

Cong accuses MP minister Govind Singh Rajput of poll code violation, demands dismissal

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Tuesday accused Madhya Pradesh minister Govind Singh Rajput of inducing voters and workers with money ahead of the assembly elections in the state and demanded he be dismissed and debarred from contesting.

Congress leader Shobha Oza also claimed that the Election Commission has booked Rajput for model code violation after a Congress worker made a complaint against him.

At a press conference here, Oza played a video purportedly showing Rajput, an MLA representing the Surkhi assem-

bly segment, telling party workers that he would award Rs 25 lakh to in-charges of booths that get more votes for the BJP.

She said the Model Code of Conduct is in place in Madhya Pradesh and leaders of the BJP who know they are going to lose the elections are continuously engaging in malpractice and trying to influence voters.

Oza also shared a video of senior BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya purportedly saying he would pay Rs 51,000 to in-charges of booths where no votes are polled for the Congress.

She said Rajput was close to Union minister

Jyotiraditya Scindia. Oza alleged that Scindia talks about taking to the streets and fighting for the people but those close to him were involved in corruption and talking of "buying votes".

The Congress leader said party worker Sandeep Singh Baghel lodged a complaint with the Chief Election Commissioner and the State Election Commission and thanked the poll body for registering an FIR against Govind Singh Rajput under section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and section 178 of the IPC.

Shobha Oza is a former

president of the All India Mahila Congress. "We demand that strict action be taken against ministers and leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party who have been involved in corrupt activities... like Kailash Vijayvargiya and Govind Singh Rajput. We appeal to the governor to immediately dismiss Govind Singh Rajput...", Oza said.

"We demand that they (such BJP candidates) be banned from contesting elections and their assets investigated to ascertain how they have collected so much money. We also demand answers from BJP president J P Nadda and Chief Minister

Shivraj Singh Chouhan as to why they are trying to win elections in Madhya Pradesh through such corrupt practices," the Congress leader said.

Asked why no complaint was filed against Vijayvargiya, she said the BJP leader had allegedly made the offer prior to the enforcement of the model code. Oza, however, asserted that her party would file a complaint in case he did it again.

"The BJP knows that its roots have been uprooted because of corruption in Madhya Pradesh in the last 18 years and the public will uproot such people this time," the Congress leader claimed.

Lebanon's prime minister visits troops at the country's tense southern border with Israel

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BEIRUT: Lebanon's caretaker prime minister on Tuesday visited troops deployed near the border with Israel and UN peacekeepers, as Hezbollah militants and Israeli troops clash for a third week.

The visit by Prime Minister Najib Mikati to the tense southern province is his first since clashes erupted along the border following a surprise attack by the Palestinian group Hamas on Israel on October 7.

It also came two days after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited troops along the border on Sunday.

Mikati and international governments have been scrambling to prevent the Israel-Hamas war from expanding to Lebanon, where the powerful Hezbollah group warned Israel about a ground incursion into the blockaded Gaza Strip.

Hezbollah deputy leader Sheikh Naim Kassem said the group is in the "heart" of the war to "defend Gaza and confront the occupation".

"Its finger is on the trigger to whatever extent it deems necessary for the confrontation," Kassem tweeted.

Clashes between Hezbollah and the Israeli military thus far have been mostly limited to several towns along the border.

Journalists from Hezbollah's Al-Manar television reported that an Israeli



helicopter attack struck an empty position near the border town of Houla, after a missile fired from Lebanon hit an Israeli military position.

The Israeli military said the anti-missile attack hit a position in Manara with no casualties. They added that they struck a group of militants in Mount Dov, a disputed territory known as Shebaa Farms in Lebanon, where the borders of Lebanon, Syria and Israel meet.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's top Druze political leader Walid Jumblatt, said that he along with Mikati and Hezbollah ally Nabih Berri, who is Lebanon's parliamentary speaker, are in agreement that the war shouldn't further expand into the tiny Mediterranean country.

Jumblatt said that he held calls with top Hezbollah security officials on the matter.

"But the matter is not up to Hezbollah alone ... Israel could have hostile intentions," Jumblatt said after meeting with Druze religious officials

and clergymen in Beirut. "We must expect the worst."

Israel and Hezbollah fought a monthlong war in 2006 that ended in a stalemate. Israel sees Iran-backed Hezbollah as its most serious threat, estimating it has around 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel.

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron visited Israel on Tuesday, where he reaffirmed calls to prevent the war from expanding into Lebanon and the wider Arab world, and called for a "decisive" political process with the Palestinians for a viable peace.

Macron warned Hezbollah and other Iran-backed groups against opening a new front in the ongoing war, and that Paris had expressed those concerns in direct communication with Hezbollah. "To do so would be to open the door to a regional inferno from which everyone would come out the loser," he said.

