the former Minister said.

He also accused the former Chief Minister of insulting him and many senior party office-bearers repeatedly.

Siddiqui said he had dedicated his whole life to the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Dalit leader, but she expelled him from the party on flimsy grounds.

She did not even give me an audience to explain whatever was said against me, he said.

"I am pained that sacrifices made by me and my family for the last so many years have been rewarded with sudden expulsion," Siddiqui said.

The former Minister also denied charges against him and his son, who too has been expelled from the BSP.

He said the BSP fared badly in the 2012 and 2017 assembly elections and the 2009 and 2014 general elections due to Mayawati's wrong policies and actions.

Siddiqui, once a confidant of the BSP chief, was expelled along with his son Afzal on Wednesday for alleged involvement in anti-party activities.

Mishra also accused him of taking money from candidates during the 2017 assembly elections, in which the BSP's tally fell to an all-time low of 19.

Siddiqui, a three-time senior minister in previous BSP governments, was also accused of becoming a partner in many slaughterhouse businesses and holding "benami" properties at many places.

He has denied all charges.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 'I will be fine,' says Comey after sack from FBI

**Washington , May 11** : A day after he was fired by US President Donald Trump, FBI Director James Comey wrote an email to the bureau explaining that he is "not going to spend time" thinking about the decision to fire him or how it was executed.

"I will be fine," Comey assured his former staffers in an email letter obtained by CNN.

Comy wrote that he has "long believed the President can fire an FBI Director for any reason or for no reason at all", and said he will not question that decision -- and he hopes no one else will.

"I have said to you before that, in times of

turbulence, the American people should see the FBI as a rock of competence, honesty and independence," the email read.

"What makes leaving the FBI hard is the nature and quality of its people, who together make it that rock for America."

Comy wrote that "working with you has been one of the great joys of my life".

Several FBI employees and agents told CBS News on Wednesday they were touched by what they took as the very personal nature of the farewell email, especially after the abrupt announcement of his dismissal on Tuesday.

The agents and employ-

ees said that they take issue with White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders' comments that Comey had lost the confidence of the bureau.

The White House said that Comey had been fired because Trump had lost confidence in him.

But many have questioned the timing, since the FBI is leading the investigation into ties between the Trump White House and Russia.

According to reports, Comy last week asked Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein for more resources for the FBI's Russia investigation, something the Justice Department denied.

### Afghan President declines invites to visit Pakistan

**Islamabad , May 11** : Pakistan on Thursday summoned the Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Islamabad over fresh ceasefire violations on the Line of Control, that it said has left one Pakistani civilian dead and two others injured.

The Foreign Office said in a statement that Director General Mohammad Faisal (South Asia and Saarc Desk), summoned Deputy High Commissioner J.P. Singh and condemned the "unprovoked" ceasefire

violations by Indian forces on the intervening night of May 10 and 11 in Tandar, Subzkot, Khuiratta, Baroh, Bagnsar, Khanjar sectors.

The Indian envoy was conveyed that "deliberate" targeting of civilians was

condemnable and contrary to international human rights and laws.

The Indian side was urged to respect the 2003 Ceasefire and probe the incident and maintain peace on the LoC.

The summoning comes as India has decided to put all bilateral engagements with Pakistan on hold after alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on spying charges.

Tensions escalated after two Indian soldiers were killed and their bodies mutilated in unprovoked firing by Pakistan on May 1 on the LoC.

Last week, India summoned Pakistan High Commissioner Abdul Basit and demanded action against Pakistani soldiers and commanders responsible for the beheading of the two security force personnel.

### South Korea urges 'parallel' talks and sanctions to rein in North Korea

**Seoul , May 11** : South Korea's new president launched international efforts to defuse tension over North Korea's weapons development on Thursday, urging both dialogue and sanctions while also aiming to ease Chinese anger about a U.S. anti-missile system.

