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STATE TIMES

THE BOLD VOICE OF J&K

RNI No. : 66908/96
Regd. No. L-29/JK-346/22-24
Vol. 29 Issue 81 • Jammu • Friday • March 22, 2024 • Pages 12 • ₹ 3.00
Air surcharge 50 paise for Leh

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SHAPING INDIA

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Website : www.statetimes.in, Email: statetimes1@gmail.com

Delhi CM Kejriwal arrested by ED in liquor policy case

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday night in an excise policy-linked money laundering case, officials said.

The arrest, the first of a sitting chief minister, came hours after the Delhi High Court refused to grant protection to the AAP national convener from any coercive action by the agency.

The 55-year-old leader's arrest, amid campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, drew angry reactions from his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The party said Kejriwal "will continue as the chief minister of Delhi. If need be, he will run the government from jail."

The BJP though demanded that Kejriwal step down as chief minister on moral grounds.

In a day of fast-paced developments, a 10-member



ED team led by an additional director reached his official residence on Flagstaff Road in Civil Lines in the national capital soon after the high court order and carried out searches. He was arrested more than two hours after the ED team arrived at his residence, officials said.

Officials said the ED would

AAP FACES LEADERSHIP CRISIS

NEW DELHI: The arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the alleged excise policy scam case has posed a leadership crisis question before the AAP as well as the Delhi government, with his wife Sunita Kejriwal and cabinet ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj being talked about as his possible replacement.

The challenge before the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) now is to come up with a worthy leader who could handle both the party and its government in Delhi in absence of Kejriwal.

However, it's indeed a big task for the AAP leadership to come up with a name of a leader that at least comes closer to Kejriwal's stature as convener of the party since its inception in 2012 and holding Delhi Chief Minister's post for three terms spanning nearly a decade.

The urgency of the task becomes even more pressing as the AAP is gearing up to contest the Lok Sabha polls in Punjab, Delhi, Gujarat, Assam and Haryana in which Kejriwal was to be a key campaigner of the party.

Apart from Sunita Kejriwal, a former IRS officer, the names of AAP government ministers Atishi and Bharadwaj too are taking rounds for the post of Delhi chief minister.

Atishi, who holds the maximum number of portfolios in the Delhi government, including education, finance, PWD, revenue and services, is considered close to Arvind Kejriwal.

She is also a frontline spokesperson of the party defending the AAP government and Kejriwal, and attacking the BJP in her regular press conferences and appearances on news channels. Likewise, Bharadwaj is also a prominent member of the Delhi Cabinet holding several important

Mohd Yousf Wani appointed as Addl Judge to J&K-Ladakh HC

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Six advocates and a judicial officer from Jammu and Kashmir were appointed as judges in two high courts on Thursday.

Judicial officer Mohd Yousuf Wani has been appointed as an additional judge of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court.

According to a Law Ministry statement, advocates Mullappally Abdul Aziz



Abdul Hakim, Syam Kumar Vadakke, Mudavakkat, Harisankar Vijayan Menon, Manu Sreedharan Nair,

Easwaran Subramani and Manoj Pulamby Madhavan have been appointed as additional judges of the Kerala High Court.

Separately, 10 additional judges of the Bombay High Court have been elevated as permanent judges.

Additional judges are usually appointed for a period of two years before being elevated as judges or what is popularly called "permanent judges".

DB set-aside judgment of writ Court, directs to appoint petitioner in KAS from 2011

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: In a landmark judgement, a Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Puneet Gupta, while setting-aside the judgment of writ Court, directed PSC to appoint Hitesh Choudhary in KAS

from 2011.

DB further ordered that petitioner shall be entitled to all consequential benefits including seniority, promotion etc. from the date of the other similarly situated candidates came to be appointed minus the monetary benefits.

This appeal is directed

against the order dated 01.04.2016 passed by the learned Single Judge in SWP No.979/2012, whereby the Judge dismissed the writ petition filed by the writ petitioner.

The facts-in-brief are that the writ petitioner participated in the

ACB register case against ex-CEO, XEn, AEE WMDA for misappropriation of Govt funds

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday registered a case against Zulfikar Mohammad Khan, then Chief Executive Officer, Bashir Ahmad Baba, the then Executive Engineer, Zahoor Ahmad Sheikh the then Assistant Executive Engineer/ Executive Engineer as well as beneficiary contractors namely Ghulam Nabi Mir, son of Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, resident of Treesa and Ghulam Nabi Bhat, son of Mohammad Maqbool Bhat, resident of Safapora and others on account of misappropriation of Govt funds meant

for various development works parks etc on the culmination of verification.

