

Punjab BJP leaders attack Mann govt, claim AAP using state like ATM

STATE TIMES NEWS
PATIALA: Punjab BJP leaders on Sunday accused the Bhagwant Mann government of handing over the reins of the state to AAP leaders from Delhi, who are "using the state and its resources like an ATM to raise funds for the party's expansion".

They also alleged that AAP leaders such as Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia, who have been "rejected" by the people of Delhi, are being treated as "guests" in Punjab where they are calling the shots for the Mann government.

The BJP wrested power from the AAP in Delhi Assembly polls held earlier this year.

The Punjab BJP on Sunday held a thanksgiving rally after the AAP government withdrew its land pooling policy in the face of mounting pressure from farmer bodies and opposition parties.

Addressing the gathering in Rajpura, state BJP president Sunil Jakhar claimed the people of Punjab, who elected 92 AAP MLAs in 2022, are now paying the price for their decision.

Jakhar also criticised Sisodia's recent "Saam, Daam, Dand, Bhed" remarks about the 2027 Punjab polls, and accused Chief Minister Mann of effectively "outsourcing" the state government to Delhi AAP leaders.

Targeting the land pooling policy, Jakhar blamed AAP leaders Kejriwal, Sisodia and Satyendra Jain, calling them "failed leaders from Delhi".

Praising Narendra Modi, Jakhar said the prime minister stood firm before US President Donald Trump by refusing to compromise on farmers' interests.

He also appealed to all Punjabis to support Modi's stand.

On August 15, Modi said India will not compromise on the interests of farmers, livestock rearers and fishermen, asserting that he is "standing like a wall" to protect them.

The remarks assume significance as the US is seeking duty concessions from India in the agriculture and dairy sectors in the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) being negotiated between the two countries.

Jakhar also hit out at the Congress leaders, accusing them of double standards on

the land pooling policy.

Addressing the gathering, BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh also slammed the Mann government over the land pooling policy.

The state government came out with a scheme to loot farmers' land under the garb of the land pooling policy, Chugh alleged.

"The Mann government is using Punjab as AAP's piggybank to expand its base. The AAP is using Punjab and its resources like an ATM," he claimed.

The AAP leaders struck a deal with the "land mafia" to collect election funds, Chugh alleged while referring to the land pooling policy.

He claimed that "rejected" leaders like Kejriwal have become "guests" in Punjab, holding meetings with officials and giving them directions.

Chugh also targeted the Mann government on the law and order situation, and for not keeping its poll promise of giving Rs 1,000 per month to every woman in the state.

Punjab BJP working president Ashwani Sharma echoed AAP's criticism, saying people want to "get rid" of the

party and see BJP as a viable alternative.

"I see a changed Punjab - one that is supporting Prime Minister Modi," Sharma said.

He praised the BJP government in Haryana for providing minimum support price on 24 crops as against Punjab's "anti-farmer" policies, including the land pooling scheme, which he alleged aimed at "snatching farmers' lands".

The BJP will hold rallies in all the 117 Assembly constituencies in Punjab to mobilise public support, he announced.

Referring to the withdrawal of the land pooling policy, Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu called it a victory for the people of Punjab.

Bittu also alleged that when the three now-repealed farm laws were introduced, then Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal "misled" Prime Minister Modi by assuring him that consultations had been held with the farmers, labourers, farm unions and other stakeholders.

She said they consulted all the stakeholders and termed the Bills very good, Bittu claimed.

"But they did not speak to

anyone. They lied and misled the people," he said, attacking the Badal family.

"The prime minister said he wanted to bring the Bills in the interest of the farmers. If the farmers were unhappy, why would he bring those Bills? Later, Modi ji withdrew the Bills after an apology," Bittu said.

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) parted ways with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2020 over the now-repealed farm laws, while Harsimrat Kaur resigned as a Union minister.

During the rally, Satbir Singh Khattara, Congress leader and son of former inspector general Ranbir Singh Khattara, joined the BJP.

