

Demonstrations turn aggressive as Indian tricolour ripped during PM Modi's UK visit

LONDON: Some groups protesting against atrocities in India during Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#)'s visit here turned violent after a tricolour was torn down from one of the official flagpoles set up for all 53 Commonwealth countries.

Modi, who is in the UK for bilateral talks and the multilateral Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), was greeted by protesters as he met his British counterpart [Theresa May](#) on Wednesday.

Some of the protesters at [Parliament Square](#) turned aggressive after the Indian tricolour was torn down from the flagpole.

"Police are investigating after an Indian flag in Parliament Square was pulled down at 1500 (UK time) on Wednesday, 18 April. The flag has been replaced. There have been no arrests. Enquiries continue," a Metropolitan Police statement said.

The [Ministry of External Affairs](#) (MEA) said the matter was taken up with the British authorities, who expressed their regrets and immediately had the torn flag replaced with a new one.

"We're deeply anguished with the incident involving our national flag. Matter was taken up strongly with the UK side. They have regretted the incident. The flag was immediately replaced. We expect legal action against the people who were involved in this," MEA spokesperson [Raveesh Kumar](#) said at a press briefing on Thursday.

[View image on Twitter](#)

<blockquote class="twitter-tweet" data-lang="en"><p lang="en" dir="ltr">We're deeply anguished with the incident involving our national flag. Matter was taken up strongly with the UK side. They have regretted the incident. The flag was immediately replaced. We expect legal action against the people who were involved in this: Raveesh Kumar, MEA Spox. pic.twitter.com/c5ZxUv8zAa</p>— ANI (@ANI) April 19, 2018</blockquote><script async src="https://platform.twitter.com/widgets.js" charset="utf-8"></script>

A UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) spokesperson said, "While people have the right to hold peaceful protests, we are disappointed with the action taken by a small minority in Parliament Square and contacted High Commissioner Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as soon as we were made aware.

"The visit to the UK by Prime Minister Modi has strengthened our relationship with India and we look forward to working even more closely together on a number of important areas."

A senior broadcast journalist from one of the leading Indian media channels covering the protests was caught in a violent scrum with some of the more aggressive pro-Khalistani protesters and Scotland Yard officers on duty had to step in to the rescue. The group is planning to file a complaint with the Metropolitan Police on the incident.

"We have expressed our concerns with the British authorities and they have apologised for the incident. We have been warning against some of these elements out to make trouble and they have assured us of action. The Indian flag has now been replaced," a senior Indian official associated with the PM's visit said.

The pro-Khalistani demonstrators from Sikh Federation UK and demonstrators from the so-called "Minorities Against Modi" group, led by Pakistani-origin peer Lord Ahmed, were among nearly 500 protesters who descended upon Parliament Square. These included groups led by some Kashmiri separatist groups and at one point, some of them had surrounded the Mahatma Gandhi statue at the square with their banners and flags.

Officials involved with the prime ministerial visit to the UK had said that protests and demonstrations are “part and parcel of any democratic society” as long as they remain peaceful. There are now concerns that some of the more aggressive elements hijacked the tone of the protests.

Earlier on Wednesday, flash mob of sari-clad women with dhols set the tone for the pro-Modi crowds opposite 10 Downing Street as the Indian PM arrived for his breakfast meeting with British Prime Minister Theresa May. They were joined by the Friends of India Society International (FISI) group, which spearheaded a crowd of Indian diaspora from across the UK waving banners such as “Chak De India” and “Jai Hind” outside Downing Street and nearby Parliament Square.

“We want to welcome the Indian PM to the UK and show him the diaspora support he enjoys,” said one of the members of the gathering.

On the other side, the anti-Modi protesters from Caste Watch UK and South Asia Solidarity group waved banners such as ‘Modi, you have blood on your hands’ and ‘Modi Not Welcome’.

“Hindu nationalism must be curtailed to avert India sliding towards wholesale dictatorship threatening democratic fabric, rule of law and the unity of India,” a Caste Watch UK spokesperson said.

They were joined by other protestors carrying images the eight-year-old rape victim from Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir, and Gauri Lankesh, the Indian journalist who was shot at her doorstep last year.

Pakistan seeks \$70 million from India for unplayed cricket series

Karachi: Pakistan has kicked off a legal battle against India for not honouring a bilateral cricket series agreement, the sport’s governing body confirmed Thursday.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is seeking \$70 million in compensation from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) after the country failed to attend two series in 2014 and 2015 as part of a memorandum of understanding signed between the two boards.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) confirmed receiving the notice.

