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News Brief

Gujarat AAP Chief detained amid protests against Kejriwal's arrest

Ahmedabad, March 22 (IANS) Gujarat AAP Chief Isudan Gadhvi was detained by police in Ahmedabad on Friday after AAP workers took out a protest march against the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal.

The AAP workers protested against what they termed as a "politically" motivated action. The police responded by detaining several protestors, including AAP Chief Isudan Gadhvi.

"There were around 300 AAP workers in the Sardarbaug area in Ahmedabad. We were there to protest against the injustice towards Kejriwal.

India, Mauritania hold first Foreign Office Consultations in Nouakchott

New Delhi, March 22 (IANS) India and Mauritania held their first Foreign Office Consultations in Nouakchott, during which a wide range of issues from bilateral, regional, to global issues of mutual interest were discussed.

"During the consultations held on March 21, both delegations engaged in constructive discussions on a wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

The discussions encompassed various facets of collaboration, including political cooperation, economic partnership, development assistance, cultural exchanges, and cooperation in multilateral forums.

AAP workers, leaders including Saurabh Bharadwaj, Atishi detained near ITO

New Delhi, March 22 (IANS) Delhi Police, on Friday, detained scores of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers and leaders including Delhi Ministers Saurabh Bharadwaj and Atishi at ITO, where they had gathered to protest and march towards BJP headquarters following the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the excise policy case.

Anna Hazare: Deeply pained, but Arvind Kejriwal paying for his deeds

Ahmednagar (Maharashtra), March 22 (IANS) Anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare on Friday said that he felt "deeply pained" by the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, "who is now paying for his own deeds".

Interacting with a large crowd of mediapersons at his native village Ralegan-Siddhi this morning, Anna Hazare, 86, recalled his old association with Arvind Kejriwal during the India Against Corruption (IAC)'s long movement in New Delhi in 2011, and other places.

"I remember, he was working with me and we both had raised our voices against liquor... But now he's trying to accord legal sanction to liquor. I felt very hurt by it," lamented Hazare.

Kejriwal Sent To ED Custody Till March 28

New Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal will remain in ED custody for six days till March 28 in the liquor policy case. The agency sought 10-day custody.

Arvind Kejriwal was sent to ED's custody for six days till March 28, a day after he was arrested in connection with the Delhi liquor policy scam. ED said Kejriwal was the kingpin of the liquor scam and the money trail has been traced to the Goa election campaign in 2022. The chief minister sought hefty bribes from the stakeholders of the liquor policy promising them undue favours and that money was used in the Punjab and Goa elections, the ED said. Appearing for Arvind Kejriwal, senior advocate and Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said remand should not be the norm and it should be looked into whether Kejriwal's custody is needed.

Kejriwal versus ED: Here is what happened in the court. The ED made some revelations and for the first time called Arvind Kejriwal the kingpin of the Delhi liquor policy scam. ED said Vijay Nair who worked as the middleman in the case was staying near CM's residence and they were working closely. ED said they wanted a 10-day remand of Kejriwal to find out the entire money trail as AAP candidates told them that they received cash to contest for the AAP in Goa. The south cartel represented by K Kavitha paid ₹100 crore kickback to Kejriwal which AAP used in the Goa election, the ED said. Abhishek Manu Singhvi said ED has no ground for arrest and the ground

they have presented could be the ground for questioning.

Singhvi said ED built its ground of arrest based on people who have turned approver. "All those who turn approver develop back pain and on back

pain, the court does not oppose bail. This is the new formula I am seeing," Singhvi said.

80% of people interrogated by the ED did not name Arvind Kejriwal, Singhvi said.



Arrested Delhi Chief

Minister Arvind Kejriwal is the kingpin of the alleged excise policy scam and is directly involved in its implementation and giving favours to the 'South Group', the ED told a court here on Friday as it sought his custody for questioning.

Seeking 10 days custody, Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, who appeared for the ED with special counsel Zohab Hossain, said that Kejriwal was non-cooperative in the investigation. "We want to gather information and interrogate him," he said.

He contended that the CM "is involved in the use of proceeds of crime", and had demanded kickbacks from the "South Group" in exchange for giving favours to them.

The South Group in question includes accused persons from whom, the ED claimed, that AAP

leaders received kickbacks to the tune of Rs 100 crore, including Sarath Reddy, Raghav Magunta, and Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy. Last week, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLC K Kavitha was allegedly held for being a part of this group.

"Proceeds of crime of about Rs 45 crore received from the South Group were used by Aam Aadmi Party in the Goa campaign in 2021-22," ASG Raju said, adding that proceeds of crime were not only the Rs 100 crore bribe but also the profits made by bribe payers.

"Aam Aadmi Party is a beneficiary but it doesn't exist individually. It is a company. Every person who is involved in the functioning of the company is responsible and shall be deemed to be guilty," he said.

