



Centre to launch Rs 24,000 crore scheme for welfare of tribals: PM

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IEWS & VISION OF CITY

Volume: 16, Issue: 80

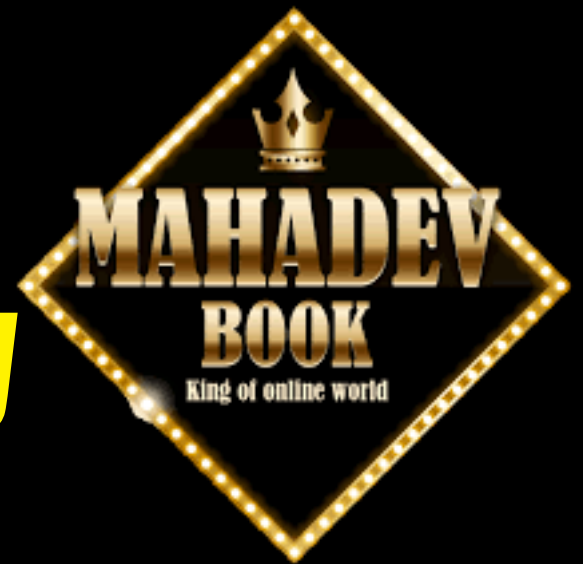
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RNI No. MAHENG/2009/29332

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Mahadev Betting App:

Biggest Scam unearthed ahead of assembly elections 2023



AV Team

After the Enforcement Directorate (ED) action, Mahadev Gaming app is back in the limelight. Mahadev is a mobile application that can be downloaded on smart phone. App provides platforms for illegal betting in virtual games like poker, teen Patti, and real games like IPL, Cricket, Soccer, Hockey etc. This scam got unearthed in 2017 but didn't hit the headlines, on 10th November, the Noida Commissionerate Police had registered a case under the Gangster Act against 18 people including the owner of the app came under scanner. The police have started investigating the properties of app owner Saurabh and Noida franchisee Tarun. After completion of the investigation, the property of the accused could be sealed.

Even the Mumbai Police also filed an FIR in connection with the Mahadev betting app scam against prominent figures from the Dabur Group, the homegrown fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) major. Chairman Mohit Burman and Director Gaurav Burman were named in the FIR on November 7.

The FIR encompasses a total of 32 individuals, with the app's promoter and actor Sahil Khan also among those implicated. The charges specified in the FIR involve various sections related to fraud and gambling, specifically under Sections 420, 465, 467, 468, 471, and 120 (B) of the Indian Penal Code.

The development comes mere hours after New Delhi-based financial services firm Religare clarified that the remuneration, including salary and employee stock

options (ESOP), was ₹42.06 crore for the financial year ending March 2023. This goes against the Burman family's accusation that Saluja's annual compensation was more than ₹150 crore.

Police officials said that Tarun Lakhe- da, Rahul, Abhishek Prajapati, Akash Sahu, Himanshu, Anurag Verma, Vivek, Deepak Kumar, Vishal Sharma, Rawat, Divya Prakash, Harshit Chaurasia, Akshay Tiwari, Neeraj Gupta, Akash, resident of Sector-108 Jhansi and Jogi and Deepak were arrested. In the interrogation, it was revealed that the accused had been running a betting racket for one and a half months. The other accused of the gang who were not caught by the police were found to be located in 11 different countries including Dubai, Bangladesh, Thailand.

Police interrogation revealed that Saurabh was running this app from Dubai. Franchises were allotted to different cities to run the betting racket. Its leader in Noida was Tarun. Rented a house in Sector-108 as a place. The data of the bids received on the Mahadev app was being handled here with the login ID of the app. The investigation revealed that this racket, which is running from Noida, has done transactions worth Rs 400 crore in one and a half months. Transactions through the app were also seen in the assembly elections

It is being told that a few days ago, the ED had seized a large amount of cash being carried by the promoters of the Mahadev app to spend in elections in Chhattisgarh. An agent of Cash Courier was also caught in this case.

