

Top news stories Friday 10 March 2017

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NATIONAL

Exit Polls: Advantage BJP in UP, UK, Manipur; Punjab, Goa heading for hung assembly

New Delhi, March 9 (UNI) Predictions made by various exit polls on the results of the five assembly elections gave an indication that the BJP is making a strong comeback in crucial state of UP and Uttarakhand, but facing rout in border state of Punjab and a surprise victory in another border state of Manipur in the North East region with Goa going either way. The AAP is making its presence felt in a big way in Punjab as well as in Goa, if the pollsters are to be believed. NDTV gave the BJP 193 seats with SP and Congress combined way behind at 120 seats and the BSP poor third with 78 seats. Only one TV channel ABP news predicted the hung assembly in UP with a strong showing of SP+Cong combined giving it an edge with 82 to 100 seats and the BJP getting somewhere 75 to 93 seats and the BSP 28 to 40 seats.

2 LeT militants killed in ongoing Pulwama encounter

Srinagar, Mar 9 (UNI) Two militants were killed in an encounter between the Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) militants and security forces in south Kashmir's Pulwama district today, official sources said. Meanwhile, locals hit the streets and started pelting stones at security forces near the encounter site. Security forces burst teargas shells to disperse the demonstrators, who were trying to move towards the sealed area. Firing has stopped, but search operation continued in the area, official sources said. They said that security forces and the Special Operation Group (SOG) of Jammu and Kashmir police launched a joint search operation at Padgampora, Awantipora in Pulwama district, following a tip-off about the presence of militants.

SC reserves order on contempt proceedings against liquor baron Vijay Mallya

New Delhi, Mar 9 (UNI) The Supreme Court today reserved its order in connection with the plea filed by the State Bank of India (SBI) led consortium of banks seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against liquor baron Vijay Mallya. The bench was headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel. Mr Mallya told the apex court that he did not have the money and his entire property had been seized. The Supreme Court also reserved its verdict whether Mr Mallya's deal with Diageo would come under the debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT). The liquor baron asserted that he had transferred this money to his family trust.

India rejects Chinese objections on Dalai Lama visit to Arunachal

New Delhi, Mar 9 (UNI) In a clear rebuff to Beijing, India today rejected objections raised on Tibetan religious leader the Dalai Lama's proposed visit to Arunachal Pradesh, saying that the Government has no say in the travel plans of "revered figure". MEA official spokesperson, Gopal Baglay, deviating from earlier practice of not reacting to the Chinese media reports, advised China not to draw any political meaning to the visits of the religious leader. "Government has no say in his travels within India and no political meaning should be attached to them as such," said the MEA spokesperson.

India, Pak hold flag meet on IB in Jammu, discuss border issues

Jammu, Mar 9 (UNI) India and Pakistan today discussed border issues at Sector Commander level flag meet held along International Border in RS Pura area of Jammu. "On request of Pakistan Rangers, a Sector Commander level Flag Meeting was held between Border Security Force(BSF) and Pakistan Rangers from 1130 hours to 1320 hours on International Border in Suchetgarh area," official spokespersons here said. He said that the BSF delegation comprising 18 officers was led by P S Dhiman, DIG BSF Jammu Sector and Brig Amjad Hussain, Sector Commander Chenab Rangers, Sialkote Punjab, Pakistan led the Pakistan delegation comprising of 18 officers including 03 Wing Commanders.

INTERNATIONAL

Al Qaeda appeals for help to repel Houthis in central Yemen

DUBAI, Mar 9 (Reuters) Yemen's local al Qaeda wing appealed for help today to fend off an offensive by the armed Houthi movement in central Yemen, and accused the United States of coordinating attacks with the Iran-aligned group, according to an online statement. Residents say tribesmen in Ansar al-Sharia, the local wing of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and other Islamists known as salafists are the main force holding back the Houthis in Qifa in al-Bayda province, where President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's internationally-recognised government has little control. Ansar al-Sharia referred in the statement on its Telegram channel to repeated air strikes by the United States in recent days. Washington has acknowledged it has stepped up operations against militants in Yemen in the past couple of weeks.

US to host 68-nation meeting on countering Islamic State

WASHINGTON, Mar 9 (Reuters) US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will host a 68-nation meeting in Washington this month to discuss the next moves by a coalition fighting Islamic State, the State Department said today. The March 22-23 meeting of coalition foreign ministers aimed "to accelerate international efforts to defeat ISIS in the remaining areas it holds in Iraq and Syria and maximize pressure on its branches, affiliates,

and networks," the State Department said in a statement, using an acronym for Islamic State. The State Department said it would be the first meeting of the full coalition since December 2014, shortly after it was founded. "It's an opportunity for Secretary Tillerson to lay out the challenges that are facing the coalition moving forward," acting State Department spokesman Mark Toner told reporters.