"The verification conducted into matter revealed that Wullar Manasbal (WMDA) Development Authority executed about 23 civil works during the financial years 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19, of which 18 works were tendered and in 15 works, huge illegal and fraudulent extensions were granted ranging from 44 per cent to 218 per cent by the then Chief Executive Officer Zulfikar Mohammad Khan in brazen violation of laid down norms by gross

Shabir Shah's daughter, Geelani's grand-daughter distance themselves from separatist ideology

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: Jailed separatist Shabir Ahmad Shah daughter Sama Shabir and deceased Pakistan supporter Syed Ali Shah Geelani's granddaughter Ruwa Shah have dissociated themselves from the separatist ideology and pledged their loyalty to the sovereignty of Union of India.

In identical public notices published in local newspapers, they distanced themselves from separatist politics.

Ruwa Shah, daughter of Geelani's son-in-law Altaf Ahmad Shah alias Altaf

Fantoosh, issued a public notice distancing herself from the Hurriyat Conference faction founded by her late grandfather.

She also declared she has no inclination or sympathy towards Hurriyat Conference ideology.

"I am a loyal citizen of India not affiliated with any organisation or association which has an agenda against the Union of India and I owe allegiance to the Constitution of my country (India)," Shah said in the notice published in a local daily earlier this week.

Her father, who was also in

jail for alleged terror funding, died last year after a prolonged illness.

In a separate public notice published in a local newspaper on Thursday, 23-year-old Sama Shabir, a former CBSE topper in Kashmir, emphasised her status as a loyal Indian citizen and unequivocally distanced herself from the banned separatist organisation founded by her father, who is currently in Tihar Jail on money laundering and terror funding charges.

"I am a loyal citizen of India and I am not affiliated with any person or organisation

which is against the sovereignty of the Union of India," Sama Shabir, the elder daughter of Shah, said in the notice.

"I am not associated with the DFP or its ideology in any way," Sama Shabir stated, cautioning that legal action would be pursued against anyone linking her to the separatist group without authorisation.

Shabir Ahmad Shah (70) was arrested in 2017 by the Enforcement Directorate over alleged money laundering activities linked to terror financing. He was

BRO commences work to reopen Leh-Manali NH in Ladakh

STATE TIMES NEWS
LEH: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has commenced work for the reopening of the strategic Leh-Manali National Highway in Ladakh union territory, officials said on Thursday.

The highway, which lies across high-altitude areas in the Himalayas, remains closed for several months during peak winters due to heavy snow.

"Project Himank has commenced snow clearance works to clear the accumulated snow and restore access to the Ladakh region from Manali side," a defence

spokesperson said.

A team of engineers of the Border Road Task Force (BRTF) have been tasked with snow clearing and provided with advanced equipment, he said.

The extreme cold climatic conditions, gusty winds and sub-zero temperatures in treacherous terrain at altitudes ranging beyond 17,000 feet makes the work more challenging, the spokesman said.

"Despite this, the team of BRO is working tirelessly to reopen the highway and timely restore the crucial link to Ladakh," he added.

Cong's poll panel meets to finalise candidates for J&K, UP, MP

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The Congress' Central Election Committee met here on Thursday to finalise Lok Sabha poll candidates for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

This is the first time that the panel, chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, took up discussions on the candidates for the politically crucial Uttar Pradesh.

There is speculation that Rahul Gandhi may also contest from Amethi, besides his declared seat of Wayanad in Kerala, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Raebareli, a seat which was previously held by Sonia Gandhi. Both the seats in UP are considered bastions of the Gandhi family and the local units of the Congress have demanded that the two scions of the Gandhi family should contest from there.

UP Congress chief Ajay Rai, Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Jitu

EC asks Govt to stop sending 'Viksit Bharat' messages on WhatsApp

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The Election Commission Thursday directed the Centre to "immediately halt" sending bulk WhatsApp messages under the "Viksit Bharat Sampark" to highlight the government's initiatives.

The Commission issued the direction to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology after it received complaints about the matter.

"The move is a part of a series of decisions taken by the Commission to ensure

a level-playing field," the Commission said.

It has also sought a compliance report on the matter from the ministry.

The ministry had informed the Commission that the messages along with a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi were sent before the Model Code of Conduct came into force on March 16.

"... some of them could have possibly been delivered to recipients with a delay because of systemic and network limitations," the ministry said in a communication to the

Commission.

The poll authority had received several complaints that such messages highlighting the government's initiatives were still being delivered on citizens' phones despite the announcement of the General Elections 2024 and the MCC coming into force.