BJP announces 14 more candidates for TN, one for Puducherry; actor Radhika fielded from Virudhunagar

Chennai, March 22 (IANS) The Central Election Committee of the BJP on Friday released the fourth list of 14 candidates for Tamil Nadu and to the lone seat in Puducherry. It also announced the name of VS Nanthini as the candidate for the Assembly bye-election to the Vilavancode seat in Tamil Nadu. The BJP is fielding popular actor Raadhika Sarathkumar, wife of actor Sarathkumar from Virudhunagar constituency. BJP Tamil Nadu state Vice President and senior

leader, KP Ramalingam, is contesting from Namakkal constituency. The other BJP candidates are Pon V Balaganapathy (Tiruvallur SC), RC Paul Kanagaraj (Chennai North), A Ashwathaman (Tiruvannamalai), AP Muruganandam (Tiruppur), K Vasantharajan (Pollachi), VV Senthilnathan (Karur), P Karthiyayini (Chidambaram SC), SGM Ramesh (Nagapattinam SC), M Muruganandam (Thanjavur), Dr. Devanathan Yadav (Sivaganga), Prof Raama Sreenivasan (Madurai), B

John Pandian (Tenkasi SC). In Puducherry, state Home Minister, A Namassivayam is the BJP candidate. With the BJP announcing more candidates, filing of nominations that commenced from March 20 will be accelerated. The filing of nominations can be done till March 27 and the last date for withdrawal is March 31. With the elections announced for April 19 to elect 39 Lok Sabha members, there will hardly be 17 days left for campaigning in Tamil Nadu.

Senior Congress leader rails against party for tickets to BRS defectors in Telangana

Hyderabad, March 22 (IANS) Telangana's senior Congress leader, G Niranjan has termed fielding of three defectors from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in the Lok Sabha polls as an insult to Congress cadres.

Senior Vice President of Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC), and Chairman of the Election Commission Coordination committee of the TPCC, on Friday wrote a letter to AICC President,

Mallikarjun Kharge, criticising the party's decision to field the BRS defectors.

"The people of Telangana defeated the BRS and voted the Congress to power as they wished to have a change of government in the state. Fielding D. Nagender, Sunitha Reddy and Ranjith Reddy as Congress candidates is against the expectations of the people and it is also an insult to the Congress cadre and demoralises them. We also have to consider

what message it gives to the people and cadre," wrote Niranjan.

He urged Congress chief Kharge to reconsider the decision and to field committed and loyal Congressmen who stood by the party during good and bad days, in all the 17 Lok Sabha constituencies of Telangana. "If we really want to have Indiramma Rajyam, we should recollect how Indira Gandhi ji selected and fielded the candidates who were sin-

cere and honest towards the party and its leadership, irrespective of their financial background," reads the letter. The three defectors from the BRS were among five candidates announced by the Congress party on Thursday night for Telangana Lok Sabha elections. BRS MLA, D. Nagender, who joined the Congress party on March 17, was named as the candidate from Secunderabad Lok Sabha constituency.



Congress leaders Salman Khurshid, Supriya Shrinete and others addressing media persons after meeting the Election Commissioners at Nirvachan Sadan, in New Delhi on Thursday. UNI

BJP announces fourth list for Tamil Nadu, Puducherry

Chennai, March 22 (IANS) Central Election Committee of the BJP on Friday released the fourth list of 14 candidates for Tamil Nadu and for the single seat in Puducherry, besides for the assembly bye-election to the Vilavancode seat in the Tamil Nadu assembly. The list for the Lok Sabha polls in-

cludes Tiruvallur (SC) Pon V. Balaganapathy; Chennai North - R.C. Paul Kanakaraj; Tiruvannamalai - A. Ashwathaman; Namakkal - K.P. Ramalingam; Tiruppur - A.P. Muruganandam; Pollachi - K. Vasantharajan; Karur - V.V. Senthilnathan; Chidambaram (SC) P. Karthiyayini; Nagapatti-

nam (SC) - S.G.M. Ramesh; Thanjavur - M. Muruganandam; Sivaganga - Dr. Devanathan Yadav; Madurai - Prof Raama Sreenivasan; Virudhanagar - Raadhika Sarathkumar; and Tenkasi (SC) B. John Pandian. The Puducherry Lok Sabha seat will be contested by A. Namassivayam.

Maha: Gadchiroli cops nab dreaded Maoist with Rs 1.5 lakh bounty

Gadchiroli (Maharashtra), March 22 (IANS) The Maharashtra Police have arrested a dreaded, wanted Maoist who carried a Rs 1.5 lakh reward on his head, officials said here on Friday. The accused - identified as Peka Madi Pungati (42) was caught near a traffic check post during a security blockade enforced by the CRPF and Bhamragad QRT teams. Acting on a tip-off that a person was lurking around suspiciously in the forests near the checkpost, the security personnel detained him for questioning. During the interrogation, it emerged that he was a wanted Maoist linked with a Jan Militia active in the Gadchiroli jungles and placed him under arrest, days before the first phase of Lok Sabha elections in the state will begin on April 19.