Addressing the gathering, Punjab BJP Mahila wing president Jai Inder Kaur, the daughter of former chief minister Amarinder Singh, claimed the land pooling policy was introduced only to please AAP leaders in Delhi and to "usurp farmers' lands for big builders".

She also questioned why such a policy was implemented if its adverse impact on the farmers was already known.

Time to support PM Modi for his pro-farmer stand against US pressure: Jakhar

STATE TIMES NEWS
CHANDIGARH: Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar on Sunday called on all stakeholders, including farmers, to set aside politics and stand with Prime Minister Narendra Modi "in national interest" for his "resolute stand" in favour of farmers against US pressure to allow its agricultural products into Indian markets.

In a statement here, Jakhar said the US, which considers itself "the global enforcer", has imposed stringent tariff restrictions on India.

However, Modi understands that allowing the US agricultural products into India would devastate Indian farmers, and thus, he has refused to bow to this pressure, the Punjab BJP leader said.

Jakhar emphasised that at a time when major global powers have succumbed to the US demands, Modi prioritised the interests of Indian farmers and refused to open Indian markets to the US.

He appealed to farmers and farmer organisations, stating that this is the time to stand firmly with



the PM in the interest of the nation, so he can fight for farmers' rights with even greater resolve.

On August 15, Modi said India would not compromise on the interests of farmers, livestock rearers and fishermen, asserting that he is standing like a wall to protect them.

The remarks were significant as the US is seeking duty concessions from India in agriculture and dairy sectors in the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA), being negotiated between the two countries.

The US has also imposed steep tariffs on India. Trump has ratcheted up tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent, which will come into effect from August 27. At present, an additional 25 per cent tar-

iffs are there on Indian goods entering the US market.

Referring to the AAP government's recent move of withdrawing the land pooling policy, Jakhar said it was only the BJP that made every possible effort to protect farmers' land and built public opinion against the policy.

"Due to the BJP's pressure and the strong opposition from Punjab's people, the government was forced to withdraw this policy," he said.

Jakhar added that the people of Punjab have now clearly understood who engages in politics in the name of farmers and who truly stands with them in difficult times.

He stressed that this is the time to identify those who "exploit farmers" for political gain while doing nothing substantial for them. In contrast, the BJP took a firm stand against the land pooling policy in Punjab and stood strongly with farmers, Jakhar said.

At the national level, the PM has taken on the US to protect the interests of the country's farmers, he said.

Adityanath inaugurates 250-bed private hospital in Gorakhpur

STATE TIMES NEWS
GORAKHPUR: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated a 250-bed super-specialty private hospital here on Sunday.

He also claimed there was no dearth of such facilities in the district, and then there is also Ayushman Yojana and the Chief Minister Jan Arogya Yojana for those who cannot afford it.

Adityanath said that in the last one year, a sum of Rs 1,100 crore has been given for healthcare from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

The chief minister termed

the newly inaugurated facility a big "achievement" for Gorakhpur and eastern Uttar Pradesh, as well as people from northwest Bihar and Nepal.

Regency hospital is equipped with an 80-bed ICU.

Adityanath said ten years ago, BRD Medical College was the only big healthcare centre in eastern UP, which was itself "sick."

But under his government, the medical college has improved, and dozens of other hospitals, including an AIIMS, have opened in the

district.

Today, he said, there are medical colleges in districts like Basti, Siddharthnagar, Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Deoria, Ayodhya, Jaunpur, Bahraich, Balrampur, Gonda, Pratapgarh, Azamgarh, Ambedkarnagar, Chandauli, and Mirzapur.

A medical college is also on its way in Ballia, he said.

Adityanath, in his address, also highlighted the model of Guru Goraknath Hospital around two decades ago, which provided healthcare to all, in line with what they could afford.

NCC cadets to undertake fresh expedition soon, peaks shortlisted: DG

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: A newly constituted NCC expedition team consisting of 20 cadets, is set to embark on a mountaineering adventure post monsoon when they will attempt to scale a peak in northern India, the Corps' director general said.

