

## News Brief

### UK flag printed on cover of Rajasthan Board workbook, Minister orders probe

Jaipur, March 27 (IANS) Rajasthan School Education Minister Madan Dilwar has ordered an inquiry into a state Education Board workbook that has the British flag printed on its cover.

Minister Madan Dilwar on Tuesday instructed the Director of Secondary Education, Bikaner, to investigate the matter and directed him to take adequate action against those found guilty.

The minister said that objections were raised recently regarding the Class 9 English Remedial Workbook published by Rajasthan State Educational Research and Training Council, Udaipur, on which the British flag was printed on the cover page.

### Singapore President walks on Jaisalmer streets to explore the city

Jaipur, March 27 (IANS) Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who is a visit to Rajasthan's Jaisalmer city, visited the historic Patwa Haveli on Tuesday.

He was seen walking on the streets of Jaisalmer on the second day of his visit.

Many foreign guests accompanying the Singapore President also visited Patwa Haveli.

He was impressed by the embroidery works of Jaisalmer at Chidiya Haveli, and also bought some local products.

He also invited Chidiya Haveli members to organise an exhibition of embroidered products in Singapore.

### Seat-sharing formula of INDIA bloc in Bihar to be announced in one or two days: Tejashwi

Patna/New Delhi, March 27 (IANS) RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday said that the seat sharing of the INDIA bloc has been finalised and will be announced in Patna in one or two days.

Interacting with the media persons in New Delhi, he said: "The RJD and Congress have an old alliance in the country and we have an understanding with each other. The seat-sharing formula has been finalised and will be announced in one or two days in Patna."

### PM Modi, CMs of 5 BJP-ruled states among party's 40 star campaigners for MP

Bhopal, March 27 (IANS) The BJP has released the list of 40 star campaigners for Madhya Pradesh in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, party chief J.P. Nadda, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Jyotiraditya Scindia, and Smriti Irani, Chief Ministers Mohan Yadav (Madhya Pradesh), Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Vishnu Deo Sai (Chhattisgarh) and Bhajan Lal Sharma (Rajasthan) are among the star campaigners for the party.

## No interim relief for Arvind Kejriwal from Delhi HC, next hearing on April 3

New Delhi : The Delhi high court on Wednesday did not allow any interim relief to Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal who is in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate as the high court only issued notices regarding Kejriwal's plea and posted the matter for further hearing on April 3. A bench of Justice Swaraj Kant Sharma issued a notice to the ED on Arvind Kejriwal's plea seeking immediate release and declaring his arrest and remand as illegal and asked the agency to reply within April 2.

The high court rejected the contention of senior advocate AM Singhvi who appeared for Kejriwal and argued that no reply from ED was required. The court said it is duty-bound to hear both sides fairly keeping in mind the principles of natural justice and hence ED's reply is



essential and crucial to decide the present case. "Thus, having regard to the nature of issues raised in this petition, this Court is of the opinion that the respondent has to be granted an opportunity to file a reply, as an opportunity for effective representation, and declining this opportunity would amount to denial of fair hearing as well as violation of one of the principles of natural justice i.e., audi alteram partem, which is applicable to both the parties and not one," the court said. Meanwhile, the ED is

likely to produce Kejriwal in a court on Thursday as his present remand will conclude tomorrow. The ED arrested Kejriwal last Thursday in connection with the Delhi liquor probe and sought a six-day custody starting from March 22. ED may seek an extension of Kejriwal's custodial remand or seek court directions for sending him into judicial custody.

According to officials, Kejriwal, who is a diabetic patient, has been experiencing fluctuating sugar levels. His sugar level

went as low as 46, sources said without disclosing when it was measured.

Kejriwal's wife Sunita addressed a press meeting on Wednesday and said Kejriwal's health has deteriorated in the ED custody.