Moon Jae-in, a liberal former human rights lawyer, was sworn in on Wednesday and said in his first speech as president he would immediately address security tensions that have raised fears of war on the Korean peninsula. Moon first spoke to Chinese President Xi Jinping and later to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with how to respond to North Korea's rapidly developing nuclear and ballistic missile programs, in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, dominating talks.

"The resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue must be comprehensive and sequential, with pressure and sanctions used in parallel with negotiations," Moon's spokesman, Yoon Young-chan, quoted Moon as telling Xi.

"Sanctions against North Korea are also a means to bring the North to the negotiating table aimed at eliminating its nuclear weapons," Yoon

told a briefing, adding that Xi indicated his agreement.

Moon has taken a more conciliatory line with North Korea than his conservative predecessors and advocates engagement. He has said he would be prepared to go to Pyongyang "if the conditions are right". Regional experts have believed for months that North Korea is preparing for its sixth nuclear test and was working to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the United States, presenting U.S. President Donald Trump with perhaps his most pressing security issue. Trump told Reuters in an interview last month that North Korea was preparing for its sixth nuclear test and was working to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the United States, presenting U.S. President Donald Trump with perhaps his most pressing security issue. Trump told Reuters in an interview last month that North Korea was preparing for its sixth nuclear test and was working to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the United States, presenting U.S. President Donald Trump with perhaps his most pressing security issue.

North Korea says it needs its weapons to defend itself against the United States which it says has pushed the region to the brink of nuclear war.

"Threats from North Korea's nuclear and missile development have entered a new stage," Japan's Abe told Moon in their telephone call, according to Japanese Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Hagiuda. "How to respond to North Korea ... is an urgent

issue. I would like to closely cooperate with the president to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea," Abe told Moon.

But Abe also said "dialogue for dialogue's sake would be meaningless" and he called on North Korea to demonstrate "sincere and concrete action", Hagiuda said, adding that Moon shared Abe's views.

Japan has been concerned that Moon will take a tough line on feuds stemming from the bitter legacy of its 1910-1945 colonization of the Korean peninsula and could fray ties at a time when cooperation on North Korea is vital.

Moon told Abe to "look straight at history" and not make the past "a barrier", though he raised South Korea's dissatisfaction with a 2015 agreement meant to put to rest a dispute over Japanese compensation for South Korean women forced to work in Japanese brothels before and during World War Two, Korea's presidential office said.

While South Korea, China and Japan all share worry about North Korea, ties between South Korea and China have been strained by South Korea's decision to install a U.S. anti-missile system in defense against the North.

### Sharif, Modi may meet, back channel links on

**Islamabad , May 11** : Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Narendra Modi of India might meet in Kazakhstan, a top Pakistani official has said, amid reports of back channel contacts.

Sartaj Azia, the Advisor to Sharif, said that a meeting between the two leaders cannot be ruled out on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit next month in Kazakhstan.

But it was too early to speak about such a meeting, the Nation newspaper quoted him as saying on Wednesday. "Pakistan could consider the meeting if interest was shown from the other side."

Aziz said the SCO Summit was

important as Pakistan would become a permanent member of the organisation.

The report said there was widespread speculation about a possible Sharif-Modi meeting after the Pakistani Prime Minister recently met Indian business tycoon Sajjan Jindal, who "reportedly conveyed a message of the Indian premier to the Pakistani leader".

Aziz said Pakistan was reviewing India's plea against alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav's death sentence and also the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in the case. The Nation quoted unnamed senior Pakistani Foreign Office officials as saying that diplomatic efforts

had been launched to defuse tensions along the borders with its immediate neighbours.

"There have been overt and covert talks with all the countries (Iran, Afghanistan and India)," an official was quoted as saying.

"Nobody can afford confrontation, so we are trying to resolve the misunderstandings through talks," the official said. He said that while there had been open talks with Iran and Afghanistan, "back-channels were being used in India's case".

The unnamed official added that if Modi and Sharif do meet on the sidelines of the SCO Summit, "it will be positive to concentrate on the talks process".