Two peaks have been shortlisted by the NCC -- Mt Yunam (6,111 m) in Himachal Pradesh and Mt Shalung Dhura (5,678 m) in Uttarakhand.

"One of the two peaks will be selected based on weather conditions. The team has equal number of male and

females cadets, and the planned mission is in line with promoting a spirit of adventure among the youth," DG of NCC, Lieutenant General Gurbirpal Singh told PTI.

Both are basic or beginners' peak, he said.

The National Cadet Corps (NCC), the largest uniformed youth organisation in the world, was raised in 1948.

Earlier in May this year, an expedition team of the NCC summited Mt Everest - the world's highest peak.

"We are now looking for the next expedition. We are still to decide on a peak,

but it will be either Mt Yunam located in Lahaul in Himachal Pradesh or Mt Shalung Dhura, located in Uttarakhand," Singh said.

An NCC team has earlier scaled Mt Yunam but, it will be the "first attempt" by cadets to summit Mt Shalung Dhura, he added.

This will be a post-monsoon expedition, so depending on rainfall and other weather conditions, it is likely to begin around either end-September or October, he added.

The NCC DG said the Corps has already put together a team for this upcoming expedition.

Around fifteen days ago, nearly 150 cadets had come to Delhi after being shortlisted by their respective directorates, and from that pool, the 20 cadets were finalised, he said.

The NCC has 17 directorates spread across the country, with a total sanctioned strength of 20 lakh.

It has two divisions -- Junior Division and Senior Division.

After they join, in the first year of Senior Division, the cadets are made to train at various training academies as part

of different courses, and mountaineering is also part of their training.

After selection for a mountaineering expedition, they get trained for 7-10 days in Uttarkashi generally, but due to natural disaster there recently, "we are trying to do this at another place in Uttarakhand", the DG said.

Lieutenant General Singh expressed pride that 2,000 NCC cadets along with 500 My Bharat volunteers were part of the team that sat in front of the Red Fort ramparts here during the 79th Independence Day celebrations, in a formation of the 'Naya Bharat' logo.

The NCC DG also attended the celebrations at Red Fort on August 15, where the defining spirit was the success of Operation Sindoor -- India's decisive four-day military action in May in the wake of Pahalgam attack.

"75,000 NCC cadets participated in civil defence and other related activities across the country, during the four-day period when Operation Sindoor was underway," he said.

The cadets helped in traffic management and crowd

control. As also in hosting blood donation camps, thus contributing to nation-building which they are trained for, the DG said, adding, that they also took part in mock drills that took place around that period.

On the upcoming expedition, Lt Gen Singh said, besides the 20 cadets (average age 20-21 years), at least three officers and 10-15 support staff will be part of the team.

He said every year, two expeditions are planned, one pre-monsoon and another post-monsoon.

For putting together an NCC expedition team for scaling Mt Everest (8,848 m), "we take 1.5-2 years", the DG added.

Mt Everest was first conquered by New Zealand's Edmund Hillary and his sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay in 1953, and has ever since fascinated climbers and mountaineers to scale the famed peak in the mighty Himalayas.

NCC cadets in the past, have successfully climbed other peaks too, including Mt Kang Yatse II (6,250 m) and Mt Abi Gamin (7,335 m).

Maharashtra govt at forefront of efforts to provide infrastructure for judiciary, says CJI Gavai

STATE TIMES NEWS
MUMBAI: Chief Justice of India B R Gavai on Sunday said Maharashtra government was always at the fore to provide infrastructure for the judiciary in the state.

He was speaking after inaugurating the Bombay High Court's new circuit bench in Kolhapur district.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Deputy CM Eknath Shinde were also present on the occasion.

"There was some remarks made by certain persons, I do not want to take their names, that Maharashtra government is behind when it comes to providing infrastructure for the judiciary," CJI Gavai said.

"This is wrong. I am of the opinion that Maharashtra is not behind when it comes to judiciary's infrastructure. Government is always behind the judiciary when it comes



to infrastructure," the CJI said.