Hopes were pinned on high court's order today as Kejriwal urged the court to order his immediate release from ED custody as his arrest on the cusp of elections was against the basic structure of the Constitution, "My prayer is release me now," Kejriwal's counsel Singhvi told the court. Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the agency, said the "bulky" petition was served upon them only on Tuesday, and three weeks' time should be given to bring their stand on record. For interim relief as well, appropriate time should be given to respond, he said.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paying obeisance at Sri Krishna Janamasthan temple, in Mathura on Wednesday. UNI

### Scare at Kolkata airport as collision between IndiGo, Air India Express aircraft narrowly averted

New Delhi, March 27 (IANS) An IndiGo aircraft narrowly avoided a collision with an Air India Express aircraft at the runway of Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport on Wednesday, sending shivers down the spines of 169 passengers aboard the latter plane. According to reports, the IndiGo aircraft was awaiting clearance to enter the runway when it inadvertently brushed the wingtip of the Air India Express plane at around 10:30 a.m. The close call sparked immediate alarm, prompting the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to initiate a comprehensive investigation into the matter.

"A minor graze between a taxiing IndiGo aircraft and that of another carrier was reported from Kolkata Airport. The aircraft returned to the bay for inspection and necessary action, as per protocol. Consequently, IndiGo flight 6E 6152 between Kolkata and Darbhanga has been delayed," an IndiGo spokesperson said.

"Refreshments were provided to all passengers and an alternate aircraft has been arranged to minimise delay and inconvenience to the passengers. IndiGo prioritises passenger safety above all else. An incident report will be submitted to DGCA in due course, as per protocol," the spokesperson added. Meanwhile, the Air India Express (AIX) spokesperson, in a statement, said that the wingtip of a taxiing aircraft of another airline grazed one of their aircraft, which was stationary and awaiting clearance to enter the runway at Kolkata for a scheduled operation to Chennai.

### Eknath Shinde, Ajit Pawar, Ashok Chavan among BJP's 40 star campaigners for Maharashtra

Mumbai, March 27 (IANS) The BJP on Wednesday announced the list of 40 star campaigners for Maharashtra where the party, along with MahaYuti allies, has set an ambitious target of 45 plus of the total 48 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Interestingly, the BJP has included names of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and union minister of state Ramdas Athavale indicating that the party treats allies on par to achieve its ambitious target in Maharashtra and at the national level of 400 plus seats. Similarly, former Chief Minister and veteran Congress leader Ashok Chavan, who is now Rajya

Sabha member after joining the BJP, figured in the list. BJP insiders said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to address about 25 rallies during five phases of election. The list of star campaigners was announced a day before the MahaYuti plans to announce seat sharing agreement (on Thursday). The list of star campaigners include PM Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Goa CM Pramod Sawant, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai, Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav, Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal Sharma, Maharashtra CM Shinde and

Deputy CM Pawar. Union Ministers Narayan Rane, Anurag Thakur, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Smriti Irani, MoS Raosaheb Danve-Patil, former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis are also included in the list.

Other star campaigners include Sampat Choudhari, Vinod Tawde, Chandrashekar Bawankule, Ashish Shelar, Pankaja Munde Palve, Chandrakant Patil, Sudhir Mungantiwar, Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, Piyush Goyal, Girish Mahajan, Ravindra Chavan, K Annamalai, Manoj Tiwari, Ravi Kisan, Amar Sable, Vijay Kumar Gavit, Atul Save and Dhananjay Mahadik.

### Delhi Assembly adjourned till Monday following protest

New Delhi, March 27 (IANS) Proceedings were abruptly adjourned in Delhi Assembly till Monday following uproar from Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) legislators over the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by ED in the excise policy case.

Sources said that the Assembly session will prioritise Chief Minister Kejriwal's second directive, issued from ED's custody, which calls for the provision of free medication and diagnostic tests at government-operated Mohalla clinics.

Prior to the assembly's session, AAP MLAs had gathered outside the premises, chanting slogans demanding Kejriwal's immediate release.

Wearing yellow T-shirts with "Mei bhi Kejriwal" written on the backside, the AAP MLAs, including Ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj, raised slogans against the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the excise policy scam.

