

# Gukesh wins Candidates, becomes youngest ever challenger for world title

**AGENCY**

TORONTO: India's 17-year-old Grandmaster D Gukesh scripted history by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament here to become the youngest ever challenger to the world title, bettering a record created by the legendary Garry Kasparov 40 years ago.

Gukesh played out an easy draw with American Hikaru Nakamura in the 14th and final round to finish with nine out of a possible 14 points in the tournament that is held to decide the challenger to the world champion.

The triumph entitles Gukesh a clash against reigning world champion Ding Liren of China in the last quarter of the year.

The Chennai-based teen bettered Kasparov's record by quite a distance as the Russian great was 22 when he qualified in 1984 to clash with compatriot Anatoly Karpov.

"So relieved and so happy. I was following this crazy game (between Fabio Caruana and Ian Nepomniachtchi), and then I went for a walk with my second (Gregorz Gazevsky),



I think that helped," Gukesh said after winning.

Gukesh also won a cash award of 88,500 Euros (approx Rs 78.5 lakh). The total prize fund of the Candidates was 5,00,000 Euros.

He became only the second Indian after the great Viswanathan Anand to win the prestigious tournament. Five-time world champion Anand's triumph came in 2014.

"Congratulations to @DGukesh for becoming the youngest challenger. The @WacaChess family is so proud of what you have done. I'm personally very proud of how you played and handled tough situations. Enjoy the moment," Anand posted

on 'X' to congratulate the youngster, who like him, also hails from Chennai.

Needing at least a draw, Gukesh gave nothing away to Nakamura, a clear signal that the teenager is ready for the big stage and is going to be the next biggest star in the chess world.

The black pieces did not matter much as Nakamura was at sea in the Queen's Gambit Accepted and did not find any ways to pursue playing for an advantage.

Gukesh won a pawn and Nakamura had to find the path to equality in the ensuing rook and opposite coloured Bishops endgame. The game lasted till move 71 but the result was never in doubt. With Gukesh ending

on 9 points, all eyes were on the match between American Caruana and Russia's Nepomniachtchi.

The American outplayed Nepomniachtchi right from the opening and enjoyed a nearly winning position for several moves.

However, the clock did the talking here as Caruana blundered on 39th move to allow a playable position.

Things were far from over though, Caruana built his position all over again and was close to winning a second time when again his clock deceived him and he failed to find the correct continuation.

The resulting position was a drawn queen and pawns endgame where Caruana kept pressing to no avail.

Had any of these two players won, the tournament would have needed a tie-break as Gukesh and the winner would have ended up in joint lead.

Caruana, Nepomniachtchi and Nakamura all ended on an identical 8.5 points for the shared second place while Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa ended fifth on seven points defeating Nijat Abasov of

Azerbaijan. Vidit Gujrathi played out a quick draw with Firouzja Alireza of France in the final round to end on the sixth spot with six points in all. Alireza finished seventh on five points while Abasov ended last on 3.5 points in all.

Gukesh has been making waves for a while now after becoming the third youngest in chess history to earn the Grandmaster title at the age of 12.

Last year, he won a silver medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games.

The dates and venue for the world championship are yet to be finalised.

Results final round (Indians unless specified):

Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 8.5) drew with D Gukesh (9); Fabio Caruana (USA, 8.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (FIDE, 8.5); Nijat Abasov (Aze, 3.5) lost to R Praggnanandhaa (7); Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 5) drew with Vidit Gujrathi (6). Final standings: 1. D Gukesh 2-4: Nakamura, Nepomniachtchi, Caruana 5. Praggnanandhaa 6. Gujrathi 7. Alireza 8. Abasov.

# BJP says opposition parties resorting to 'appeasement' politics as its graph rising in polls

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: The BJP alleged on Monday that the opposition has resorted to blatant appeasement politics, anti-Hindu agenda and joining hands with anti-India forces in desperation, as it is becoming clear that the ruling NDA will reach its target of winning over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls.

Its spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia cited the murder of Neha Hiremath (23), daughter of Congress councillor Niranjan Hiremath in Karnataka, and claimed that the state government is not taking appropriate action due to the religion of the accused.

Fayaz, who allegedly stabbed the victim on a college campus, has been arrested by the police.

Bhatia said Niranjan Hiremath has stated that he had given to police names of eight persons who were allegedly involved in his daughter's murder but none of them has been arrested and that the CBI should probe the case.