BJP to checkmate Chhattisgarh govt. with Mahadev Betting App

Editoritis



Dr. Vaidehi

In Chhattisgarh, ahead of parliamentary elections, BJP released a video claiming that Shubham Soni is one of the accused in the Mahadev betting app case. Which is being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate. In this video, Sony has claimed that it has given Rs 508 crore to Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel so far. At the same time, Shubham Soni also claimed that he is the owner of Mahadev App. To which Bhupesh Baghel said he had made many appeals to ban the Mahadev app and issue an LOC against its promoters. However, one of the accused came forward with a video statement claiming that the Chief Minister himself had asked him to flee to the UAE.

Shubham Soni, wanted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case related to the Mahadev alpha, founded the com-

pany in 2021 and betting was his business. Eventually many people got arrested in this scam and the promoter Soni wanted some security and assurance of his safety. He approached CMO, he was then contacted by a person named Verma, who demanded a security deposit of Rs 10 lakh per month. Soni started paying this amount of Rs 10 lakh per month. Even after paying demanded money his people were getting arrested, he approached Verma. Verma arranged Soni's meeting with high profile people. Those days Verma took him to the Chief Minister. In the video he can be heard saying that I have given my written statement to the ED. The Mahadev App scam is thought to have involved a huge sum of money, estimated to be approximately Rs 5,000 crore.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Editoritis

BJP to checkmate Chhattisgarh govt. with Mahadev Betting App

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TDP which had won 15 seats in 2014 Assembly Election has lost its ground in Telangana by conceding party leaders to either TRS or Congress.

BJP failed to build a party in rural areas. BJP local leadership lacking active participation in poll campaigning and depending heavily on central leadership. Moreover, Prakash Javadekar, the election in-charge, is a low profile leader and not capable of changing the fate of BJP in state.

Telangana Congress is full of powerful Reddy leaders, but it lacks representation from Muslim leaders and backward classes.

Shubham Soni, an accused in the Mahadev Book betting app case, claims that he had the "proof" of paying Rs 508 crore to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

The Mahadev app is an online betting platform that operates illegally and launders the money. The app receives money from the users who are not located in India. Mahadev Online Book (MOB) operates from UAE headquarters, it also has various branches in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan. The app makes money by franchising "Panel/Branches" to its known associates at a profit margin of 70-30 per cent. Mahadev Book Online Betting App syndicate in which the promoters of this betting syndicate are based abroad and remotely running thousands of panels across India with the help of their friends and associates who are mainly from Chhattisgarh and have earned thousands of crore of proceeds of crime. It allegedly creates IDs, enrolls new users, and launders money through a tiered network of Benami bank accounts utilizing the online book betting program. Many celebrities endorse these betting entities and do promotional work in return for hefty fees.

As of now, as many as 34 Bollywood celebrities including actors, singers, dancers etc. have come under the Enforcement Directorate ED scanner in connection with the scam. Sonu Sood, Sonakshi Sinha, Malaika Arora and Amit Trivedi are some of the names. Another agent of this app was allegedly sent by the app promoters from the UAE "especially, to deliver large amounts of cash for electioneering expenses of the ruling Congress Party".

Police say that Chandrakar and Uppal are natives of Bhalai but have moved to Dubai. Chhattisgarh Police has issued a lookout notice against them. Chandrakar and Uppal, who run the Mahadev betting app, have denied the allegations of match-fixing. On November 6, the Mumbai Metropolitan Magistrate's Court directed the police to initiate the case following repeated complaints by social activist Prakash Banker. The social worker had alleged fraud of Rs 15,000 crore through the app since 2019. An FIR was registered under Maharashtra Gambling Prevention and IPC.

According to Prakash's complaint, the syndicate had 'manipulated' the cricket matches. Of the 32 names in the complaint, at least five are associates of Chandrakar, who are working to 'fix' matches from different parts of the country and the Middle East. The complaint states that they operate through 'Khiladi App' and other portals, earning crores per day, which is distributed through Hawala, a bitcoin wallet. Mahadev Books application can be downloaded on mobile. App provides platforms for illegal betting in virtual games like poker, teen

Patti, and real games like IPL, Cricket, Soccer, Hockey etc. Initially, this app didn't make any profit but everyone gets their time. Saurabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal got their time in 2020 Covid was a nightmare for most people but for many it proved a jackpot. When everyone was locked inside homes and was stressed this Mahadev app proved a good time for people. Their app became a major hit during Covid time.

