

Two NC workers shot dead by suspected militants two days ahead of J-K local polls

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Two days ahead of polling for the first phase of elections for local bodies in Jammu and Kashmir, militants Friday shot dead two National Conference party workers and injured another by firing at them from a close range in Karfali Mohalla area of Srinagar. "Party President Farooq Abdullah, Vice President Omar Abdullah expressed profound grief over the barbaric killing of two party workers Nazir Ah Bha and Mushtaq Ah Wan," the JKNC said in a tweet.

Confirming the incident, Omar tweeted: "I cannot condemn strongly enough the murderous terrorist attack against three of my party

workers. Nazir Ahmed Bhat (working in the office of MLA Shamima Firdous) & Mushtaq Ahmed Wani have been killed. Allah Jannat naseeb karey." He further said, "Shakeel Ahmad Zango has been injured & is in hospital. I pray for his complete & speedy recovery. May the families of Nazir, Mushtaq & Shakeel find strength in this most difficult time." Omar also thanked former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, who also expressed pain over the incident. "Thank you for your kind words at this difficult time. Mehebooba Mufti Sahiba, I'm sure your message of support will give the family some strength at this difficult time." Mufti tweeted: "Pained to hear about the killing of two NC

workers. My heart goes out to their families & children. Cannot possibly imagine what they must be going through."

The first phase of polling in the state will be held on October 8, followed by the second phase on October 10, the third phase on October 13 and the fourth and final phase on October 16. The counting of votes will be taken up on October 20. Around 17 lakh electors are eligible to vote in the four-phased local body and municipal polls in Jammu and Kashmir. With the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) staying away from the municipal elections in Jammu and Kashmir, at least 70 BJP candidates have been elected

unopposed in the Valley and the saffron party is set to lead at least seven municipal bodies in Kashmir.

Blaming the National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) for the low number of nominations filed for the upcoming municipal elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Minister of State (Home) Hansraj G Ahir said Wednesday, "By not participating in the local elections, PDP and NC have encouraged militants."

"Both NC and PDP ruled Jammu and Kashmir for so many years but when the Centre is allocating over Rs 4,000 crore to the state, the two parties have shown that they are against development," he said.

TTV Dinakaran claims OPS wanted to meet him in September to 'oust' CM Palaniswami

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His comments come a day after OPS reportedly told the media that he would support EPS to protect the government.

AIADMK, meanwhile, says Dinakaran was trying to "fish in troubled waters." AIA DMK spokesperson R M Babu Murugavel was quoted as saying by PTI, "Dinakaran is trying to fish in troubled waters. He and his aides will say anything to stay relevant. He is perhaps doing this to keep his flock together in the context of the case regarding disqualification of 18 AIADMK MLAs." After former CM and AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa's death in December 2016, multiple factions of the party emerged. Dinakaran was expelled from the party after two factions, led by Palaniswami and Panneerselvam, agreed on a merger under the condition that Palaniswami becomes CM and Panneerselvam deputy CM. Panneerselvam had become interim CM after Jayalalithaa's death. Dinakaran later formed his own party, Anna Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (Anna People's Progress Front). He contested the RK Nagar bypoll last December as an independent and won with a huge margin, defeating the ruling AIADMK party as well as opposition DMK. The bypoll was necessitated after the death of Jayalalithaa.

Kathua rape and murder case: Supreme Court dismisses plea seeking CBI probe

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The Supreme Court Friday dismissed a petition filed by two accused in the Kathua rape and murder case seeking an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The apex court also set aside a plea for fresh investigation filed on grounds that the probe conducted was motivated. The bench

observed that allegations tendered by the accused can be raised during ongoing trial. An eight-year-old girl belonging to a minority community was raped and murdered in Kathua district in Jammu and Kashmir, after having disappeared from her home on January 10 this year. The girl's father had moved the apex court, apprehending threat to the family and their lawyer Deepika Singh Rajawat. In

September, lawyer and rights activist, Talib Hussain, who is also a key witness in the case, was shifted to another cell following alleged life threat. The doctors who conducted a post-mortem on the eight-year-old girl told a court in Pathankot that the victim who was sexually assaulted had died of asphyxia. Fifty-four witnesses had deposed before the court in the trial in the rape and murder case.

Muzaffarpur shelter abuse case: CBI finds skull, suspects it may belong to missing girl

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A CBI team probing the Bihar shelter sexual abuse case has scooped out part of a skull and bones from a spot at a cremation ground near the Muzaffarpur shelter and these may belong to a girl who went missing from the shelter home, sources said. The spot was identified by main accused Brajesh Thakur's driver, who had told the police during interrogation that the girl was allegedly killed and buried there after she threatened to expose Thakur.

Muzaffarpur Police had two months ago dug the front portion of the shelter home in search of the missing teenaged girl, reportedly from the National Capital Region, but had not found any evidence.

Six girls had gone missing from Thakur's shelter home in 2013 — two were found dead, three had got married and one was still missing. Police had

tried to trace the girl's address but it was found to be incorrect. The bones form "very important evidence" for the CBI, which can match DNA samples once the girl's parents are located. A missing person's complaint was earlier filed at the Town police station but it was made into an FIR only in July after medical reports confirmed sexual abuse of more than 30 girls at the Muzaffarpur shelter home. All inmates were shifted to other shelters in May, a month after a TISS report suggested sexual abuse in at least six shelter homes, including the one at Muzaffarpur. CBI spokesperson Abhishek Dayal confirmed that the recovery was made at Akhara Ghat cremation ground in Muzaffarpur town. "Brajesh Thakur's driver Vijay Kumar, whom we had taken on remand, told us that a girl who had threatened to expose Brajesh Thakur, was killed and buried at the cremation ground."