“The ICC has received a Notice of Dispute from the PCB’s lawyers, which will be forwarded to the chairman of the Dispute Resolutions Committee next week,” a spokesman of the ICC said.

The ICC Dispute Resolution Committee is headed by Michael Beloff QC who will appoint independent adjudicators to hear the case.

The PCB sent a legal notice to their counterparts earlier this year but Indian officials rejected the memorandum as “a piece of paper”.

The arch-rivals have not played a full bilateral series since 2007.

New Delhi halted all bilateral sports with Pakistan in the wake of 2008 Mumbai attacks, which India blamed on militants based in Pakistan.

Those attacks, which left eight people dead and seven Sri Lanka players and their staff injured, suspended international cricket in Pakistan and forced them to play at neutral venues

of United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The two planned series between India and Pakistan were due to take place at a neutral venue.

GDP growth rebounds to 6.3% in September quarter

Recovers from 5.7% in last quarter; Infrastructure output grew 4.7% in October from a year ago, driven by higher refinery production.

Reversing five quarters of slowing GDP growth, the Indian economy expanded by 6.3% in July-September on the back of a pick-up in manufacturing.

The gross domestic product (GDP) growth had hit a three- year low of 5.7% in the first quarter of 2017-18. It was 7.5% in the September quarter of 2016-17.

According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) data, the economic activities that registered growth of over 6% in the second quarter are manufacturing, electricity, gas, water supply, other utility services and trade, hotels, transport and communication, and services related to broadcasting.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector is estimated to have grown by 1.7%.

Infrastructure output grows 4.7%

Eight core sectors grew at a slower pace of 4.7% in October, chiefly due to subdued performance of cement, steel and refinery segments.

The eight infrastructure sectors – coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity – had clocked a growth of 7.1% in October 2016.

Meanwhile, the Industry Ministry has revised downwards September growth print of these eight sectors to 4.7% from the earlier estimate of 5.2%.

Official data released this evening showed that cement production contracted by 2.7% as against an expansion of 6.2% in October 2016.

Output growth in the steel segment too slowed to 8.4% in the last month compared to 17.4% in the year- ago period.

Similarly, there was slowdown in refinery output, whose growth was 7.5% in October 2017. This compares with 12.6% expansion in the same month in 2016.

Electricity generation, too, was slower on an annual basis.

Meanwhile, the coal segment has shown significant improvement as it expanded by 3.90%. It witnessed a decline of 1.9% in the year-ago period.

The fertiliser sector grew by 3% as against 0.7% last year.

Crude oil production and natural gas output have shown improvement, too.

Cumulatively, the growth in the eight core sectors slowed down to 3.5% as against 5.6% in the comparable period of the last fiscal.

The eight core industries constitute 40.27% of weight of items in the index of industrial production (IIP).

Wife Of Rape Accused Arrested For Blackmailing Uzbek National

A woman, whose husband allegedly raped a 23-year-old lady from Uzbekistan, has been arrested for blackmailing and trying to force her into flesh trade in New Delhi.

The accused Anjali has been arrested but her husband Altaf is absconding, the police said.

According to the police, the woman alleged she was raped by Altaf, who introduced her to his wife Anjali and the couple blackmailed her and tried to force her into flesh trade.

It said Altaf had befriended the Uzbek woman on Facebook and she flew down to Delhi on May 6 after being lured by him on marriage promise.

Altaf then took her to a hotel where he allegedly raped her and filmed the act, the police said, adding that he then began to blackmail her with his wife.

The couple, she alleged, had snatched her passport, visa and money. They also confined her into a room and allegedly beat her up regularly. She was forced to attend to the guests, the woman claimed, it said.

The complainant confided into a friend living in Delhi and they approached at the Vasant Kunj (north) police station.

A case has been registered under IPC Sections 370 (buying or disposing of any person as a slave) and 376 (rape). A case under the immoral trafficking act has also been registered and the police are probing the possibility of a bigger racket involving Uzbek women flourishing in the area.

Head Constable Posted At Uma Bharti's Residence Attempts Suicide

A Delhi Police Head constable deployed at Union Minister Uma Bharti's residence in New Delhi allegedly attempted suicide by shooting himself with his service gun last night.

The incident took place around 10.30 PM, following which police teams were rushed to the residence of Uma Bharti, the Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in New Delhi's Ashoka Road.

The official, identified as Head Constable Brijpal of Delhi Police's security unit, was still breathing while being rushed to the nearest hospital, a senior police official said adding that the reason why he took the extreme step could not be ascertained yet.

