

Quota must in govt appointments, no ifs and buts: Chirag Paswan over lateral entry issue

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: BJP ally and Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Monday slammed any move for appointments in government positions without following reservations and asserted that he would raise the lateral entry issue with the Centre.

The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president's reaction came over the recent advertisement to fill posts through lateral entry on a contract basis that the opposition has alleged snatches away reservations for the disadvantaged communities.

"Reservation provisions must be there in any government appointment. There is no ifs and buts in this. No reservation exists in the private sector and if it is not



implemented in government positions as well... The information came up before me on Sunday and it is a matter of concern for me," he told PTI. Paswan said as a member of the government, he has the platform to raise the issue and he would. The Union minister also said that as far as his party is concerned, it is absolutely not in support of

such a measure. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) last Saturday advertised 45 posts -- 10 of joint secretaries and 35 of directors/deputy secretaries -- to be filled through the lateral entry mode on a contract basis. It is the biggest tranche of lateral recruitment being undertaken by the Centre, an official

said. Opposition parties slammed the move, claiming it would snatch reservations from SCs, STs and OBCs. The BJP hit back, stating the NDA government was bringing transparency to this mode of recruitment started by the Congress-led UPA.

The Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) also alleged that it was a "conspiracy" by the BJP to appoint its ideological allies to high posts through the back door.

However, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav had said the Congress' criticism of the lateral entry system in senior bureaucracy shows its "hypocrisy". In a post on X, Vaishnav

said the reform measure implemented by the NDA government will improve governance. "INC (Indian National Congress) hypocrisy is evident on lateral entry matter. It was the UPA government which developed the concept of lateral entry," he said.

He said the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC), chaired by Veerappa Moily and established in 2005 by the then Congress-led UPA government, "recommended recruitment of experts to fill the gaps in roles that require specialised knowledge".

The minister said the NDA government has created a transparent method to implement the recommendation made by the ARC.

CM prosecution case: HC directs special court to defer its proceedings till August 29

STATE TIMES NEWS
BENGA LURU: The Karnataka High Court on Monday directed the special court for people's representatives, slated to hear complaints against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', to defer its proceedings till the next date of hearing on August 29.

"No injunction has been granted," said Justice M Nagaprasanna, who heard a writ petition filed by the Chief Minister challenging the legality of the August 16 order of the Governor, who accorded sanction against him under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nyaya

Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. In the petition, the Chief Minister submitted that the sanction order was issued without due application of mind, in violation of statutory mandates, and contrary to constitutional principles, including the advice of the Council of Ministers, which is binding under Article 163 of the Constitution of India.

Siddaramaiah contended that the Governor's decision is legally unsustainable, procedurally flawed, and motivated by extraneous considerations, and thus, he has preferred the writ petition seeking to quash the impugned order amongst other reliefs.

The Governor had issued the order after Pradeep Kumar S P, T J Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna had submitted to him petitions

requesting sanction for prosecution of the Chief Minister in connection with the alleged irregularities in the allotment of alternative sites to his wife Parvathi by MUDA.

Abraham and Krishna have moved the special court for public representatives, and the case was slated to come up on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"Since the matter is being heard by this court and the pleadings are yet to get complete, till the next date of hearing, the concerned court shall defer its proceedings," Justice Nagaprasanna said.

Senior advocate and Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi and the Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta appeared on behalf of the Chief Minister and Governor, respectively.

BJP wants Mamata to resign over medic's rape, murder; calls INDIA bloc leaders 'political vultures'



STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: (The BJP on Monday called West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee "shameless" and demanded her resignation, alleging that crucial evidence was destroyed at her behest to save the culprits in the rape and murder of a medic in Kolkata.

It also slammed leaders of the opposition INDIA bloc, including the Congress' Rahul Gandhi, and called them "political vultures", alleging that they "generalised" the trainee doctor's rape and murder by expressing a general concern over such cases reported in differ-

ent parts of the country, including those in BJP-ruled states.

"Mamata Banerjee has become Mamata, the destroyer. By her misdeeds she destroyed the dignity of a woman, a doctor who was serving the society. Mamata Banerjee is the destroyer of the rule of law and the Constitution," BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said at a press conference at the BJP headquarters here.