All the virtual games hosted by the app's platforms were rigged in a manner that the owners do not lose money. Even though users made initial profits, whose payments were done using Benami bank accounts, ultimately, they incurred losses once they got addicted.

The next phase of the Business model was - Expansion. They started to roll out franchise owners who were called Panel Owners. They are people sitting in India and their job is to market the app, and add more and more people to the app. Profit was shared between them in 80:20 ratios. Saurabh and Ravi sitting in Dubai had 80% and the Panel agents sitting in India got 20%. Most of the panel agents were from Chhattisgarh. For using the app, one will have to obtain a user ID and password, which are typically owned by people associated with the app. These user IDs were sold for a hefty sum costing up to thousands of rupees. Once acquired, users can engage in online betting activities through the app. All financial transactions are channelled through bank accounts or online transactions. All the communication happens via WhatsApp. The application also provides online casino and betting platforms- activities that are illegal in India or operate under strict supervision of the government. Sourabh Chandrakar who earlier worked as a juice vendor and his associate Ravi Uppal are the founders of this application and the duo currently resides in Dubai. Interested to see, will this app controversy give a jackpot to the BJP in Chhattisgarh or not.

Volume No. 16 | Issue No. 80



Editor

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Vaidehi has received several Awards like I Congo-karmavir chakra, Bedal Powell scout and guide awards 2021- best journalist, Newspaper Association of India award- best journalist. She received lot of awards for her contribution towards journalism.

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Voices



Traditional Tamil Marriages



- C.K. Subramaniam

Traditionally, the family of the bride is responsible for organizing and planning the wedding. Dress code is usually bare-chested with a veshti for males and sarees or Madisaar for females. In the reception component of the wedding, it is not uncommon to see guests dressed in formal Western wear such as suits for males. Women still generally remain adorned with flowers and silk Saree. All the South Indian functions start with Ganpati Puja to give an auspicious beginning. The Hindu Wedding Ceremony has number of rituals and customs, most of which are often labeled as superstitious. It is believed to be nothing but rituals and more rituals.

Some families conduct the marriage on a large scale for a longer period and some of them cut short by one day. But for convenience sake some families take the marriage hall for two day possibly on a Saturday/Sunday so that it will enable all the relatives and friends can attend the marriage in large numbers. Thus Vratam, Nichayathartham (Engagement), Janavasam and Reception take shape on the first day and the next day is allotted only for marriage.

VRATHAM

The wedding rituals formally begin with prayers offered to ancestors to seek their and God's blessings for the upcoming wedding. This usually takes place in the early morning hours of the day before the wedding day. A sacred yellow thread is tied on the wrists of the bride and the groom. This is followed by the 'palika' ceremony, where nine varieties of grains are sprinkled on the bride and groom, to bless them with prosperity. At the end of the function, an 'aarathi' ceremony is performed.

Jana Vasam

The bridegroom is given a pride of place to. The groom arrives to the wedding venue in a decorated carriage or vehicle. Family and friends of the groom form a procession to the wedding site, often dancing and singing along the route. In more modern weddings, the bride may join the groom halfway through the procession. They then make their way to the temple where the groom - "maapillai" - is given a new set of traditional dhoti - "veshti" and shirt - to wear for the following nischayathartham ceremony. Western style suits are also becoming common as the groom's formal wear.

Kashi Yatra

Bridegroom goes on a mock Kashi trip. He also holds an umbrella, a fan, a walking stick, and a towel containing dhal and rice tied to his

shoulder. He then sets off on a mock pilgrimage to pursue further religious studies, and renounce worldly pursuits. As he steps out of the wedding hall, the bride's father intervenes and advocates for the superiority of married life to an ascetic life. He also promises to give his daughter as companion to face the challenges of life. The groom accepts and returns to the mandapam to get married. The umbrella is to remain with the groom, to remind him in the future of this advice. On his return back to the Marriage Hall, Oonjal, Palligai seeds sowing by the ladies of both the bride and bridegroom members.

