

IAF recommends Wing Commander Abhinandan's name for Vir Chakra medal

Agency
New Delhi April 21,

The India Air Force has recommended Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman for the Vir Chakra medal for shooting down an F-16 in an aerial engagement with the Pakistan Air Force on February 27.

In the past, during wars, pilots who shot down enemy fighters were all given Vir Chakra medals.

The Vir Chakra is the third highest gallantry award in the military during times of war after the Param Vir Chakra and the Mahavir Chakra.

This comes even as the IAF fighter pilot was issued transfer orders out of Srinagar to another base in the western sector along the Pakistan border.

"Security considerations prompted the transfer," a defence ministry officer said and added that Wing Commander Abhinandan's home base will "be another front-line fighter base."

The transfer orders came after security agencies indicated that the officer could be a target of the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) - the group that claimed responsibility for the February 14 Pulwama suicide attack which killed 40 jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

Wing Commander Abhinandan's new base is also a fighter base. If he is cleared for flying, he would be able to continue his flying duties.



however, said that the transfer orders to another base were "routine."

Wing Commander Abhinandan, flying a vintage Russian-made Mig-21 fighter, was part of the Indian Air Force package that took on the Pakistan Air Force war planes on

February 27. A day earlier, IAF fighters had hit a JeM training camp in Balakot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

During the aerial engagement, Wing Commander Varthaman's Mig-21 was shot down along the Line of Control (LoC). However, he

managed to eject safely, but landed in Pakistani territory where he was taken prisoner. Under pressure from India, Wing Commander Abhinandan was released by Pakistan on March 1. The fighter pilot is currently awaiting medical clearance to resume flying a combat aircraft.

Former PM Manmohan Singh along with his wife to cast vote from Dispur

Agency
New Delhi April 21,

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur will cast their votes in Guwahati Lok Sabha constituency where polls will be held on April 23 in the third phase of elections, a Congress leader said on Saturday. Singh and his wife will vote

at the Dispur Government Higher Secondary School, Leader of Opposition in Assembly Debabrata Saikia said.

A Rajya Sabha member from Assam since 1991 with his current term ending on June 14 this year, Manmohan Singh and his wife are voters of Dispur legislative assembly in Assam. Their serial numbers in the

electoral roll are 623 and 624 and their address is House No 3989 in the Sarumotoria area.

Then Assam Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia offered him a Rajya Sabha seat from Assam after he became the Union Finance Minister in the P.V. Narasimha Rao government in 1991. Saikia also made him a tenant in his house located at Sarumotoria.

'Samajwadi Party workers should learn discipline from BSP,' says Mayawati

Agency
New Delhi April 21,

Miffed by loud sloganeering allegedly by Samajwadi Party workers during her address at a rally in Firozabad, Bahujan Samaj Party supreme

Mayawati said that the SP workers need to learn how to listen attentively from BSP people. "The sloganeering and shouting you (SP) do in the middle of a speech, I think you should learn a little from the BSP people how they listen carefully to what I say. The SP people need to learn

a lot," said Mayawati at a joint rally of the SP-BSP alliance which was also attended by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Targeting the BJP, Congress and other opposition parties, Mayawati said that voters should be careful not to fall for their tactics.

"Parties are going all out to create an environment favourable for them by manipulating the media, opinion polls and surveys. Voters should not be misled by these things," she said.

"People should be able to see through the tall promises in manifestos of political parties

and not get lured by it," Mayawati added.

Burying decades-old hatchet, the SP and BSP have joined forces to take on the Congress and BJP in Uttar Pradesh. As per a pre-poll pact, the BSP, SP and RLD are contesting on 38, 37 and 3 Lok Sabha seats, respectively.

In Firozabad, Mulayam Singh Yadav's brother Shivpal Singh Yadav of Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) is contesting against his nephew Akshaya Yadav, son of SP general secretary Prof Ram Gopal Yadav. Akshaya is also the sitting MP from the seat.

EC notice to Sidhu for warning Muslims about division of votes

Agency
New Delhi April 21,

The Election Commission Saturday issued a showcause notice to Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu for his remarks in which he allegedly warned the Muslim community that efforts were on to divide their votes in Bihar.

The EC said prima facie he has violated provisions of the model code of conduct, election law and a Supreme Court direction asking politicians not to mix religion with political discourse while electioneering.

The Punjab minister has been asked to respond within 24 hours, failing



Bihar with a sizeable population of the minority community to vote en bloc and defeat Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The comments by former test cricketer came at a rally in Katihar, where he was canvassing in support of veteran Congress leader and former Union minister Tariq Anwar.

"Do not consider yourself as being in a minority. You constitute the majority here. You are about 64 per cent. Do not fall into the trap laid down by people like Owaisi (president of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen). They have been propped up by the BJP," Sidhu had said on Monday at a rally held at Barasol, in the Balrampur assembly segment under the Katihar Lok Sabha seat in Bihar.