The head constable allegedly shot himself with his official gun which has been recovered from the spot.

“His condition is critical,” DCP (New Delhi) Jatin Narwal said.

Prima facie the official shot himself sitting inside his personal car parked inside the premises of Ms Bharti’s bungalow.

JP Nadda To Hold Meeting With State Health Ministers On NEET

With several parliamentarians opposed to the common medical entrance test, the Centre has decided to hold consultations with state Health ministers today to formulate a strategy regarding the issue.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda said that he “looks forward” to the meeting tomorrow and hoped to find a solution to address the concerns of lakhs of medical aspirants.

“Looking forward to meeting with the State Health Ministers today morning on the issue of NEET.

“I am hopeful that together we shall be able to find some solution to address concerns of lakhs of aspiring medical students & their parents,” Mr Nadda tweeted.

According to reports, the Supreme Court had ruled that starting this academic session, students would have to appear for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to seek admission to any medical or dental colleges in the country.

Earlier this week, the apex court also turned down a batch of appeals by states seeking to conduct their own medical admission tests and ruled that “only NEET would enable students to get admission to MBBS or BDS studies”.

Following the apex court’s ruling, opposition parties have raised concerns that students passing out from state boards in vernacular languages and living in remote areas may not be able to perform well in common entrance exam despite being competitive.

Several MPs have demanded the government to bring forth an ordinance to stall the NEET for the current academic session.

US warns of China troops build-up on India border

China has increased defence capabilities and deployed more troops along the Indian border, the Pentagon has said, as it warned of increasing Chinese military presence including bases in various parts of the world, particularly Pakistan.

“We have noticed an increase in capability and force posture by the Chinese military in areas close to the border with India,” Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for East Asia Abraham M Denmark told reporters during a news conference here after Pentagon submitted its annual 2016 report to the US Congress on ‘Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China’.

However, Denmark said it is difficult to conclude on the real intention behind this. "It is difficult to say how much of this is driven by internal considerations to maintain internal stability, and how much of it is an external consideration," he said in response to a question on China upgrading its military command in Tibet.

Referring to US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter's recent trip to India, Denmark said he had a very positive and productive visit.

"We're going to continue to enhance our bilateral engagement with India, not in the China context, but because India is an increasingly important player by themselves. And we are going to engage India because of its value," he said.

The Defence Department also warned of China's increasing military presence including bases in various parts of the world, in particular Pakistan – with which it has a "longstanding friendly relationship and similar strategic interests".

China and Pakistan may not agree, but the United States believes that India is ready to enter the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Hours after China defended its blocking India from becoming part of the NSG, the US on Friday said that India does in fact meet the missile technology control regime requirements for entry into the NSG.

The remarks about India's eligibility for the NSG came in response to a question about reports that China and Pakistan have joined hands to oppose India becoming a member of the NSG.

US sources recently told news agency ANI that they are disappointed with Chinese tactics of "using Pakistan's non credentials with the NSG to settle scores with India".

Maharashtra Governor's nod to CBI to prosecute ex-CM Ashok Chavan

In a major embarrassment to the opposition Congress, Maharashtra Governor CV Rao here on Thursday accorded sanction to the CBI to prosecute former chief minister Ashok Chavan in the Adarsh Society scam.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), through its letter dated October 8, 2015, sought the governor's sanction to prosecute Chavan under Section 197 of the Criminal Procedure Code after "fresh incriminating material" was allegedly found against Chavan.

Chavan is currently a Lok Sabha member from Maharashtra and chief of the state unit of the Congress party.

CBI included a report by a two-member Commission of Inquiry, comprising Justice J.A. Patil (retd) and former chief secretary P. Subramanian, besides Bombay High Court observations in a criminal revision application filed in 2014.

Accordingly, Rao granted the sanction to prosecute Chavan under Section 197 of CrPC and Sections 120-B and 420 of the Indian Penal Code in the Adarsh Cooperative Housing Society case.

The Maharashtra cabinet, at a meeting last week presided over by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, recommended to the governor to accord the sanction.

In its report, the commission of inquiry had indicted four former chief ministers – Chavan, late Vilasrao Deshmukh, Sushilkumar Shinde and Shivajirao Nilangekar-Patil, also revenue minister at the relevant time – besides several top bureaucrats and other officials for their role in the high-profile scam.

The commission was set up in January 2011. However, its report and recommendations were rejected by the then Congress-Nationalist Congress Party government in December 2013.