"Our MLAs are united in their protest against the unjust detention of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. There's a concerning trend to undermine democracy in our nation, evident in the targeting and incarceration of opposition figures," said Minister Atishi.

Even as the AAP MLAs were protesting, BJP MLAs also raised slogans outside Delhi Vidhan Sabha demanding Chief Minister's resignation.

Shortly after receiving instructions from Chief Minister Kejriwal to address the medicine shortage, Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj announced that a session of the Delhi Assembly would convene on Wednesday.

### Ex-MP Sanjay Nirupam skins Congress for 'total surrender' to Shiv Sena (UBT); may rebel

Mumbai, March 27 (IANS) Veteran Congress leader and ex-MP Sanjay Nirupam on Wednesday whipped his own party leadership, alleging an 'surrender' to the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally, Shiv Sena (UBT), headed by former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. Nirupam (59) launched a broadside at the Congress and SS (UBT) after the latter announced its list of 16 Lok Sabha candidates, including the Mumbai North West seat which he (Nirupam) had coveted.

The SS (UBT) has fielded Amol G. Kirtikar -- an accused in the infamous 'khichdi scam' of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and the son of rival Shiv Sena MP Gagan Kirtikar -- as its candidate for Mumbai North West, taking the MVA allies Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) by surprise.

"I will not support such a 'khichdi chor' (thief) candidate..." He has been unilaterally thrust upon Congress by the SS (UBT). We hope the (Congress) - which adopts a 'high moral ground' vis-avis corruption -- lodges its strong protest with Thackeray for the tainted nominee (Amol Kirtikar)," Nirupam said.

Launching a veiled attack at Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, state Congress chief Nana Patole, and the party's Mumbai head Varsha Gaikwad -- without taking names -- Nirupam said the party has abandoned its lakhs of activists all over the city, state and the country.

"The leadership does seem to be bothered about its workers... The Congress talks of 'Nyay' (justice) to various sections of society, but justice is being meted out to its own workers. Enough is enough... no more. Now it will be a decisive move for me," Nirupam said.

Turning to the SS (UBT), the former three-term MP said that by announcing Amol Kirtikar's name for Mumbai North West, Thackeray has thrown a challenge at the Congress, which failed to carry out tough negotiations in the seat-sharing talks.

"The SS (UBT) is not as powerful as perceived... It cannot win a single seat in Maharashtra without Congress' support. Yet, it has surprised us and that is highly condemnable. But the Congress did not retaliate though seats were snatched away by SS (UBT). Our leadership even failed to save Mumbai, Sangli, and other seats," said Nirupam.

He alleged that the move by Thackeray indicates 'a hidden agenda' to finish off the Congress in the state and bury it in Mumbai -- both places where it held sway for decades in the past.

### Former wrestler held in Delhi for smuggling Malana cream from Himachal

New Delhi, March 27 (IANS) A former wrestler was arrested along with his aide for smuggling 'Malana Cream' from Malana in Himachal Pradesh and selling the same in Delhi-NCR and other parts of the country, the police said on Wednesday. The accused wrestler has been identified as Hanumant (30), a resident of Civil Lines, while his associate has been identified as Adnan Ahmed (32), a resident of Jamia Nagar. The police also recovered 350 gm charas, valued at over Rs 10 lakh, from the possession of the accused, which was being transported in a Mercedes car. Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch), Sanjay Bhatia, said that recently, the police received specific inputs that drug traffickers are procuring charas from Malana and Kullu in Himachal Pradesh and selling the same in different parts of Delhi-NCR and other parts of India.

### In West Bengal's Dum Dum it is a clash between three salt and pepper politicians

Kolkata, March 27 (IANS) Dum Dum Lok Sabha constituency in North 24 Parganas District, which has a history of changing its voting pattern in consecutive elections since 1977, will be an interesting watch this time, with three veteran politicians clashing with each other.