BJP's Tejasvi Surya readies for repeat win in Bengaluru South, Cong hopes on Sowmya Reddy's challenge

Bengaluru, March 22 (IANS) As BJP's National Yuva Morcha chief Tejasvi Surya prepares to repeat his victory in the Bengaluru South Lok Sabha seat, the Congress is hoping that its candidate Sowmya Reddy may be able to reverse the trend.

The BJP has remained unbeatable in Bengaluru South since 1991.

Sowmya Reddy is a former MLA from the Jayanagar Assembly seat in Bengaluru and is the daughter of state Minister for Transport and Muzarai Ramalinga Reddy, who wields considerable influ-

ence in the area.

She lost the last Assembly election to a BJP candidate by a slender margin. By fielding her, the Congress hopes to challenge the BJP. Congress had fielded B.K. Hariprasad in 2019 from here. But, Tejasvi Surya registered a thumping victory with a huge margin of more than 3.31 lakh votes.

In 2014, the Congress had put up Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani as its candidate, but again BJP won with a margin of more than two lakh votes.

With Tejasvi Surya emerging to be a promis-

ing leader at the national level as a voice of Hindutva, his proactive approach in the constituency, connect with grassroots workers, the BJP camp is upbeat and sure of repeating the history. The Parliamentary constituency comprises the Assembly segments of Govindarajanagar, Vijayanagar, Chikkapet, Basavanagudi, Padmanabhanagar, BTM Layout, Jayanagar and Bommanahalli. In the last Assembly election, the Congress won in Govindarajanagar, Vijayanagar, BTM Layout Assembly seats.

Unprecedented welcome for PM Modi in Bhutan



New Delhi, March 22 (IANS) Feelings of warmth and bonhomie overflowed the streets of Bhutan on Friday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi was accorded a rousing welcome from the people who turned up in huge numbers cheering and waving flags of the two nations.

Crowds lined up the entire 45-kilometer route from Paro to the capital Thimphu, as PM Modi walked waving at them and blessing

young children as a Bhutanese welcome song played in the background. He exchanged smiles and greetings with the public and walked along with young children who had gathered with Indian flags to catch a glimpse of him. Arriving in the Himalayan kingdom on a two-day state visit, PM Modi was received by his counterpart, Tshering Tobgay, with warm hugs and was also presented with a traditional Bhutanese scarf. He was also accorded

a Guard of Honour at the Paro Airport by the Bhutanese armed forces.

In a post on X on Friday, PM Modi thanked his counterpart Tobgay for a warm welcome.

The visit, which was earlier postponed by a day due to weather conditions, is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between the countries, and India's emphasis on its Neighbourhood First policy.

Snack shop owner gifts Rs 25k to BJP candidate in K'taka

Bengaluru, March 22 (IANS) A snack shop owner selling the popular snack 'churmuri' gifted Rs 25,000 for the expenses of the BJP candidate, Kota Srinivas Poojari, contesting election from Udipi-Chikkamagaluru Lok Sabha seat on Friday.

The incident took place when Poojari was campaigning at Teguru Circle near Chikkamagaluru. Lokesh Naik, the snack shop, owner welcomed Poojari and gifted him the money by keeping it on the plate containing beetle leaves, areca nut, banana and flowers.

Former General Secretary C.T. Ravi who accompanied Poojari was

also felicitated.

After gifting the money, Lokesh Naik said that he is a fan of Poojari and wanted him to win the election.

BJP gave the ticket to Kota Srinivas Poojari after denying the ticket to Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje, who represented the seat in the 2019 general election.

Kota Srinivas Poojari is presently serving as the LoP in the Council and is considered as one of the leaders with a clean image.

Congress has fielded former Chairman of Karnataka State Backward Classes K. Jayaprakash Hegde.

Youth stabbed 12 times in Delhi street, nine juveniles in net

New Delhi, March 22 (IANS) A 20-year-old youth was killed after being stabbed over 12 times by a group of minors in south Delhi's Sangam Vihar area, police said on Friday, adding that nine juveniles have been detained.

The deceased was identified as Shadab, a resident of the Sangam Vihar area.

According to police, on Thursday at 6 p.m. a police control room call was received regarding the stabbing incident at Harijan colony, Sangam Vihar in the Tigris police station following which a police team rushed to the spot.

The police found Shadab lying in a pool of blood by the roadside. He was shifted to a hospital where he was declared brought dead.

"Multiple stab injuries were found on the body of Shadab. Accordingly, a case under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code was registered and investigation was taken up," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (south) Ankit Chauhan.

The DCP further said that nine juveniles have been apprehended, and four knives and one country-made pistol have been recovered from their possession.

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