

## 'Diplomacy and defence policy are not linked now', says Amit Shah

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India's defence policy is no longer linked to its diplomatic policy, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah said in an interview, explaining how his party views national security. "...diplomatically, India could boldly present its views to other countries and at the same time strike at the source of terror," he said. Shah is convinced national security, which his party has made the centrepiece of its campaign, will find an echo among voters. "Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi has assured 1.25 billion Indians that his government is committed to national security, which is the topmost priority of his regime — whether it is taking tough decisions on Jammu and Kashmir or being the most successful government in handling international diplomacy and challenges." The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has delivered on other fronts too, Shah said: "There have been agricultural reforms with increased rate of growth,

more coverage of irrigation, faster infrastructure development with 2.5 times increase in road and 2.25 times increase in railroad construction." The BJP president expects his party to better its 2014 tally of 282 in the election and listed three reasons why people will vote for the BJP: "First, the BJP has a strong leader, while the opposition leadership is in tatters. Second, we have made the 500 million poor people realise that they have a stake in the country. Third, as opposed to indecisive or leaderless governments in the past, our decisive leadership has addressed the challenges related to economy, defence, infrastructure, agriculture, and poverty alleviation." Responding to a question on whether it was alright for his party to use the UN listing of terrorist Masood Azhar as a talking point in its campaign, Shah said: "It is an achievement of the Modi government, so why should we not take electoral advantage of it?" He also repeated his party's commitment to scrapping

Articles 35A and 370 of the Constitution that give special status to Jammu and Kashmir and said they will have to go. That will happen once his party has a majority in the Upper House of Parliament too, he added. The Rajya Sabha, where the BJP and the NDA have not had the numbers, has come in the way of the government's legislative agenda. "One more round of UP/Bihar of Rajya Sabha polls and things will change in favour of the BJP (in the Upper House),"

Shah said. The BJP president said that veteran leaders such as LK Advani and Murlimanohar Joshi have not retired from politics, but from electoral politics. "They can guide us in many other ways, such as training the cadres," Shah said, adding that the BJP left out 18 such leaders who were over 75 years of age from directly contesting in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, "but they still have an important role in the party".

## Around 64 per cent polling recorded in 5th phase of Lok Sabha elections

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A voter turnout of 63.99 per cent has been recorded in the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections. Polling for 51 Parliamentary constituencies, spread over seven states, was held yesterday in this phase. According to Election Commission's voter turnout App, the maximum 79.07 per cent polling was recorded in West Bengal, followed by 68.98 per cent in Madhya Pradesh and 65.12 per cent in Jharkhand.

While Rajasthan recorded a poll percentage of 63.73, it was 57.95 per cent in Uttar Pradesh and 57.76 per cent in Bihar. The minimum 19.55 per cent voters exercised their franchise in Jammu and Kashmir. Briefing reporters in New Delhi last evening, Deputy Election Commissioner Sandeep Saxena said, people came out in large numbers to vote including women and senior citizens. He said, barring few incidents, polling remained peaceful in this phase. A total of 674 candidates were in

the fray in this phase. The Election Commission had set up 96,000 polling booths, which included a maximum of 28,000 in Uttar Pradesh. The poll body has seized unaccounted cash, illicit liquor, drugs, gold and freebies worth over 3.360 crore rupees since the Model Code of Conduct came into effect.

## Campaigning in full swing for remaining phases of LS polls

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Campaigning is gaining momentum for the remaining two phases. Star campaigners of various political parties are addressing rallies in different places. Senior BJP leader and Prime Minister Narendra Modi held public meetings in West Bengal and Jharkhand yesterday. Speaking at a rally at Chaibasa in Jharkhand, Mr Modi said, the country does not want instability, and the people want a strong and stable government at the Centre. He accused the Congress of using foul language against the dignity of the post of the Prime Minister of the country. Congress President Rahul Gandhi campaigned in Delhi and Haryana. Addressing a rally in the national capital, Mr Gandhi reiterated his party's promise of filling up over 22 lakh vacant posts in Central government departments if it comes to power. Our Kolkata correspondent reports that BJP President Amit Shah and the Congress Chief are among the leaders who will campaign in West Bengal today. Mr Amit Shah will also campaign in Bihar today. Mr Rahul Gandhi will also hold a public meeting in Jharkhand.

## Bullet-proofing experts, slogan writers win big in Lok Sabha elections

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Businesses offering image makeovers, political slogan writers and experts in bullet-proofing vehicles are in high demand in India, and they have a short window to make some fast money before the country's marathon voting season draws to a close. The world's biggest election, in which about 900 million

citizens cast their votes in seven phases, has created opportunities for a range of businesses. It also means a significant rise in election spending, making it the costliest poll on earth. Expenditure is set to rise 40 percent to \$7 billion, according to Centre for Media Studies, a New Delhi-based think tank. As politicians lock horns, Sunchit Sobti, director of Lagar Industries Ltd., and his 70 staff are working overtime to fulfill orders from clients to customize vehicles with armor-plating that will withstand gunfire and grenade attacks while providing a comfortable ride on the campaign trail.

and grooms candidates on the importance of making eye contact, said Sudhanshu Rai, founder and chief strategist at communication firm Saints Art. He would not reveal the firm's clients. "Every image is carefully crafted," said Rai. "It depends on the objective the client has. If he wants to portray himself as an educated politician, all publicity material will be designed that way." Media organizations also hire companies to improve election coverage. "We are advising them by analyzing everything on social media platforms - how are Twitter hashtags trending, what is the public sentiment on a topic, how are different parts of the country reacting to a particular news," said Amarpreet Kalkat, co-founder of Froole, a company specializing in analyzing social media data.