Campaigning in his constituency, Gehlot speaks of 2020 revolt

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

J O D H P U R : Campaigning in his assembly constituency, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday recalled the attempt to topple his government in 2020 and said those who tried it, "did not know who they were dealing with".

"I have been the chief minister of the state three times. I completed all these three terms which is a big thing.

"It is not just that I completed all these three terms... they tried to topple my government this time but they failed. They thought that they would succeed here as well, but they had no idea who they were dealing with" Gehlot said.

The Congress leader was speaking while campaigning in his constituency Sardarpura for the second day. He held road shows and corner meetings in various localities

of the constituency.

Gehlot's then deputy Sachin Pilot and 18 other Congress MLAs had revolted against him in July 2020. The month-long crisis ended after the intervention of the party high command. Pilot was then removed as the deputy chief minister and state Congress president.

While Gehlot-Pilot ties have been strained since, with both openly taking pot-shots at each other, the party has been put-

ting up a united face in the state in the run-up to the November 25 Assembly polls.

Gehlot expressed gratitude to the people and sought their blessings for the upcoming election.

On Tuesday, his campaigning was focused on Mandore - a Mali-dominant area.

Gehlot, who belongs to the Mali community, also attended a felicitation programme organised by the community in which

836 meritorious students were honoured.

While addressing various gatherings, Gehlot said that it was his duty to come to his constituency immediately after getting the ticket and express his gratitude to them.

"You have always blessed me. So it was my duty to come to you first. Now, with your permission I would leave to take care of the remaining 199 seats," he said.

President Murmu, Modi, Sonia attend Dussehra festivities in Delhi

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi and several other leaders attended events across Delhi to mark Dussehra festivities on Tuesday.

Dussehra marks the end of the nine-day festivities of 'Navratra'. Effigies of Ravana, Meghnad and Kumbhakaran are set ablaze during the celebrations to signify the triumph of good over evil.

President Murmu attended Dussehra celebrations hosted by the Shri Dharmik Leela Committee at the ground opposite the Red Fort here, while Prime Minister Modi took part in an event held in Dwarka.

The Shri Dharmik Leela Committee has been organis-



ing one of the most high-profile Ramlila events of the city since 1924. President Murmu arrived at the venue around 6 pm and offered prayers along with the members of the committee.

Murmu was accompanied by former Union minister Harsh Vardhan. She was later handed a ceremonial bow and arrow to shoot towards the effigies, following which they were set ablaze.

Prime Minister Modi was

accorded a traditional welcome by the organisers of the event in Dwarka as a sea of crowd gathered to watch the festivities.

Modi was welcomed with a shawl and statue of Ram Durbat, and was also gifted a mace.

Later, he shot an arrow using a ceremonial bow, kick-starting the 'Lanka Dahan' celebrations.

"It is also a festival that marks the triumph of humili-

ty over arrogance," Modi said in his address.

Vijaydashmi is a festival of "sankalp" (resolutions) and to "reiterate our resolutions", the prime minister said. He also invoked the new Ram Temple being built in Ayodhya.

Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi attended Dussehra celebrations at an event hosted by the Nav Shri Dharmik Leela Committee. She was accompanied by Congress leader J P Agarwal and other party leaders.

Amid chants of 'Jai Shri Ram', Gandhi was gifted a copy of the Ramayana at the event.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also attended Dussehra festivities hosted by different Ramlila committees at venues facing the iconic Red Fort.

China announces the removal of defense minister missing for almost 2 months with little explanation

■ AGENCY

TAIPEI: China has replaced Defense Minister Gen. Li Shangfu, who has been out of public view for almost two months with little explanation, state media reported on Tuesday.

Li is the second senior Chinese official to disappear this year, following former Foreign Minister Qin Gang, who was removed from office in July with no explanation offered.

Li, who became defense minister during a Cabinet reshuffle in March, hasn't been seen since giving a speech on August 29. There is no indication that the disappearances of Qin and Li signal a change in China's foreign or defense policies, although they have raised questions about the resilience of president and ruling Communist Party leader Xi Jinping's circle of power.

Xi has a reputation for valuing loyalty above all and has relentlessly attacked corruption in public and private, sometimes in what has been seen as a method of eliminating political rivals and shoring up his political position amid a deteriorating economy and rising tensions with US over trade, technology and Taiwan.

Li is under US sanctions related to his overseeing weapon purchases from Russia that bar him from entering the country. China has since cut off contacts with the US military, mainly in protest over US arm sales to Taiwan, but also strongly implying that Washington must lift the measures against Li, which Beijing refuses to publicly recognise.