The state government has made the impossible possible by ensuring that the building for the Kolhapur's bench was set up within a short span of time, he added.

The CJI said people who made remarks that the state government was lagging when it came to judicial infrastructure do not know about Devendra Fadnis and Eknath Shinde.

"I was confident that the

government would ensure that the bench would be set up and all infrastructure would be provided," CJI Gavai said.

He further said that he has always supported for a bench in Kolhapur as no common person should be forced to travel all the way to Mumbai (Bombay HC's principal bench) to fight for their rights.

The CJI said there is now a demand from lawyers for a bench in Pune as well, but added that it would not be possible, as only a handful of lawyers have made the demand and not the common people.

The setting up of the fourth bench in Kolhapur comes amid demands from various quarters over the years to ease the burden on litigants and lawyers who have to travel to Mumbai, located 380 km away, for hearing of

their pleas.

At present, apart from the principal bench in Mumbai, the HC has two more benches - in Nagpur in Vidarbha region and Aurangabad (Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar) in the state's Marathwada region.

A third bench of the high court sits in adjoining Goa.

On August 1, a notification was issued by Bombay HC's Chief Justice Alok Aradhe designating Kolhapur as a circuit bench.

The Kolhapur bench will be functional from Monday (August 18) with a division bench and two single benches.

The new bench will have jurisdiction over six districts - Satara, Sangli, Solapur and Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg.

The single bench of Justice Dige will hear criminal appeals, criminal revision applications, bail applications and other criminal matters.

Justice Chalpaogankar will preside over a single bench hearing civil writ petitions, civil applications and other civil matters assigned to a single judge.

M S Karnik and Sharmila Deshmukh, while Justices S G Dige and S G Chalpaogankar will preside over the single benches.

The division bench is expected to hear matters including Public Interest Litigations, civil writ petitions, first appeals, family court appeals, contempt appeals, as well as all other civil and criminal matters from the districts of Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli, Solapur, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg.

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BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik hospitalised due to age-related ailments

STATE TIMES NEWS
BHUBANESWAR: BJD chief and Leader of the Opposition in Odisha Assembly, Naveen Patnaik, was admitted to a private hospital here on Sunday due to age-related ailments, party leaders said.

"The hospital will soon

release a bulletin on Patnaik's health condition," a senior BJD leader said.

The 78-year-old former chief minister had complained of complained uneasiness on Saturday night and some doctors had visited his residence, Naveen Niwas, the party leaders said.

Patnaik, who had undergone spinal surgery for cervical arthritis at a hospital in Mumbai, had returned to Odisha on July 12.

He had left for Mumbai on June 20 and underwent the procedure on June 22. He was discharged from the Mumbai hospital on July 7.

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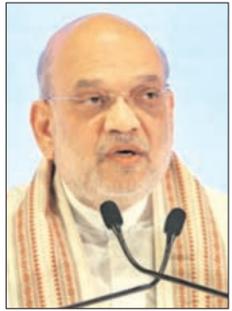
Amit Shah to release stamp commemorating Vithalbhai Patel's centenary

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will release a special commemorative postal stamp marking the centenary of Vithalbhai Patel at the upcoming All India Speakers' Conference, officials said on Sunday.

Patel was the first elected Indian President (Speaker) of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1925.

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta said, "Honouring our parliamentary pioneers is not just about remembering history, but also about drawing inspiration for the future. In this spirit, this stamp is being released as a centenary tribute to Vithalbhai Patel."

Union Minister of Communications and Development of North



Eastern Region Jyotiraditya M Scindia will also attend the event.

Issued by the Ministry of Communications in collaboration with India Post, the stamp will honour the "distinguished parliamentary legacy and monumental contributions" of Vithalbhai Patel, said the statement.

The commemorative issue recognises Vithalbhai Jhaverbhai

Patel's pioneering role in India's freedom movement and his leadership as the first Indian to preside over the Central Legislative Assembly on August 24, 1925.