Kannihadhanam follows Mangalayadharanam

The tying of the Mangal Sutra or Thali takes place at exactly the predetermined auspicious hour. The bride is seated over a sheaf of grain-laden hay looking eastward on the lap of her father while the bridegroom faces westward. The bridegroom puts the gold Mangal Sutra around the neck of the bride. As he does so the Nadaswaram is played loud and fast so as to muffle any inauspicious sounds at the critical hour.

Gifts exchange follows treading on the grindstone

Holding the bride's left toe the bridegroom helps her to tread on a grindstone kept on the right side of a fire. This ritual is symbolic of the solid rock foundation for the union. Blessings of elders are sought with Asirvadham and the morning ritual come to an end with Aarathi.

Nalangu

This function is a formal one for both bride and the bridegroom mix together before they enter in family bliss. The Nalangu starts with the bride and bridegroom being seated opposite each other. They apply turmeric on each other's feet. The bride also takes yellow rice and waves it around her husband's head and throws it away. This is repeated three times and the same is done by the husband. This is believed to ward off evil eyes. This is followed by wedding games that bring in a light-hearted element into the wedding day and relieve the stress. Traditional games include the newly-weds putting their hands into a small bowl to find a small object with the person finding the object first the winner. Another game consists of rolling a coconut towards each other like a ball. This provides an opportunity for both the bride and the bridegroom to touch each other and play the game of love in open in front of elders. Thus the scene is set well and truly for the first night to happen in a friendly way and to know each other in give and take family game.

Letters to the Editor

Urgent call for an end to violence in Gaza

The recent escalation of violence in Gaza and to echo President Macron's call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, particularly the tragic loss of innocent lives, including women and children. The ongoing conflict in Gaza has inflicted immeasurable suffering on civilians, with disproportionate casualties among the most vulnerable members of society. The continuous loss of innocent lives, particularly women and babies, is a heartbreaking reminder of the urgent need for a peaceful resolution to this longstanding crisis. It is essential for all parties involved to prioritize dialogue and diplomacy

as the means to resolve their differences and put an end to the cycle of violence. Every life lost is a tragedy that further perpetuates the suffering and deepens the wounds of this conflict.

As responsible global citizens, we must stand united in condemning all acts of violence and advocating for an immediate ceasefire. Every effort should be made to ensure the protection of civilians and the provision of essential humanitarian aid to alleviate the dire situation faced by the people of Gaza. The international community, including influential stakeholders and world leaders, must exert all possible efforts to facilitate dialogue, foster understanding, and work towards a sustainable and just resolution that guarantees the rights and security of all individuals in the region.

Maimul Safui

Welcome Decision

India showing its great sensibility has voted in the United Nations in favour

of a resolution condemning Israel's settlement in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan – just about a fortnight after refraining from supporting an appeal from the international organisation for humanitarian truce in the Gaza Strip. New Delhi's decision to vote in favour of the resolution this week is significant as it had late last month refrained from supporting a United Nations General Assembly resolution that called for a humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Surely, this decision will play a key role to stop ongoing war and restore peace in Gaza Strip and it will be economically useful for India too.

TKR.Noori

Cry for Justice

The events of sexual harassment to the women and innocent young girls have been appearing in India day to day. Now the limit is over, a minor girl

was allegedly raped by a police sub-inspector in Rajasthan's Dausa district on Friday and FIR was registered after protests erupted. It seems that holding government job or joining political party is a safe refuge for committing crimes. A number of cases of atrocities against women and children have been registered including those involving police and other government officials. After all, how long will Dalits and vulnerable people be subjected to oppression? How long will they be deprived of their rights? Has the door of justice for women and innocent girls in the country been closed? How long will they be subjected to politics?