While the chief minister did not take concrete steps to ensure a swift probe into the "possibility" of gang-rape and murder of the medic, she got crucial evidence of the

heinous crime destroyed, he charged. "And see the brazenness of shameless Mamata, the destroyer. She took out a march in Kolkata while the entire country was embarrassed by the gruesome incident of rape and murder... She should immediately resign (as chief minister)," the BJP leader added.

The postgraduate trainee doctor's body was found on the premises of the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9. A civic volunteer of the Kolkata Police was arrested in this connection and the case taken over by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) after a Calcutta High Court order. Unidentified goons entered the hospital premises shortly after Wednesday midnight and vandalised portions of the facility, where the woman's body was found. The vandalism occurred amid midnight protests by women against the incident.

Finance Minister meets heads of PSBs, exhorts banks to improve deposit growth

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharman on Monday held a performance review meeting with heads of public sector banks and urged them to improve their deposit growth.

Deposits have been growing 300-400 basis points lower than the credit growth in the last few months, creating an asset-liability mismatch for banks.

According to sources, the finance minister reviewed the financial performance of banks and progress made in the implementation of various flagship schemes of the government, including PM Awas Yojana, PM Surya Ghar and PM Vishwakarma Yojana.

Sitharman also took stock of deposit growth, credit-to-



deposit ratio (CD ratio) and asset quality, sources said.

The minister asked the banks' chief to focus on core banking business and increase the pace of deposit growth by introducing innovative products.

Earlier this month, the finance minister had said there is a mismatch between deposit and lending growth.

"Growth in lending is higher...I will be meeting banks (on August 19) for various

reasons and in that process, I will be talking to them about the importance of deposit collection," she had said.

The RBI has given them liberty in terms of interest rate, she had said, adding that using that liberty, banks should make deposits more attractive.

Echoing a similar view, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had asked banks to mobilise deposits through innovative products and serv-

ices by leveraging their vast branch network.

"Banks are taking greater recourse to short-term non-retail deposits and other instruments of liability to meet the incremental credit demand. This, as I emphasised elsewhere, may potentially expose the banking system to structural liquidity issues," he had said.

During the meeting, concerns related to cyber security and the risks to the financial sector were also discussed, sources said.

Issues related to fraud and wilful defaulters and progress on the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) also came up for discussion, they added.

This is the first review meeting after the presenta-

tion of Budget 2024-25.

On the performance front, PSU banks' net profit has crossed Rs 1.4 lakh crore in the financial year ended March 2024, recording a growth of 35 per cent over the previous year on a high base of Rs 1 lakh crore.

The 12 Public Sector Banks (PSBs) together had earned a net profit of Rs Rs 1,04,649 crore in 2022-23.

Out of the total profit of Rs 141,203 crore earned during the FY24, market leader State Bank of India (SBI) alone contributed over 40 per cent of the total earnings, as per the published numbers on exchanges.

SBI earned a profit of Rs 61,077 crore 22 per cent higher than the previous financial year (Rs 50,232 crore).

CBI busts bribery ring at NCL in Madhya Pradesh, own DSP among 5 arrested

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: The CBI has arrested five people, including its own deputy superintendent of police and two officials of the Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli in an alleged corruption and bribery case.

NCL is a 'Mini Ratna' company under the Coal Ministry. The federal probe agency conducted searches in connection with the case on August 17 in Singrauli and Jabalpur as well as Noida in Uttar Pradesh. The premises of various officials of the NCL, including that of Subedar Ojha, Private Secretary to CMD NCL and manager (secretariat), former NCL CMD Bholu Singh, its present chief vigilance officer (CVO) and some other senior officers were searched, official sources said.

Those who have been arrested are deputy superintendent of police (DSP) Joy Joseph Damle, posted at CBI anti-corruption branch at Jabalpur; Subedar Ojha; Lt Col (retired) Basant Kumar Singh, chief manager administration at NCL, Singrauli; Ravi Shankar Singh, alleged middleman and director of Sangam Engineering in Singrauli and his associate Diwesh Singh. The agency produced them before a special court in Jabalpur on Monday that sent them to CBI cus-

tody till August 24, sources said. A Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) spokesperson said Rs 3.85 crore in cash was recovered from Ojha's residence.