Consulting. Business jets are even more expensive - as much as 460,000 rupees per hour - said Martin, who advises the Business Aircraft Operators Association, the main lobby group for the industry. "Elections are a brisk business time for agencies," said Raaj Hiremath, managing director of Ushak Kaal Communications Ltd. and chief executive of Tandav Films Entertainment Pvt. "In terms of volumes, the advertisement business is around 25 billion rupees for this year's election. And some 20 to 25 agencies must be working with political parties." But not everyone is smiling. As the campaign shifts away from traditional forms of advertising - such as flags, posters, garlands, caps, badges and t-shirts - onto social media, some businesses have become less lucrative. Madan Lal, who works in the New Delhi-based Bharat Trading Company that sells campaign material said there's usually high hopes of a decent profit during election season. "This time we have been unable to even recover our costs."

## A R organises monthly village chief meeting at T-minou



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A monthly village chief/secretary meeting was organised at T-Minou by Moreh Battalion of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) on 06 May 2019. A total of 10 village chiefs and secretaries of nearby villages attended the meeting.

The security situation in the area was deliberated upon and the importance of maintaining peace and harmony was discussed in detail during the meeting. Village Chiefs/Secretary expressed their interest in maintaining close liaison with Assam Rifles, the border guarding force. The other agenda points of the meeting included security

aspects, exchange of information and updation of mobile numbers. The meeting culminated with refreshments for all. The village chiefs and secretaries thanked Assam Rifles for its efforts to ensure peace and tranquility in the area. They also assured their whole hearted cooperation with Assam Rifles in future as well.

"We are getting a lot of orders," said Sobti, whose Punjab-based firm installs engine firewalls, fuel protection systems and run-flat-tires along with armoring in vehicles. "So far, we have armored 30 to 35 vehicles during this election and it's a good number." The transformation could cost anywhere between 600,000 rupees (\$8,650) to 4 million rupees. "It takes two-to-three months to armor and customize a vehicle," Sobti said.

Helicopters - a status symbol for some politicians - are also in high demand. But this luxury does not come cheap. The companies charge 150,000 rupees per hour for single engine helicopters and 250,000 rupees for twin engine ones, said Mark Martin, founder of Martin

## 'Worst fears have come true', says complainant in CJI case

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The former Supreme Court employee who levelled charges of sexual harassment against the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi said on Monday she was "highly disappointed and dejected" by the clean chit given to him by the three-member in-house panel of the Supreme Court, and would decide on the next step after consulting her lawyer. In a statement issued after the panel's notification was made public, the complainant said "gross injustice" has been done to her "as a woman citizen of India". The court's notification said that the full report did not need to be made public, citing a previous Supreme Court judgment dating back to 2003.

The woman said she was terrified "because the in-house committee, despite having all material placed before them, appears to have given me no justice or protection and said nothing about the absolutely mala fide dismissals and suspensions, indignities and humiliations suffered by me and my family. I and my family remain vulnerable to the ongoing reprisals and attack." The complainant had detailed the alleged wrongful dismissals and indignities in a sworn affidavit sent to 22 judges of the apex court on April 19. She said that not only were the services terminated, her husband and brother-in-law were suspended from the Delhi Police. Her third brother-in-law, who has a disability and whose job she had secured

with Gogoi's help, was given a termination letter. "Today, my worst fears have come true, and all hope of justice and redress from the committee have been shattered," she said in her statement. The woman participated in the proceedings of the panel but walked out after her third deposition on April 30, saying she had lost faith in it because she was not allowed to be accompanied by her lawyer, and because the proceedings were not being recorded. The complainant also said that she was not aware if the committee had called other persons, such as the police officer who, she alleged, had taken her to the CJI's residence to make her apologise. The complainant said she also asked the panel to secure the call record details of the CJI and had submitted two mobile numbers,

asking that the committee corroborate her charge that he regularly called and sent her WhatsApp messages. "I will consult my lawyer and decide on the next steps. Today, I am at the verge of losing faith in the capacity of our system to deliver justice to the weak and vulnerable who are pitted against the powerful within the system itself," she said. Gogoi has refuted the allegations, saying a 'bigger force' wants to deactivate CJI's office. In an interview, last week, her lawyer Prashant Bhushan said that the complainant can invoke various remedies under the law. "She can file an FIR with a police station but that will require the permission of the President of India. She can also go to court challenging her dismissal from service..." Bhushan said.

## Assam Rifles Organises Excursion Trip



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Mantripkhri Battalion of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) organised an excursion for the underprivileged children to Shelipung Ecological Park, Lamlai on 05th May 2019. These children are being supported by Assam Rifles and being provided free education at the Assam

Rifles Public School (ARPS) Mantripukhari. The day long outing was an unique experience for the students wherein they were not only educated about the importance of biodiversity through an awareness lecture but also experienced firsthand the necessity of maintaining green cover. As part of the excursion, various fun games were also organised for the students where they

enthusiastically participated. Refreshments and lunch was also catered for. Children thoroughly enjoyed the visit and conveyed heartfelt gratitude for the efforts of Assam Rifles for undertaking such an initiative and requested for more such informative and entertaining visits in future for benefit and awareness of the students.

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