Week after being elected, Bengaluru deputy mayor Ramila Umashankar dies

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Bengaluru Deputy Mayor Ramila Umashankar passed away on Friday after suffering a cardiac arrest. She was elected to the post on September 28 and took charge earlier this week. Karnataka Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy, expressing shock at her death, offered his condolences to her family. He remembered her as a loyal activist of the Janata Dal (United), who was involved in

social service. A day before her death, Umashankar had participated in the flagging off of the Namma Metro. Umashankar, 44, was a JD(S) corporator from the Kaveripura ward in Bengaluru. She is survived by her husband and two children. Umashankar (left) riding the metro on Thursday. (Twitter/@CMofKarnataka) "Deeply saddened to hear of the demise of Deputy Mayor Rameela Umashankar. She had actively participated with us at the Namma Metro flagging off event just yesterday. She was

'If allies want, sure': Rahul Gandhi on being India's next prime minister in 2019

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Who will be India's next prime minister if the Congress wins 2109 elections, was a question asked to Rahul Gandhi. "If they (allies) want me, sure," he said, speaking at the *Hindustan Times Leadership Summit* in New Delhi on Friday.

Launching a scathing attack on the BJP, Gandhi said that the Opposition has decided to defeat the Modi government in the upcoming general elections and then choose who will handle the top post. When prodded further if he would take the mantle if the allies agree, he said: "Sure."

Underlining the difference between the Congress and

the BJP, he said "India is a partnership between all its people" and the Congress "didn't believe in binaries". Talking about Mayawati's decision to not have an alliance with the Congress in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, Rahul Gandhi said the move will not impact the party's prospects in the states. He, however, did not rule out an alliance for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. "I don't see the BSP alliance impacting us much in Madhya Pradesh," Gandhi said. He also expressed confidence of winning the state elections — Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Chhattisgarh — slated to be held this year. Adding that an alliance would have been better,

Gandhi said he was "more flexible than some state leaders." "The alliance in state and the alliance in the Centre are very different... Mayawati has indicated that. We were pretty flexible in the state, in fact, I was more flexible than some of our state leaders." Gandhi said, suggesting that both the parties might come together for an alliance during the Lok Sabha elections. "I think in national elections parties will come together particularly in Uttar Pradesh," he said. Gandhi, who is spearheading the campaign against the BJP at the Centre, has expressed confidence that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would not be re-elected to

the post next year. Earlier, while campaigning for Karnataka elections, Gandhi had suggested that he would be the prime minister if the Congress emerged as the single largest party after the Lok Sabha elections. "Yes, why not," he had said, reported PTI.

Gandhi took the reins of the Congress last December from his mother and now UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi. He has been elected at a time when the Congress is at its weakest, electorally and politically, in its 133-year history. From helming governments in nineteen states 24 years ago, the party today is in power only in three states and one Union Territory — Punjab, Mizoram, Karnataka and Puducherry.

Former TV anchor Suhai Ilyasi acquitted in wife's murder case

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The Delhi High Court Friday acquitted former TV anchor and producer Suhai Ilyasi, serving life imprisonment for killing his first wife, Anju, 18 years ago. A Bench of Justice S Muralidhar and Justice Vinod Goel set aside the trial court order convicting Ilyasi, 52, holding there was no evidence against him and that the prosecution too failed to establish the murder charges. The bench said there was no evidence on record to sustain the conviction.

The bench accepted the arguments of Ilyasi's advocates Rajiv Mohan and Abhimanyu Kamath that the trial court had reached the conclusion of guilt of the accused based on conjectures and the conviction was not supported by material on record.

Ilyasi, who was taken into custody on December 16 last year after his conviction, contended in his plea that after framing of additional charge under Section 302 of the IPC for the offence of murder, he was not given an opportunity to cross-examine all the witnesses. Ilyasi had claimed that the police had not collected any material for three months after the incident and there was no

evidence to charge him for the offence of murder. The police had claimed he had misled the investigating agency.

The trial court had, on December 20, 2017, sentenced Ilyasi to life term for stabbing his wife to death, saying he "committed murder and gave it a colour of suicide". It had also imposed a fine of Rs 2 lakh on him and directed that Rs 10 lakh be paid as compensation to Anju's parents.

Earlier, Ilyasi was charged with milder provisions, including 304 B (dowry death) of the IPC. However, Anju's mother Rukma Singh and sister Rashmi Singh had moved the Delhi High Court, which, in August 2014, ruled that the former TV producer would be tried under Section 302 of the IPC for the offence of murder.

The High Court, which had on April 26 granted interim bail to Ilyasi, refused to extend the relief on May 14. He later moved the Supreme Court that also refused to grant him interim bail.

Anju was rushed to a hospital on January 11, 2000 with stab wounds she received at her East Delhi residence. She was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

Ilyasi, who had shot into limelight after hosting TV crime show — 'India's Most Wanted', was arrested on March 28, 2001. Charges were framed against him in the case after his sister-in-law and mother-in-law alleged that he used to torture his wife for dowry. He was granted bail later.



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IAF aircraft crashes in UP's Baghpat: A microlight aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF), which was on a routine mission, snagged mid-air in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat Friday. It, however, parachuted down safely and the two pilots aboard also managed to eject themselves in time, according to the IAF.

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