"This amount was allegedly amassed from several contractors and officials in lieu of favours for their operations in NCL, Singrauli," the spokesperson said. He added that Ravi Shankar Singh was allegedly acting as a "conduit" between various contractors, businessmen and several officials of NCL, facilitating and delivering "bribes".

The CBI spokesperson said Diwesh Singh was arrested "red handed" while delivering a Rs 5 lakh "bribe" to Damle in lieu of obtaining a favourable report in matters of complaints and investigation pending against them and being conducted by the probe agency. "It was alleged that on August 16, on the instructions of Ravi Shankar Singh, Ajay Verma, an employee of Ravi Singh, collected Rs 5 lakh from Lt Col (retd) Basant Kumar Singh.

"The bribe amount was allegedly sent by Subedar Ojha. On August 17, Ravi Shankar Singh instructed Diwesh Singh to deliver this amount to DSP Damle," the spokesperson said.

The CBI also seized digital devices and "incriminating" documents during the searches.

Assam CM gifts Aadhaar, ration, Ayushman cards to old-age home residents

STATE TIMES NEWS

GUWAHATI: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma presented Aadhaar, ration, Ayushman, and Orunodoi cards as gifts to residents of a government old age home in Sonapur, on the outskirts of Guwahati, on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan on Monday.

He also announced that doctors from the nearby civil hospital would visit the old age home monthly for free health check-ups.

Sarma visited the Sonapur Government Old Age Home, accompanied by Social Welfare Minister Pijush Hazarika and Dispur MLA Atul Bora.

The residents of the home tied 'rakhis' to the chief minister and other dignitaries, also presenting them with red roses as symbols of their love and blessings.

During his speech, Sarma explained that the Aadhaar card would serve as identity proof for the senior citizens, enabling them to access government benefits and open bank accounts.

The ration card will entitle each resident to five kilograms of free rice per month, a facility that was not previously available to residents of old age homes. The Ayushman cards will allow them to receive cashless medical treatment of up to Rs five lakh per year, while the Orunodoi scheme will provide Rs 1,250 per month directly into their bank accounts to help cover various expenses.

"I will also ask doctors of Sonapur Civil Hospital to visit here monthly for free medical check-ups," Sarma added.

Earlier, members of various organisations tied rakhi to the chief minister at his official residence here in the morning.

Nepal to export 1,000 MW electricity to India: EAM Jaishankar



STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Nepal will export close to 1,000 megawatt of electricity to India, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday after holding comprehensive talks with his Nepalese counterpart Arzu Rana Deuba.

Jaishankar described Nepal's decision to export the electricity to India as a "new milestone".

In their talks, the two ministers also focused on boosting cooperation in areas of trade, connectivity and infrastructure.

Deuba began her five-day trip to India on Sunday in her first official trip abroad

after assuming the responsibility.

"Discussed the multifaceted India-Nepal cooperation including in energy, trade, connectivity and infrastructure development," Jaishankar said on 'X'.

"Glad to note that Nepal will be exporting close to 1000 MW of electricity to India, a new milestone," he said.

"Our Neighbourhood First policy and unique people-to-people & cultural connect propels our relationship forward," he added.

On her part, Deuba described the talks as "productive".

"Had a productive meeting

with @DrSJaishankar in New Delhi. We discussed bilateral interests, various aspects of Nepal-India relations, and the exchange of mutual cooperation," she said on 'X'.

"I am confident this visit will further strengthen the centuries-old bond between Nepal and India," Deuba said.

The Nepalese foreign minister's visit comes a week after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri travelled to Kathmandu.

Nepal is an important neighbour for India in the context of its overall strategic interests in the region, and the leaders of the two countries have often noted the age-old "Roti Beti" relationship between the two sides.

The country shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states -- Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Land-locked Nepal relies heavily on India for the transportation of goods and services.

Total collapse of civic infra this monsoon, submit monthly report on inspections: Delhi LG to chief secy

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena has directed Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to submit a monthly report on the inspections conducted by senior officers in the aftermath of deaths due to "complete collapse of civic infrastructure" this monsoon, officials said on Monday.

In a written communication to the chief secretary, Ashish Kundra, the principal Secretary to Saxena, said the LG has advised that an "institutionalised mechanism be put in place for scheduled inspections" by senior officers of facilities under their charge.