"Her father is himself saying that he has lost faith in



the police but Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is shielding the accused," the BJP spokesperson alleged.

While BJP president J P Nadda met the victim's family members, no senior Congress leader such as Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra or the chief minister met them, he said.

The BJP spokesperson claimed that some people who raised 'the Jai Shri Ram' slogan during a Ram Navami procession were beaten up and said that there is a "jungle raj" in Karnataka.

Bhatia alleged that the Congress manifesto for the Lok Sabha polls seems to be inspired by Pakistan's founder M A Jinnah as it

speaks of strengthening personal laws.

Will the practice of triple talaq, which was banned and made a criminal offence by the Modi government, be brought back, he asked and also attacked the Congress for its leader P Chidambaram's assertion that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act will be repealed if the INDIA bloc comes to power.

As the BJP's graph rises during the polls and it becomes clear that the ruling National Democratic Alliance will reach its target of over 400 seats, the opposition, especially the Congress, is turning desperate, Bhatia claimed.

# Geeta Kora files nomination as BJP candidate for Singhbhum LS constituency

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

CHAIBASA (JHARKHAND): Geeta Kora on Monday filed her nomination papers as the BJP candidate for the Singhbhum (ST) Lok Sabha constituency in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district.

Jharkhand BJP president Babulal Marandi, senior party leaders and hundreds of party workers accompanied Kora as she submitted her nomination papers before the returning officer.

Exuding confidence about her victory, Kora told reporters that the enthusiasm of party workers "showed that BJP would achieve 400 seat target."

"Lots of work has been done for women by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He has a mission for development of women, tribals and others. I will take forward his mission of development in my constituency," Kora said.



JMM has fielded former state minister Joba Manjhi in the Singhbhum Lok Sabha seat against Geeta Kora, who is the wife of former chief minister Madhu Kora.

"Manjhi is a JMM candidate and she is my competitor in my constituency. So, I will fight accordingly," Kora said.

Kora was the lone Congress MP from

Jharkhand in the outgoing Lok Sabha. She won the seat in 2019 by defeating BJP's Laxman Gilua with a margin of 72,155 votes.

Kora joined the BJP on February 26.

The Singhbhum parliamentary constituency will go to polls on May 13.

The BJP-AJSU alliance had won 12 out of the 14 parliamentary seats in Jharkhand in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

# SC permits minor rape survivor to undergo medical termination of 30-week pregnancy

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: Taking note of "exceptional" circumstances, the Supreme Court on Monday permitted a 14-year-old rape survivor to undergo medical termination of her almost 30-week pregnancy, saying the welfare of the minor was of "paramount importance".

Exercising its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution which empowers it to pass any order necessary for doing complete justice in any case, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala said, "Bearing in mind the exigencies of the situation and the welfare of the minor, which is of paramount importance and her safety...we set aside the judgement of the Bombay High Court."

At the outset, the bench, which took up the plea as the first item, observed, "We will allow the medical

termination since she is 14-year-old and it is a rape case. This is an exceptional case."

Setting aside the April 4 judgement of the Bombay High Court declining permission for termination of pregnancy, the top court directed the dean of the Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College and General Hospital (LTMGH) at Sion in Mumbai to set up a team of doctors immediately for aborting the foetus.

While allowing the plea, the bench took note of the report submitted by LTMGH and said, "The medical board has clearly opined that the continuation of the pregnancy against the will of the minor would impact negatively on physical and mental well being of the minor who is barely 14 years old."

Referring to the report, it said, "While a certain degree of risk is involved in

every procedure for medical termination of pregnancy, the medical board opined that the threat to life of the patient if termination of pregnancy is carried out at this stage is not higher than the risk of delivery at full term of pregnancy."

The bench said a detailed and reasoned judgment will follow as it was passing an interim order keeping the exigencies of the case in mind.

"The circumstances which weighed with us are that the MTP is sought for a minor who is 14 and the pregnancy has emanated from a sexual assault resulting in an FIR. The minor herself was unaware that she was pregnant till a very late stage. This is not an uncommon feature in such cases," it said.

It asked the hospital administration to make arrangements for transportation of the minor for the medical procedure

while taking note of the submissions of Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati that the Maharashtra government will bear the expenses.

The bench directed that post-procedure medical care, if any, be ensured.

It, however, did not order a DNA test or any other medical examination of the foetus for the purpose of the ongoing criminal investigation in the rape case.