75 per cent beneficiaries of PM SVANidhi scheme for street vendors from non-general category: SBI research

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: An SBI research report has praised the Modi government's micro-credit scheme for street vendors for ensuring "inclusive entrepreneurship" and said nearly 75 per cent of its beneficiaries come from the non-general category with the OBCs accounting for 44 per cent.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes account for 22 per cent of the total disbursement of the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme and 43 per cent of the total beneficiaries are women, the report said.

"Female share indicates empowerment of entrepreneurial capabilities of urban female, giving SVANidhi a gender equaliser tag," it said.

Sharing the report on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "This in-depth research by Soumya Kanti Ghosh of the State Bank of India provides a very clear picture of the transformative impact of PM SVANidhi. It notes the inclusive nature of this scheme and highlights how it has led to financial empowerment."

Soumya Kanti Ghosh is the SBI's Group Chief Economic Advisor. The prime minister shared high-

lights of the report on his website.

Noting that almost 75 per cent of loan beneficiaries come from the non-general category, the report said it is a testament to the innate power of the well-intended policy schemes to seed transformative changes.

The SBI's emphasis on the social inclusivity of the welfare scheme comes amid a raging political debate centred on Other Backward Classes (OBCs), the largest and most crucial voting bloc, with the opposition demanding a nationwide caste census and accusing the government of denying the community its due.

On the other hand, the ruling BJP has accused the Congress and its allies of doing politics and asserted that no government has done as much for the OBCs as the Modi dispensation.

The research report said the PM SVANidhi scheme has seamlessly connected marginalised urban micro-entrepreneurs, breaking down community barriers along the way.

The persistency ratio (first and second loans repaid) is increasing, which indicates the scheme's need and popularity, and also incentivisation of those who are paying back the loans, it said.

The ratio of people repaying the first loan of Rs 10,000 and taking the second loan of Rs 20,000 loan is 68 per cent while the ratio of people repaying the second loan of Rs 20,000 and taking the third loan of Rs 50,000 loan is 75 per cent, it added.

Till date, around 70 lakh loans have been disbursed in all three tranches, benefiting over 53 lakh street vendors, with the total value exceeding Rs 9,100 crore, the report said. The report's highlights on Modi's website noted that the PM SVANidhi scheme, with an objective of economic upliftment, is a "huge success".

Relentless bombardment of Gaza by Israeli forces deeply alarming: UN chief

■ AGENCY

UNITED NATIONS: UN chief Antonio Guterres on Tuesday asserted that no party to an armed conflict is above international humanitarian law as he expressed deep alarm over the "relentless bombardment" of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip by Israeli forces and appealed to all to "pull back from the brink" before the violence escalates even further.

"The situation in the Middle East is growing more dire by the hour: The war in Gaza is raging and risks spiralling throughout the region. Divisions are splintering societies. Tensions threaten to boil over," Guterres told a Security Council ministerial meeting on the Middle East.

"On this UN Day, at this critical hour, I appeal to all to pull back from the brink before the violence claims even more lives and spreads even farther," he said.

The meeting, held under the Brazilian President of the Council, was attended by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs Eli Cohen, Palestine's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Riyad Al-Maliki, Brazil's Minister for Foreign Affairs Mauro Vieira and France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna among others.

Guterres said he is deeply concerned about the "clear violations of international humanitarian law that we are witnessing in Gaza."

"Let me be clear: No party to an armed conflict is above international humanitarian law."

Reiterating his appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, Guterres said even war has rules and stressed that the international community must demand that all parties uphold and respect their obligations

under international humanitarian law.

He also highlighted the need to take constant care in the conduct of military operations to spare civilians; and respect and protect hospitals and respect the inviolability of UN facilities which today are sheltering more than 600,000 Palestinians.

"The relentless bombardment of Gaza by Israeli forces, the level of civilian casualties, and the wholesale destruction of neighbourhoods continue to mount and are deeply alarming," Guterres said.

The UN chief underscored that the protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict.

"Protecting civilians can never mean using them as human shields. Protecting civilians does not mean ordering more than one million people to evacuate to the south, where there is no shelter, no food, no water, no

medicine and no fuel, and then continuing to bomb the south itself," he said.

Guterres's remarks were a reference to Israel's ultimatum this month that Palestinians in Gaza relocate to the strip's south following the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas militants.

Guterres, while condemning unequivocally the "horrific and unprecedented" acts of terror by Hamas in Israel on October 7, said that it is important to also recognise the attacks by Hamas "did not happen in a vacuum".

"The Palestinian people have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation. They have seen their land steadily devoured by settlements and plagued by violence; their economy stifled; their people displaced and their homes demolished. Their hopes for a political solution to their plight have been vanishing," he said.

Guterres, however, stressed that the grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas. "And those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people."

The UN chief said an immediate humanitarian ceasefire would ease the "epic suffering" and make delivery of aid in Gaza easier and safer.