"It would help them obtain a first-hand feel of the core problems being faced by citizens and take corrective policy or regulatory measures. The chief secretary shall circulate a uniform format of inspection report to all departments and submit a monthly report on number of inspections done by each officer," read the letter. Kundra also pointed out



that even the Delhi High Court has taken a serious note in the matter of desilting of drains in the national capital and has made "stinging observations".

"The LG has observed that this monsoon has seen the complete collapse of civic infrastructure, leading to unfortunate and avoidable deaths of citizens. The underlying problems are symptomatic of endemic neglect," he said in the letter.

"Drains have not been desilted for years, sewer lines are choked leading to flooding even in planned colonies," he added.

According to LG Saxena, all of this points to a "complete absence of senior management oversight" in the city, Kundra's letter said.

Sharing the LG's directions on the issue, Kundra said all head of departments (HOD), secretaries, principal secretaries, or additional chief secretaries need to "draw up a schedule of field inspections" and ensure that all assets or areas are inspected thoroughly.

"The inspection note of the principal secretary or secretary of the department shall be submitted to the chief secretary with a copy endorsed to

the LG Secretariat and the minister-in-charge," he said.

According to Saxena's directions, the inspection note should summarise the core problem observed with the corrective measures invokes. The report should be annexed with geo-tagged pictures of before and after the intervention.

The communication to Kumar also fixed the frequency of inspections to be conducted by secretaries of the department concerned on a fortnightly basis while the HODs have to do them on a weekly basis.

The principal secretaries have also been advised to conduct inspections every fortnight.

The officers have also been directed to review the institutional mechanisms prescribed under various central and state acts and ensure that these are fully functional, the letter read. "Formulation of any rules, authorities, boards under these laws should be taken up within three weeks," it added.

The LG also insisted that

there should be a robust mechanism of field level inspections at district level under the district magistrates (DM).

The inspection notes need to be submitted to the divisional commissioner who shall then send a consolidated note to the chief secretary, Kundra said.

"District magistrates, SDMs and ADMS shall undertake inspection twice a week in areas of public delivery services, focusing on road infrastructure, drains, sewage management, education, transport, etc. The executive engineer, deputy directors, and other related officers shall invariably accompany the district magistrate during the inspections. The inspections should cover all kind of settlements such as rural, urban, planned areas, JJ colonies, unauthorised colonies, etc," the letter read.

The DMs have also been asked to interact with the resident welfare associations in their jurisdictions once a month to find out the issues faced by local people and resolve them.

NIA arrests arms supplier in Punjab VHP leader murder case



STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: A key accused, who had supplied the illegal arms and ammunition used in the high-profile murder of VHP leader Vikas Prabhakar alias Vikas Bagga in Punjab, was arrested on Sunday by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in a coordinated operation with the Delhi Police Special Cell.

The accused Dharminder Kumar alias Kunal (22), wanted in the case, was nabbed by the teams of the NIA and Delhi Police Special Cell, in Punjab's Ludhiana, an official statement said.

He has been taken into custody under various sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC), Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act and Arms Act, it said.

NIA investigations had revealed that he had procured the illegal arms and ammunition from Madhya Pradesh, and had supplied the same to the ground shooters on the directions of foreign-based Khalistani terrorist Harwinder Kumar alias Sonu, said the statement issued by the anti-terror agency.

"Kumar, procured weapons from Madhya Pradesh used in the assassination of Vikas Prabhakar. He was nabbed from Balmiki Colony in Ludhiana by a joint team of NIA and Delhi Police Special Cell," Additional Commissioner of Police P S Kushwah said.

The shooters, identified as

Mandeep Kumar alias Mangli and Surinder Kumar alias Rika, both residents of Punjab's SBS Nagar, were arrested on April 16 and are currently in judicial custody, it said.

A hunt is on for two other accused, absconding Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) operatives namely Harjit Singh alias Ladhi and Kulveer Singh alias Sidhu, who are carrying a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh each for their arrest, the NIA said.

Bagga, the Nangal president of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), was shot dead in his confectionary shop in Nangal in Punjab's Roopnagar district on April 13. NIA took over the case from the state police on May 9.

According to the Delhi Police, Kumar has confessed to his involvement in the crime.

He has been previously involved in supply of illegal arms from Madhya Pradesh and has two cases of the Arms Act registered against him in Madhya Pradesh and Punjab, they said.