The Congress and the Trinamool Congress had raised objections to the message and requested the Election Commission to act against this "blatant violation" of the Model Code of Conduct.

Dr Jitendra files nomination from Udhampur-Kathua seat

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Union minister Jitendra Singh on Thursday filed his nomination papers from the Udhampur-Kathua Lok Sabha constituency for the first phase of general elections in Jammu and Kashmir on April 19.

"Two candidates today filed their nomination papers from the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency for the first phase of general elections to be held in Jammu and Kashmir on April 19", according to an official hand-out.

The candidates, including Dr Jitendra Singh and Prem Nath both from Bharatiya Janata Party, filed their



Union minister Jitendra Singh filing nomination papers at Kathua on Thursday.

nomination papers in the office of Returning Officer.

The last day for filing of nomination papers is March 27, 2024 from 11:00 AM to 03:00 PM.

The notification for the Udhampur-Kathua con-

Singh filed his nomination papers at the office of Returning Officer Rakesh Minhas in Kathua town, officials said.

Singh, whose candidacy was announced in the BJP's first list on March 3, performed a puja at his residence in the Trikuta Nagar area of the city in the presence of friends and relatives earlier in the day.

The two-time MP from Udhampur-Kathua is aiming for a hat-trick of wins and thanked the people for their faith in him while seeking their blessings for yet another term. "The people from the hills of Kishtwar and

SC refuses to stay appointment of new ECs

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to stay the appointment of new election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, saying that doing so would lead to "chaos and uncertainty" as the Lok Sabha elections are round the corner.

Observing that the Election Commission is not under the "thumb of executive", the apex court also refused to grant an interim stay on the operation of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Terms of Office) Act, 2023.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said, "At this stage, we cannot stay the legislation or put it under suspension by way of interim order. It would lead to uncertainty and chaos in case of stay."

The top court said it will examine the main petitions challenging the validity of the 2023 Act and asked the



Centre to file its response within six weeks.

It posted the matter for resumed hearing on August 5.

"They have been appointed and elections are round the corner. The balance of convenience is a very important factor. We have to see what the effect is if we do it, what are the consequences which will follow. One-member commission or three-member commission...plus, there are no allegations against the new election commissioners per se," the bench told

the petitioners who have challenged their appointment.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas, including those filed by Congress leader Jaya Thakur and NGO 'Association for Democratic Reforms', who sought a stay on the appointment of the new election commissioners and challenged the validity of the 2023 law which excluded the Chief Justice of India from the Selection Committee meant to pick the new ECs and the CEC.

"We are dismissing the applications

for stay on the appointment," the bench said.

During the hearing, the bench questioned the haste with which the Centre went ahead with the appointment of the two new election commissioners.

"Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done. We are dealing with the Representation of the People Act, which according to me, is the highest after the Constitution. Why leave any scope for the public to raise an eyebrow?" Justice Datta told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre.

Observing that it cannot be denied that election commissioners should be independent and fair, the bench said polls have been held since the 1950s and the country has had very good ECs in the past.

It told advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the NGO, "Earlier ECs were appointed by executive decisions and now they are being appointed as per the

BJP not averse to dynastic politics, has problems with those families that oppose it: Omar

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Thursday said the BJP does not have a problem with dynastic politics but has issues with those families that oppose the safe-party.

Abdullah cited the BJP's tie-up with Chirag Paswan in Bihar and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's meeting with Raj Thackeray amid speculation of an alliance in Maharashtra for the Lok Sabha polls and asked if these were not examples of 'parivarvad' or family politics.

"BJP does not have a problem with dynastic families. They have a problem with those families which oppose them. And I am proud to say that I oppose the B-JP,"

Abdullah told reporters here.

"Did not the BJP tie up in Bihar with Chirag Paswan? Amit Shah recently met Raj Thackeray. Are these not examples of parivarvad. Is there (BJP's) candidate from Guna in Gwalior (Jyotiraditya Scindia), not a dynast?" he asked.

In response to a question about NC candidates for the three Lok Sabha seats in Kashmir, Abdullah said the names will be announced at an appropriate time.

"We will announce our candidates at the right time. Our constituencies are going to polls in the third, fourth and fifth phases. There is a lot of time left. Let's celebrate Eid first," he said.

When asked about the Congress taking back

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 27.4°C Min: 18.4°C

Humidity
Max: 59 Min: 59

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 16.2°C Min: 9.9°C

Humidity
Max: 78 Min: 58

Sunset: 18:42 Hours
Sunrise: 06:32 Hours