

Election Commission seeks report over allegation of VVPAT malfunction in Delhi's Dwarka

Agency
New Delhi May 14,

The Election Commission has sought a report from the chief electoral officer of Delhi after a voter from Dwarka alleged harassment by polling officials for pointing out a mismatch between his vote and the slip generated by the Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machine. "My VVPAT machine (Delhi,

Matiala, booth 96) printed the wrong symbol although the EVM machine red bulb glowed correctly. I complained to the presiding officer who directed me to nodal officer who then directed me to sector officer. All of them asked me not to complain. I insisted. They told me I'd be arrested under IPC section 177," tweeted Milan Gupta. In a series of tweets on

Monday, Gupta claimed that he was asked to undertake a test vote. During the test vote, however, the VVPAT slip matched with the symbol he chose on the ballot unit. "The officer then announced that I proved myself wrong. He said nothing doing, you are now going to be arrested," he tweeted. Gupta was taken to the Sector 9, Dwarka police station. He was, however, not arrested and

released later. "The ECI has asked for a report in this regard. I have asked the returning officer of West Delhi to enquire into the matter and send a report at the earliest. Once the report comes in, it would be sent to the ECI," Ranbir Singh, CEO of Delhi, said. This was the first time that VVPAT machines were being used across all polling stations in Delhi.

ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 - Every team to have dedicated anti-corruption officer during World Cup: Report

Agency
London May 14,

In a first, all the 10 participating teams of the upcoming ODI World Cup will have a dedicated anti-corruption officer attached with it to deliver a corruption-free tournament, according to a report. The report in the 'Daily Telegraph' said the ICC will attach an anti-corruption official with each team starting from warm-up matches till the end of the tournament. (Complete coverage of ICC Cricket World Cup) Previously, the International Cricket Council's Anti-Corruption Unit had personnel deployed at each venue, meaning that teams would deal with a number of officials over the course of a tournament," the report said.



"Now, the same official will be assigned to a team from the warm-up matches to the end of the competition, staying in the same hotel as the players and travelling with them to training and matches." It said the move was part of ICC Anti-

Corruption Unit's effort to deliver a fixing and corruption-free World Cup and also an effort to build better relations between players and the ACU. "By being with teams throughout the competition, it is also thought that anti-

corruption officials will be better placed to spot any potential corruptors who lurk near players or back-room staff and so identify any behaviour that may be suspicious," the report further stated.

Mobs kill one in Sri Lanka as communal riots spread despite nationwide curfew

Agency
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Mobs slashed to death a Sri Lankan Muslim man despite a nationwide curfew imposed Monday night after anti-Muslim riots spread to three districts north of the capital in a violent backlash against Easter suicide bombings. The 45-year-old man died shortly after admission to a hospital in Puttalam district during the rioting which began Sunday in the area, a police official told AFP. "Mobs had attacked him with sharp weapons at his carpentry workshop," the official said. "This is the first death from the riots." Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said the curfew was declared to prevent unidentified groups destabilising the country by orchestrating communal violence. "At several places in the North-Western Province these groups created trouble, damaged property," Wickremesinghe said in a televised address to the nation. "Police and security forces have contained the situation, but these (unidentified) groups are still trying to create trouble." Wickremesinghe said the unrest would hinder investigations into the April

21 attacks that targeted three Christian churches and three luxury hotels, killing 258 people and wounding nearly 500. In a separate TV address, Police Chief Chandana Wickramaratne warned police will take stern action against rioters, and constables have been issued orders to use maximum force. Residents in the North-Western Province were ordered to stay indoors after Christian-led mobs torched dozens of Muslim-owned shops, vehicles and mosques on Sunday and Monday. The attacks came during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. Later the curfew was extended to cover the entire country of 21 million people. Police said there were sporadic incidents of mobs throwing stones and torching shops, motorcycles and cars owned by Muslims. In the town of Hettipola, at least three shops were torched. In the town of Minuwangoda, just north of Colombo, a Muslim-owned hotel and a mosque were attacked by stone-hurling mobs armed with sticks. "Several shops have been attacked," a senior police officer told AFP. "When mobs tried to attack mosques, we fired in the air and used tear gas to disperse them."

The officer added that "there are people trying to make political capital out of this situation." **PM warns against rumours** Earlier Monday, authorities banned Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media platforms. Platforms were similarly blocked after the Easter attacks. The prime minister urged the public not to believe rumours and warned that civil unrest will stretch the already thinly deployed security forces. "I appeal to all citizens to remain calm and not be swayed by false information," Wickremesinghe said on Twitter, which was not targeted in the social media blockade. A state of emergency has been in place since the bombings — which the Islamic State group claims to have helped — and security forces have been given sweeping powers to detain suspects. The latest wave of unrest started when a mob targeted Muslim-owned shops in the town of Chilaw, 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Colombo on Sunday in anger at a Facebook post by a shopkeeper. "Don't laugh more, 1 day u will cry," he wrote, which local Christians took to be a warning of an impending attack. The group smashed the man's shop and vandalised a nearby mosque prompting security

forces to fire in the air to disperse the crowd, but the violence spread. There had already been clashes last week between Christians and Muslims in Negombo, the town north of Colombo that was targeted by the suicide attackers. The main body of Islamic clerics, the All Ceylon Jamiiyathul Ulama (ACJU), said there was increased suspicion of Muslims after the Easter Sunday killings. "We call upon the members of the Muslim communities to be more patient and guard your actions and avoid unnecessary postings or hosting on social media," the ACJU said. Internet service providers said they have been instructed by the telecommunications regulator to block access to Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram. **Schools reopen** The latest unrest came as Catholic churches resumed public Sunday masses for the first time since the bombings. Dozens of people have been detained since the Easter attacks, and with security heightened students are only allowed into schools after checks for explosives. But attendance has been extremely low, according to education authorities. Muslims make up around 10 percent of Buddhist-majority Sri Lanka's population and Christians about 7.6 percent. (The story has been published from a wire feed without any modifications to the text, only the headline has been changed)