According to the statement, Patel's tenure was marked by impartiality, unwavering adherence to parliamentary procedures, protection of legislative independence, promotion of meaningful debate, and a resolute commitment to democratic values.

Gupta said that on September 27, 1973, another commemorative stamp had been released on his birth centenary.

The conference will deliberate on constitutional foundations, the growth of democratic institutions, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence in parliamentary functioning.

PM Modi inaugurates two highways worth Rs 11,000 cr to decongest Delhi

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the Delhi section of the Dwarka Expressway and Urban Extension Road-II worth nearly Rs 11,000 crore to reduce traffic congestion in the national capital and its surrounding areas.

The two projects have been developed under the government's comprehensive plan to decongest the capital, with the objective of improving connectivity, cutting travel time, and reducing traffic in Delhi and its surrounding areas.

These projects are expected to significantly reduce travel time from Sonapat, Rohtak, Bahadurgarh and Gurugram to IGI Airport when completely operational.

"Dwarka Expressway and UER-II will benefit people of Delhi-NCR...The government is making efforts to remove all difficulties of the people in Delhi," Modi said after inaugurating the two projects.

The prime minister said the government is making Delhi a model of growth that reflects the spirit of a developing India.

"Dwarka Expressway and Urban Extension Road have been constructed exceptionally well. Following the development of the Peripheral Expressway, Urban Extension Road is now poised to significantly benefit Delhi," he said.

Modi pointed out that what sets the Urban Extension Road apart is its unique contribution to addressing the city's mounting garbage problem.

"Millions of tonnes of waste have been repurposed in a scientific and sustainable manner for its construction. This innovative approach has not only reduced the towering heaps of garbage but also turned waste into a valuable resource for infrastructure development," the prime minister said.

He remarked that the consistent effort of his government is to make citizens' lives easier.

Modi noted that this commit-

ment is reflected in the party's policies and decisions.

Referring to past governments in Haryana, the prime minister observed that there was a time when even a single appointment was difficult without influence or recommendation.

He highlighted that under the BJP-led government in Haryana, lakhs of youth have received government jobs through a fully transparent process.

Highlighting that the past government's indifference towards development projects was not limited to Delhi-NCR, but was prevalent across the entire country, Modi pointed out that earlier, the budget allocated for infrastructure was very low, and even the sanctioned projects would take years to complete. The prime minister emphasised that the current focus is on the rapid completion of projects, which is why initiatives like the Dwarka Expressway are now being

realised.

He remarked that the substantial investment in these projects is not only creating facilities but also generating large-scale employment.

Speaking at the event, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said these two projects will reduce traffic jams in Delhi by 50 per cent.

The 10.1 km long Delhi section of Dwarka Expressway has been developed at a cost of around Rs 5,360 crore. The section will also provide multi-modal connectivity to Yashobhoomi, Delhi Metro Blue and Orange lines, the upcoming Bijwasan railway station and Dwarka cluster bus depot.

The stretch has been divided into two parts -- package I: 5.9 km from Shiv Murti intersection to the Road Under Bridge (RUB) at Dwarka Sector-21, and package II: 4.2 km from Dwarka Sector-21 RUB to the Delhi-Haryana Border -- providing

direct connectivity to Urban Extension Road-II.

Modi interacted with labourers while inspecting the Dwarka Expressway. He also held a roadshow in Mundka-Bakkarwala Village Toll Plaza, Delhi.

The 19 km-long Haryana section of the Dwarka Expressway was earlier inaugurated by the prime minister in March 2024.

Modi also inaugurated the Alipur to Dichaon Kalan stretch of Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II), along with new links to Bahadurgarh and Sonapat, built at a cost of around Rs 5,580 crore.

It will ease traffic on Delhi's Inner and Outer Ring Roads and busy points like Mukarba Chowk, Dhaura Kuan, and NH-09. The new spurs will give direct access to Bahadurgarh and Sonapat, improve industrial connectivity, cut city traffic, and speed up goods movement in the NCR.