The bench said police can take recourse in this regard. ASG Bhati, at the outset, urged that the MTP be permitted under Article 142 of the Constitution keeping in mind the medical report and situation where time is precious.

On April 19, the top court had taken up the matter on an urgent basis and sought a fresh medical report after taking note of the fact that the high court had relied upon the earlier report

which did not deal with "the impact of the pregnancy on the life of the minor and on the physical, mental and emotional well being of the girl."

Earlier, the court had sought a report from Mumbai's Sion hospital about the girl's possible physical and psychological condition if she undergoes the procedure or if she is advised against it.

The apex court was hearing a petition filed by the girl's mother challenging the Bombay High Court order declining the prayer for termination of pregnancy.

Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, the upper limit for aborting the foetus is 24 weeks for married women as well as those in special categories, including rape survivors and other vulnerable women, such as those differently-abled and minors.

# SC refuses to entertain PIL seeking 3-year law course instead of 5

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: Observing that the legal profession needed "mature people", the Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a PIL seeking directions to the Centre and the Bar Council of India to set up an expert committee for exploring the feasibility of introducing a three-year LLB course after class 12 instead of the existing five-year course.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala said the five-year LLB (Bachelor of Law) course is "working fine" and there was no need to tinker with it.

"Why have a three-year course at all? They can start

practice (of law) after high school only!... According to me, even 5 years is too less," the CJI said.

"We need mature people coming into the profession. This 5-year course has been very beneficial," the bench said while permitting the PIL to be withdrawn.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh appeared for lawyer-petitioner Ashwini Updhyay.

The senior advocate said even in the United Kingdom, the law course is for three years and the present five-year LLB course here is a "disincentive for the poor, especially girls".

The CJI disagreed with his submissions and said 70 per cent women have entered district judiciary this time and

now more girls are taking up law.

Singh sought the court's permission to withdraw the PIL with liberty to make a representation to the BCI for introducing such a course.

The bench disallowed his request to approach the BCI and permitted only the withdrawal of the PIL.

The PIL was filed through lawyer Ashwani Dubey.

At present, students can pursue a five-year integrated law course after class 12 for which they need to clear the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) adopted by the premier National Law Universities (NLUs). Students can also pursue a three-year LLB course after graduating in any discipline.

The plea said it was "seeking direction to the Centre and Bar Council of India to form an expert committee to ascertain the feasibility of starting a three-year Bachelor of Law

course after class 12 like Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) and Bachelor of Arts (BA) courses".

It claimed that the "prolonged period" of five years for the integrated course was "arbitrary and irrational" as it was not proportional to the subject and put an excessive financial burden on students.

"There are numerous examples of prodigies not being encumbered by a rigid system which focuses more on being the jack of all rather than being the master of one," the plea claimed, citing the example of former law minister Ram Jethmalani, who started his law firm when he was just 17.

"Was there any five-year LLB course to bar his progress and obscure his vision?"

There was none. The eminent jurist and former attorney general late Fali Nariman completed law at the age of 21 years," the plea said.

# LS polls: PM Modi to hold roadshow in Bhopal on April 24

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

BHOPAL: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a roadshow on Wednesday evening in Bhopal Lok Sabha constituency, a stronghold of the BJP, a party functionary said on Monday.

It will be PM Modi's second roadshow in Madhya Pradesh and fifth visit to the state in the last 18 days. The prime minister kickstarted his poll campaign in MP on April 7 with a roadshow in Jabalpur constituency, another bastion of the BJP which it has been winning since 1996.

BJP's Alok Sharma is pitted against Congress candidate Arun Shrivastava in the Bhopal Lok Sabha seat, where polling will be held on May 7. "Modi ji will lead the roadshow in the city on April 24 evening," Madhya



Pradesh BJP's media cell chief Ashish Agrawal told PTI.

The roadshow would cover a distance of 1.5 km from the old Vidhan Sabha to New Market area. It will commence around 7 pm, Bhopal Commissioner of Police Harinarayanachari Mishra said when contacted over phone.

Nearly 2,000 police per-

sonnel, including 24 IPS officers, will be deployed

for security during the roadshow, he added. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP won 28 out of the total 29 Lok Sabha seats in the state, while the Congress won only the Chhindwara constituency.

This time, the BJP is aiming for a clean sweep in the state.