Canada judge facing ouster over rape trial comments resigns

TORONTO, Mar 9 (Reuters) A Canadian judge who asked the complainant in a sex assault trial why she could not "just keep your knees together" announced his resignation today, hours after an oversight body said he should lose his job. " Effective March 10, 2017 I will resign as a member of the Federal Court of Canada ," reads a statement from Alberta Judge Robin Camp, released by his lawyer. " I would like to express my sincere apology to everyone who was hurt by my comments ." The Canadian Judicial Council said in a review released today that Camp's conduct during a 2014 sex assault trial was so "manifestly and profoundly destructive" towards judicial impartiality that he could not remain in office.

Silence is golden - May plays down Brexit talk at EU summit

BRUSSELS, Mar 9 (Reuters) It was her last EU summit before launching Brexit, but British Prime Minister Theresa May was keener to talk about pretty much anything else. May, who will trigger Article 50 of the European Union's Lisbon Treaty to launch two years of divorce talks later this month, was keen not to linger on her plans for some of the most

complicated negotiations Britain has faced since World War Two. At a meeting held in the shadow of Brexit but dominated by more immediate concerns like re-electing the EU summit chairman, May set out to show her fellow leaders that Britain was still a reliable member, despite choosing "a different path". She offered suggestions on everything from countering Russian "disinformation" to tackling organised crime - topics that helped her to underline Britain's contribution in areas like security and intelligence.

Czech President Zeman says he will run for second term

PRAGUE, Mar 9 (Reuters)

Czech President Milos Zeman told supporters today he would seek a second term in 2018, ending speculation over whether he would run again. Zeman, who has pushed for better ties with Russia and backed Donald Trump in the US vote last year, announced his decision at an annual party at Prague Castle to celebrate the anniversary of his election in 2013, one participant who asked not to be named told Reuters. Other media outlets also reported Zeman's comments. Zeman will hold a news conference tomorrow to officially announce his decision to the public.

OTHER NEWS

India-Belgium sign protocol amending

Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement

New Delhi, March 9 (UNI) India and Belgium have signed a Protocol amending the existing Agreement and Protocol between the two countries for Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income today in New Delhi. The Protocol was signed by Sushil Chandra, Chairman Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on behalf of India and Jan Luykx, Ambassador of Belgium to India, on behalf of Belgium. The Protocol will broaden the scope of the existing framework of exchange of tax related information. This in turn will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance between the two countries and will also enable mutual assistance in collection of taxes.

Trump-Clinton election campaign to get HBO miniseries treatment

NEW YORK, Mar 10 (Reuters) Cable channel HBO said it is planning a dramatized TV miniseries about the extraordinary 2016 US presidential, one of the first of several such projects being discussed in Hollywood. No casting, title or broadcast date was announced for the HBO project, which comes from the same team that produced the award-winning "Game Change" film about the 2008 election that starred Julianne Moore as then Republican vice-presidential contender Sarah Palin. The 2016 election campaign that saw Republican Donald Trump triumph over Democrat Hillary Clinton last November was one of the most dramatic in living memory.

US must allow access if bids for 2026 World Cup - FIFA

LONDON, Mar 9 (Reuters) The United States would have to grant entry to players, officials and fans from any country that qualified if it won the right to host the 2026 World Cup finals, soccer body FIFA said today. Responding to a question about President Donald Trump's order banning citizens from six Muslim-majority nations from travelling to the United States, FIFA boss Gianni Infantino said any nation bidding for the tournament would have clear rules. FIFA has ruled out a bid from Europe or Asia, leaving the CONCACAF region as frontrunner for a tournament set to expand to 48 nations from 32. The United States last hosted the World Cup in 1994 and Mexico in 1986. Los Angeles is also bidding against Paris for the 2024 Summer Olympics with a vote on that due in September.

Aubameyang hat-trick leads Dortmund into last eight

DORTMUND, Germany, Mar 9 (REUTERS) Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang grabbed a hat-trick as Borussia Dortmund crushed Benfica 4-0 to advance to the Champions League quarter-finals 4-1 on aggregate. Yesterday the Gabon international, who endured a dreadful evening in the 1-0 first leg loss in which he missed a hatful of chances and had a penalty saved, was back at his lethal best. He struck either side of a Christian Pulisic goal and added another late in the game as the German side, European champions in 1997, made the last eight of the competition for the third time in 10 years. It was the third straight match in which Aubameyang scored at least twice as Benfica, aiming to reach the last eight for third time in six seasons, conceded their first goals from open play in more than 700 minutes and ended their seven-game winning run.

IT dept serves notices to 550 with over 15 lakh deposits

Shimla, Mar 9 (UNI) Himachal Pradesh Circle of Income Tax Department today slapped notices to over 550 people, who had deposited more than 15 lakh in scrapped notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 in their bank account after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced demonetization drive on November 8, 2016, senior functionary of department said here. Chief Commissioner of Income Tax Himachal circle Pritam Singh said, "We have issued notices to more than 550 people in the state and have asked them to reply the sources of money deposited in their account by March 3. If failed to provide the details, the action of forfeiture will be initiated." Around 14-15 bank accounts were scanned and found huge deposits in those accounts.