For Trinamool Congress' three-time MP since 2009 from Dum Dum, Saugata Roy, the concern is his winning margin in 2019 which came down sharply to 52,999 from 1,54,934 in 2014.

The second factor that might be cause of concern for Saugata Roy is that the CPI(M) this time has fielded party veteran and central committee member, Dr Sujan Chakraborty, from Dum Dum, where his party still has a dedicated voter base.

In case Dr Sujan Chakraborty, with his vast

experience in party organisation activities as well as electoral politics, is able to grab a substantial share of the anti-BJP votes from Dum Dum, it could be going for Saugata Roy.

At the same time, the BJP has fielded Shilbhadra Dutta, who as an erstwhile Trinamool Congress leader from North 24 Parganas District has substantial experience in handling the ruling party's organisational affairs there.

Shilbhadra Dutta joined the BJP before the 2021 West Bengal Assembly polls and also contested unsuccessfully as the party's candidate from Barrackpore Assembly constituency that year.

However, he was one of the few who did not re-join the Trinamool Congress even after being defeated, which substantially enhanced his political credibility.

The factor that might make Dum Dum anybody's game is the change in the voting pattern since 1977. In 1977 it was the Janata Party's Ashok Krishna Dutta who won from that constituency, but only for a single term.

In 1980, the CPI(M)'s Niren Ghosh emerged as the victor from Dum Dum. However the equation changed again in 1984, when the Congress' Asutosh Laha got elected from the constituency.

Thereafter, the CPI(M)'s Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee got elected from Dum Dum for three consecutive terms in 1989, 1991 and 1996.

In 1998 BJP's Tapan Sikdar emerged as the surprise winner from Dum Dum and he got re-elected from the same constituency again in 1999. Again in 2004, Sikdar got defeated by CPI(M)'s Amitava Nandy.

### ED registers case against IT firm of CM Vijayan's daughter

Kochi, March 27 (IANS) The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday initiated an investigation into a money laundering case involving Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's daughter Veena Vijayan's IT firm and the Cochin-based mining firm CMRL. The case is already being probed by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO). The Kochi office of the ED has filed an ECIR in the case. The ECIR is similar to the FIR lodged by the police for cognizable offences. This issue was first raised last year by Congress MLA Mathew Kuzhalmadan on the basis of a media report, which

quoted an Income Tax Department officer as saying that "CM Vijayan's daughter Veena Vijayan's IT firm Exalogic had received Rs 1.72 crore from the mining company CMRL, in which the KSIDC has around 13 per cent stake". Initially, CM Vijayan and the CPI(M) defended the case both inside and outside the Assembly. They said that this was nothing but a political witch hunt. But the defence fell apart when the SFIO took up the probe last month. The SFIO has completed one round of probe by visiting the offices of CMRL and KSIDC and has taken statements from officials of both these firms.

### Rajasthan's top Cong & BJP leaders in Bikaner, accompany candidates for nomination filings

Jaipur, March 27 (IANS) State's top leaders from major political parties were in Rajasthan's Bikaner on Wednesday to address various meetings and participate in the nomination filings of their respective candidates. Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari, former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, BJP state president C.P. Joshi and Congress state chief Govind Dotasra were addressing different meetings as Congress and BJP candidates filed nominations. Diya Kumari was in Bikaner for the first time after becoming Deputy Chief Minister. She accompanied Bikaner East MLA Siddhi Kumari for filing nomination. BJP had earlier announced Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma's visit to Bikaner to participate in the nomination filing of Union Minister and sitting MP Arjun Ram Meghwal. However, his plan changed and instead Diya Kumari came to the city. State President C.P. Joshi, who was not expected earlier, but arrived later. After the nomination filing, a meeting in support of Meghwal at Ravindra Theatre will be held. Congress candidate Govindram Meghwal also filed his nomination papers. Former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot attended Govindram's nomination filing and will also participate in a rally later.



President Droupadi Murmu accepted credentials from the Vakhtang Jaoshvili, Ambassador of Georgia at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Wednesday. UNI



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