Older fathers put health of partners, unborn children at risk

Source: Rutgers University

Men who delay starting a family have a ticking "biological clock" — just like women — that may affect the health of their partners and children, according to Rutgers researchers. The study, which reviewed 40 years of research on the effect of parental age on fertility, pregnancy and the health of children, was published in the journal *Maturitas*. "While it is widely accepted that physiological changes that occur in women after 35 can affect conception, pregnancy and the health of the child, most men do not realize their advanced age can have a similar impact," said study author Gloria Bachmann, director of the Women's Health Institute at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. While the medical profession has no clearly accepted definition of when advanced paternal age begins — it ranges from 35 to 45 — infants born to fathers over 45 have risen 10 percent in the United States over the past 40 years. Likely due to assisted reproductive technology. The study found that men 45 and older can experience decreased fertility and put their partners at risk for increased pregnancy complications such as gestational diabetes, preeclampsia and preterm birth. Infants born to older fathers were found to be at higher risk of premature birth, late still birth, low Apgar scores, low birth weight, higher incidence of newborn

seizures and birth defects such as congenital heart disease and cleft palate. As they matured, these children were found to have an increased likelihood of childhood cancers, psychiatric and cognitive disorders, and autism. Bachmann attributes most of these outcomes to a natural decline in testosterone that occurs with aging, as well as sperm degradation and poorer semen quality, but she said that some correlations need more research. "In addition to advancing paternal age being associated with an increased risk of male infertility, there appears to be other adverse changes that may occur to the sperm with aging. For example, just as people lose muscle strength, flexibility and endurance with age, in men, sperm also tend to lose 'fitness' over the life cycle," she said. Damage to sperm from stresses of aging can lead to a decrease in sperm number and a change in the sperm and egg that is passed from parent to offspring and becomes incorporated into the DNA of cells in the offspring's body. "In addition to decreasing fertilization potential, this can also influence the pregnancy itself, as is noted by increased pregnancy risks when conception is successful," she said. These germline or heredity mutations also may contribute to the association of advancing paternal age and disorders in the offspring, such as these children being diagnosed with autism and schizophrenia. "Although it is

well documented that children of older fathers are more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia — one in 141 infants with fathers under 25 versus one in 47 with fathers over 50 — the reason is not well understood," she said. "Also, some studies have shown that the risk of autism starts to increase when the father is 30, plateaus after 40 and then increases again at 50." The study also found that older men struggled with fertility issues even if their partner was under 25. "While women tend to be more aware and educated than men about their reproductive health, most men do not consult with physicians unless they have a medical or fertility issue," Bachmann said. She recommended that physicians counsel older men as they do older women on the effect their age will have on conception, pregnancy and the health of their child. If men plan on delaying fatherhood, they should consider banking sperm before their 35th — or at least by their 45th birthday — to decrease the increased risks to the health of the mother and child. Co-authors of the study are Nancy Phillips, associate professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Science at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and Leahannah Taylor, a graduate student at Rutgers Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

4 policemen killed, 11 injured in blast in Pakistan's Balochistan

Agency
Karachi May 14,

A powerful remote-controlled bomb blast near a mosque in Pakistan's Balochistan province has killed four policemen and injured 11 others, the second major attack to rock the restive region in the last three days. The explosion occurred on Monday night when people were assembling for prayers near the mosque in the provincial capital Quetta's Satellite Town area. The attack took place shortly after a police van arrived at the site to provide security to the people offering prayers at the mosque. "The police vehicle carrying personnel for mosque security was targeted in the blast in which our four personnel of Rapid Response Group (RRG) lost their lives, while the condition of another was stated to be serious," said Quetta Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Razaq Cheema. Another 11 people were injured in the attack. Provincial Home Minister Ziaullah Langov said. This was the second major terrorist attack in Balochistan within the last three days. Three heavily-armed militants on Saturday stormed a luxury hotel in Pakistan's port city of Gwadar in the restive Balochistan province, killing eight persons, including a Pakistan Navy soldier and three militants.



An improvised explosive device planted in a motorcycle went off close to the police van. Sources said unidentified people parked the explosive-laden motorbike near the mosque in Satellite Town area and detonated it by remote control when the police van arrived there, the Dawn reported. "Three police officials among the injured died soon after being brought here at the hospital," officials at a healthcare facility said. Many vehicles parked in the area were damaged and windowpanes of nearby buildings were shattered due to the powerful blast, though the mosque remained safe in the attack. Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to trace those involved in the blast. The banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan has claimed responsibility for the motorcycle bomb blast targeting the police vehicle, the report said.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has strongly condemned the targeted attack. Khan has sought a report on the blast and said the country was fully committed to completely eliminating terrorism. The prime minister said those who target innocent people in the holy month of Ramadan did not have a religion. "The nation's spirit is strong and Pakistan is determined to do away with the menace of terrorism, he said. Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan has also condemned the attack. "Efforts are being made to sabotage peace under a wicked conspiracy. Those creating instability would be fought back with full force," he said. Vowing to improve the security arrangements, the chief minister also directed the concerned authorities to provide the best medical facilities to the wounded persons. PTI MRJ

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