Addressing an election rally in Katihar on April 16, the cricketer-turned-politician had stoked a controversy as he urged Muslim voters of a Lok Sabha constituency in

'Will investigate Rafale deal if Congress comes to power', says Rahul Gandhi

Agency
New Delhi April 21,

Congress president Rahul Gandhi is confident that the grand old party will do much better in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections than estimated by media surveys. In an interview with Shashi Shekhar, editor of Hindustan, a sister publication of the Hindustan Times, Gandhi said the mood of the people clearly favoured change and listed the major failures of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government, including rising unemployment, rural distress and alleged corruption in the Rafale deal. The coalition Congress has formed in Tamil Nadu will "wipe out everybody," Gandhi said, and the alliance in Bihar will "bring great results."

He also said Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah, would give a "huge majority" to the Congress in the Lok Sabha polls. Edited excerpts:

You are on election tours across the country. How do you feel about it? What kind of results will the Congress get?

Positive results will come because the country is disappointed with the BJP and wants change. If you talk about numbers? Instead of numbers, look at the mood of the public. The atmosphere of change is clearly visible. There are three reasons. First, unemployment is at its peak, the youth are restless, but Narendra Modi is not even talking about employment. For

the Congress, the youth and employment are a priority. Second, agriculture and farmers are in trouble but Mr Modi seems oblivious to this problem.

You are aware of our record when it comes to protecting the interests of our farmers. In Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Karnataka, we gave loan waivers in 72 hours. The third issue is corruption which is all around us, especially corruption in the Rafale deal where the trail of corruption leads directly to Mr Modi's doorstep.

After the Gujarat elections, the Congress has gained some ground... do you think the expectations of good results from Congress have increased? The performance of the Congress is going to be much better than what media surveys are showing. This is not fully visible in newspapers and TV channels because we know that the BJP government puts pressure on media through its various agencies and uses the government's advertising funds to control the narrative.

You have not been in power for a long time in the country's largest states such as UP, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, etc. It has had an impact on the organisation. Will it be difficult to get better results there?

The success of our coalition in Tamil Nadu will wipe out everybody. I believe that the Congress will win all the seats there. The alliance in Bihar will also bring great results. In Uttar Pradesh, we are fighting

separately but the Congress will win seats. That's why we have sent Priyanka ji and Scindia ji to UP. In Bihar, our state incharge, Shakti Singh Gohil, has done some good work.

You did not form a coalition in Uttar Pradesh. People thought you would form one.

A. In Uttar Pradesh, the SP-BSP decided not to form a coalition. However, we wanted all of us to fight together. I respect their decision. We respect Mayawati ji and Akhilesh ji. We are fighting alone but I'm certain we will get good results. In Delhi, too, talks of coalition continued for a long time. What happened after that?

We said clearly that in Delhi we are ready to form an alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party to defeat the BJP. There was also a consensus on the four-three formula. But I do not know why they changed their mind. Now they talk about Haryana, talk about Punjab, talk about Goa, too. It is their decision to not form an alliance in Delhi. We have offered them four seats in Delhi because we want to defeat the BJP. Today, I was in Surat for five hours. I stopped the car at one place and many daily-wagers came to us in search of work. Likewise, traders are very disappointed with GST. When I asked "who are you voting for", they remembered "Gujarati pride."

Will you be able to encash this discontent in the Lok Sabha elections? Remember one thing. Gujarat was considered the BJP-RSS stronghold but in the assembly elections in Gujarat, BJP almost

collapsed. This was despite the fact that Narendra Modi and Amit Shah had used all their strength there. Do you know what kind of pressure was exerted in Surat? How the income tax department and government agencies were misused? Gujarat's results will be a surprise. Gujarat is going to give a huge majority to the Congress party in this Lok Sabha election.

Demonetisation, the Gabbar Singh Tax, and Narendra Modi's policies benefited people like Anil Ambani, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi, but this emphasis on benefitting crony capitalist friends of Mr Modi,

has jammed the engine of Hindustan's economy. That's why you met with a lot of unemployed workers in Surat.

The truth is that, in a way, the Modi government destroyed the purchasing power of the people. If we do not give impetus to that purchasing power, and do not restart the economy of India, how will the country move forward? We have spent the last many months on planning how we will re-start the Indian economy. Our flagship Nyay scheme [Nyuntam Aay Yojana mentioned in the manifesto], will play a big role in this.

YAIPHA THOURANG CRAFTS EXHIBITION

From 20th April to 29th April, 2019

Venue : Luwangangbam, near Cricket Stadium, Imphal East, Manipur

Items : -



Hand Embroidery, Artistic textile, Cane & Bamboo,

Wood craft, & Decorative items



Organised By:

Yaipha Thourang Handloom & Handicraft Co-Operative Society Ltd.
Waroiching Leimaram, Bishnupur Manipur.

Sponsored by :-



Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)
Ministry of Textile, Government of India, New Delhi - 110066