He termed the humanitarian relief that is finally getting into Gaza as "a drop of aid in an ocean of need."

He voiced concern that UN fuel supplies in Gaza will run out in a matter of days, bringing another disaster: "Without fuel, aid cannot be delivered, hospitals will not have power, and drinking water cannot be purified or even pumped. The people of Gaza need continuous aid delivery at a level that corresponds to their enormous needs. That aid must be deliv-

ered without restrictions."

Guterres underlined that even in this moment of grave and immediate danger, "we cannot lose sight" of the only realistic foundation for true peace and stability in the Middle East - a two-state solution.

"Israelis must see their legitimate needs for security materialised, and Palestinians must see their legitimate aspirations for an independent State realised, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements," he said.

Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland told the Council that the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Gaza has reported over 5,000 Palestinians have been killed so far, including over 2,000 children and 1,100 women as well as journalists, medical workers and first responders, with more than 15,000 injured.

Himachal Pradesh: SIT makes 7 more arrests in cryptocurrency fraud case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SHIMLA: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the multi-crore cryptocurrency fraud case in Himachal Pradesh has arrested seven more persons for their involvement in luring unsuspecting victims with fake investment plans, police said on Tuesday.

All accused played distinct roles in the fraud from managing back-end office activities and databases, coordinating communications, providing technological support, managing financial transactions and handling inflow and outflow of funds, a statement issued here by the police headquarters said.

The accused have been remanded to police custody for ten days. The investigations are now focused on gathering evidence, and tracing the financial trail to bring all those involved in the scam to justice, the statement said. The police have so far not shared the names and details of the seven persons arrested.

The scam started in 2018 when the fraudsters approached people with an investment plan related to a locally made (in Mandi district) cryptocurrency known as "Korvio Coin" or KRO coins.

The scammers lured innocent people by promising handsome returns in a short span of time and built a network of investors. Three to four kinds of cryptocurrency were used and false websites in which the cryptocurrency prices were manipulated and inflated were created.

Cryptocurrency is a digital

tal currency designed to work as a medium of exchange through a computer network that is not dependent on any central authority, such as the government or bank to uphold or maintain it.

The SIT investigations have revealed that at least one lakh people have been duped by the fraudsters in the cryptocurrency fraud, and 2.5 lakh IDs have been found which included multiple IDs of the same person.

The accused used a combination of misinformation, deception and threats to maintain control over the scheme causing huge financial losses to the victims.

Over a thousand police personnel have also fallen victim to the fraud. While a majority of them were duped of crores of rupees, some of them made huge gains, opted for voluntary retirement scheme (VRS), and became its promoters.

"We will get all the wrongdoers. The investigation is progressing in an organised and planned manner," DGP Sanjay Kundu had told PTI earlier. He added that all those involved in the scam will be dealt with strongly as per law.

Police have cautioned the general public to remain vigilant and exercise caution on such investment opportunities, particularly in the cryptocurrency space. Earlier, two main accused Sukhdev and Hemraj were held in Gujarat, and during investigations, the duo confessed that they have outstanding liabilities of Rs 400 crore. The alleged kingpin of the scam, Subash, is still at large.

In the Court Of Ld. Additional Special Mobile Magistrate, Samba

1. Bajleet Singh S/o Jagir Singh Wo Ghandran, Tehsil & District Pathankot

2. Sarjeet Kour W/o Bajleet Singh R/o Ghandran, Tehsil & District Pathankot

...Plaintiffs

Versus

1. Harjeet Singh S/o S. Partap Singh 2. Bajleet Kour W/o Harjeet Singh

Both R/O Guwahati, Tehsil Vijaypur, District Samba

In The Matter Of: Civil original suit for declaration to the effect that the plaintiffs are the adoptive father and adoptive mother of child named Mankirat Singh (Minor) and the plaintiffs are also entitled to get their name entered in the documents i.e. the Birth Certificate, Passport, School Certificate etc. as adoptive parents of the minor Mankirat Singh who was adopted by plaintiffs on 26.04.2018 by way of adoption deed which was registered before the Sub-Registrar Samba on 26.04.2018, to be declare as such. With a further relief of injunction restraining the defendants from taking the custody of the minor child on the plaintiffs.

Proclamation

Whereas the above titled suit has been instituted before this court by the plaintiffs which is fixed for hearing on 07-11-2023. Through the medium of this proclamation, public at large is hereby informed that if any person has/have any objection in the suit, he/she/they shall/should appear before this court in person or through advocate and file his/her objection, failing which the matter will be dealt under law.

If the date fixed herein above is declare holiday then the matter will be taken up on next working day.

Given under my hand and seal of this court today on 21.10.2023.

SD/-

Addl. Mobile Magistrate, Samba