Modi should not join war against ISIS; SP govt ignoring Muslims in UP: Asaduddin Owaisi

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi attacked the ruling Samajwadi Party and the BJP for ignoring 'Muslims and the downtrodden' in Uttar Pradesh during his first rally in the state.

Coming down heavily on the ruling party, the AIMIM chief said, "The poor are dying, farmers are in penury here, but neither the SP nor BJP cares about them."

Owaisi also criticised SP for not fulfilling its promise of providing reservation to poor Muslims in UP.

Shifting his focus to dreaded terrorist outfit Islamic State, the AIMIM leader said that he and his party has nothing to do with ISIS.

"We condemn ISIS. We have no connection whatsoever with ISIS," Owaisi said.

However, he also warned Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to join international community's war against the ISIS.

"Modiji should not think of sending forces to fight ISIS. That is not our war," Owaisi said while addressing his supporters in the Faizabad district of UP.

Condemning PM Modi's recent Lahore visit, he said, "The way PM met his counterpart in Lahore it was as if two separated brothers are meeting."

This was his first rally in Uttar Pradesh's Faizabad ahead of the February 13 Bikanpur bypoll.

The AIMIM, which is planning to stake a huge claim in the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls of 2017, is willing to create a "Dalit-Muslim vote bank".

"My focus will be on Samajwadi Party which has betrayed both Dalits and Muslims," the AIMIM chief had said earlier.

Owaisi's party had made its agenda clear when it declared Pradeep Kumar Kori, a Dalit, as its Bikanpur candidate for the upcoming bypolls here.

Tanzanian student was not stripped, Bengaluru incident not a 'racial attack': Karnataka

home minister

The Karnataka government on Thursday said that it was seriously probing the brutal assault on a Tanzanian student while assuring full safety of foreign students staying in the state capital.

Addressing a press conference, G Parmeshwara, Karnataka Home Minister said, "We are taking this case very seriously," adding, "There are 12,000 foreign students in Bengaluru, their protection is our foremost duty. These kind of incidents should not happen."

Explaining the sequence of events that led to the brutal assault on the African student, Parmeshwara said, "Had the Sudanese man not killed someone in the accident maybe this incident would not have happened."

A man called Sanaullah and his wife were hit by a car driven by a Sudanese national identified as Mohd Ismail, who was under influence of liquor. The woman died on the spot after which an infuriated mob set the car on fire and went on rampage, he informed.

Rejecting allegations of laxity on part of local police, Parmeshwara said, "The cops registered the case at that time itself."

"We have formed special teams to trap the culprits and render justice to the victim who declined to file complaint against the accused fearing attack again," he stated.

Some more arrests are going to be made depending on enquiry. The case has been transferred to Central Crime Branch for investigation, he added.

However, he maintained that it was not a racist attack, saying "this is just a response to an accident. Bengaluru doesn't have such kind of attitude."

"The allegations that her clothes were torn off and they were paraded naked have not been verified as per the investigation so far," he added.

The DGP and Commissioner also went to spot today and spoke to affected students and assured all help to them, he informed. Parmeshwara further stressed that there are times when foreign students stay even after their passports get expired and, therefore, they are going to pursue such cases.

Five suspects have been arrested by police in this connection and they are being interrogated. We have duly apprised the MEA about the progress in the case, Parmeshwara said.

Meanwhile, Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi today asked the Karnataka government to explain the incident and send the report immediately.

The BJP today dubbed the reaction of Rahul Gandhi on Tanzanian student assault as a 'political stunt', saying that the former is seeking report from Karnataka Chief Minister only after seeing media reports on the issue.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had yesterday condemned the attack on the Tanzanian student and asked for stringent punishment for the guilty.

The Tanzanian student was beaten and then stripped by a group of locals in Bengaluru after they assumed she was part of an incident in which a Sudanese man had run over a local woman.

The incident took place on Hesaraghatta Road in Bengaluru on Saturday night after a Sudanese national ran his car over a 35-year-old woman resulting in on the spot death of the woman.

The Tanzanian student was travelling in another car, a Wagon-R, along with four others. The young woman, who arrived on the spot around 30 minutes later, was dragged out of the car and paraded naked after being stripped by the mob.

The victim told the police in her complaint that when she tried to get on a bus in order to escape the assault, people on the bus pushed her back towards the mob.

Earlier, the local residents set fire to two cars belonging to the African students, who studied in local colleges in Ganapathinagar on Hesaraghatta Road.