The BJP has been winning the Bhopal Lok Sabha seat since 1989.

According to the Election Commission, there are 23,29,892 voters in the Bhopal Lok Sabha constituency.

# RO Jammu PC assesses election preparedness ahead of polling

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Returning Officer (RO), Jammu Parliamentary Constituency (PC), Sachin Kumar Vaishya on Monday presided over a meeting here to finalise the arrangements for polling scheduled on April 26 in the Constituency under the second phase of Lok Sabha Elections. The meeting witnessed the presence of Assistant Returning Officers and senior officers including ADDC, ADC, Director IT DIO Jammu besides other senior officers.

A team of Zonal SPs, led by SSP Dr. Vinod Kumar, also attended the critical meeting.

A crucial directive was issued to halt all political campaigning by 6 pm on April 24, a full 48 hours before the polling, in adherence to the imposition of Section 144. The RO underscored that any breach of this mandate would be met with stringent action.

To ensure the sanctity of the electoral process, the sale of liquor will be prohibited across all outlets and commercial establishments till the conclusion of the polling.

The meeting also served as a platform to elucidate the role and responsibilities of the Assistant Returning Officers concerning the dispatch and reception of polling parties, as well as their overarching management duties. Discussions on transportation logistics were coupled with a thorough review of security-related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines, ensuring a fortified framework for the election day.

The Senior Superintendent of Police detailed the specific functions of Sector Magistrates and Police Sector Magistrates, while affirming the implementation of multi-tiered security measures for the event.

# DIG JSK Range reviews security distribution centre, strong room

**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: DIG Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range, Dr. Sunil Gupta accompanied by Dr. Vinod Kumar, SSP Jammu, on Monday conducted a security review of Distribution Centre and Strong Room at MAM/Polytechnic College, Jammu.

During the review, DIG JSK Range inspected the Distribution Centre, Strong Room, guards deployed on the venue, CCTV Cameras, Access Control Systems and Parking area.

Dr. Sunil Gupta, imparted the necessary directions to SSP Jammu regarding fool-proof security arrangements



in and around the venue be ensured. Besides, necessary

briefing has been given to the officers/Nafri deployed

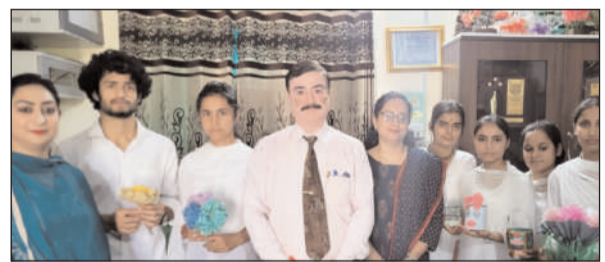
on the venue with regard to the sensitivity and nature of duty.

They were directed to remain extra alert on their point.

SSP Jammu was also directed to brief the Nafri on regular basis. SSP Jammu will also ensure that all the CCTV Cameras should be installed within two days positively.

Besides, Ajay Sharma, SP South Jammu, Kartik Shrotriya, SDPO Gandhi Nagar, Rabinder Singh, DySP DAR Jammu, Sudhir Sadhotra, SHO Gandhi Nagar and I/C Police Post Nehru Market were also present.

# GDC Marh celebrates Earth Day



**STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Eco Club of Government Degree College (GDC), Marh celebrated Earth day on Monday by organizing an environment awareness event on the College campus here.

The event themed 'Planet v/s Plastics', was held under the dynamic leadership of Principal, Prof. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul and addressed one of the most pressing environmental issues, that is, plastic pollution. The Principal, in his address, stressed that this day is dedicated to educate and mobilize individuals and communities on the importance of the environment; the necessity of its preservation and restoration. The theme of this year especially focuses on

reducing plastic pollution and a commitment in making sustainable choices that will ensure a livable future for all. Students of 4th and 2nd semester namely Ayush, Navpreet, Raveena, Sonia, Palak, Roshni prepared beautiful decorative items out of plastic waste like pen holders, pots, flowers, etc.

The activity was coordinated by Dr. Shakun Sharma (HOD Sociology), Prof. Anjana Chib (HOD EVS) and Mohit Kalotra. The occasion was graced by Prof. Madhvi Parasher (HOD Botany) and Kalkeshan Shahnaz. It is pertinent to mention here that the college has already taken initiative to process plastic waste by having MOU with RUDA.