Tauqueer Rahmani

Readers are requested to mail Letters to the Editor only at

afternoonvoicedesk@gmail.com

No postal letters will be entertained

(The views expressed are authors' own)

ODI World Cup 2023: Ahead of first semi-final match, police warns fans to be cautious while purchasing tickets

Ahead of the first semi-final match of the ODI World Cup 2023 between India and New Zealand at the iconic Wankhede Stadium on Wednesday, Mumbai Police DCP Pravin Mundhe asked cricket fans to be more cautious while buying tickets. Speaking to ANI, Pravin Mundhe talked about black marketing of World Cup tickets and said that they have registered cases on a few people for selling fake tickets during the India vs Sri Lanka match on November 2.

"Firstly I want to say that we have already arrested a few persons for black marketing. During the India vs Sri Lanka match, we registered cases on a few people for selling fake tickets outside the stadium. I ask the fans to be more cautious while buying tickets and get hold of it from the official websites only and pay only the amount written on the ticket,"



Mundhe told ANI. He added that the Mumbai Police have registered cases under IPC 420, and 511 on two people for black marketing of ODI World Cup 2023 tickets. He revealed that they were trying to sell a single ticket at a price of one lakh twenty thousand rupees. "We have registered cases on IPC 420, 511 on

two people for black marketing of ODI World Cup 2023 tickets. They were planning to sell tickets at a price of one lakh twenty thousand for just a single ticket," he added.

Mundhe further added that the Mumbai Police have increased the number of staff and officers for the match around

the stadium since the semi-final match will have more craze as the tickets have already been sold out. "Before the semi-final match between India and New Zealand in Mumbai, Wankhede Stadium has already hosted four games of the tournament here but the knockout stage match will have more craze as the

tickets have already been sold out and we are expecting a full house. We have tightened the security keeping the crowd in mind. We have also increased the number of staff and officers for the match," he added.

DCP Pravin Mundhe asked the fans to reach the stadium early on Wednesday due to security protocols which may cause delays. He also spoke about the prohibited items inside the stadium, which include water bottles and power banks. "The match will start at 2 PM but I request fans to visit the stadium early due to security protocols. We will be opening the stadium at 11:30 AM. Bags, tobacco products, coins, paper, pencils, pens, power banks, water bottles, and objectionable banners are prohibited inside the stadium. Only mobile phones, wristwatches, and wallets are allowed to be taken inside the stadium," he added. ANI

Gang was busted after a CCTV footage showing thefts happening wearing burqas in Andheri, 2 held

Mumbai Police have arrested two thieves who allegedly used to commit thefts wearing burqas. The gang was busted after CCTV footage showed two people wearing burqas entering a house in the MIDC area of Andheri on November 3rd and stealing jewellery and money.

According to the information received from the police, around 11 am on November 3, a woman living in a building in the MIDC area of Andheri, while leaving the house to drop her little girl to school, closed the door of the house from outside and took the child to school. When she came home, she saw that the door of her house was open, the woman immediately went inside and investigated and found that some gold and money were missing from the house. After the woman lodged a complaint at the nearby MIDC police station, the police

registered a case against an unknown person under sections 380 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code and started further investigation.

Police checked the CCTV footage from the building and saw two people wearing burqas entering the house. When they investigated further, police found that it was not a woman but a man who was wearing the burqa. Police arrested Raees Abdul Sheikh and Wasim Khalid Khan from Mumbai in the theft case. The arrest of Sheikh and Khan comes as a relief to the people of Mumbai, who had been living in fear of the burqa gang. The gang had been operating for several months and had committed several thefts in the city. Police are still investigating the case and are trying to identify other members of the gang. They are also urging the public to be vigilant and to report any suspicious activity to the police. Further investigation is underway. ANI

Mumbai North West Lok Sabha seat issue: Shinde faction leaders asks CM to intervene into the matter

The slugfest between Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leaders - Gajanan Kirtikar and Ramdas Kadam - over the Northwest Mumbai Lok Sabha seat continued on Tuesday, prompting Chief Minister Shinde to intervene in the matter. While Kirtikar, a veteran leader and two-time MP from the constituency, wants to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls again, Kadam is eyeing the seat for his son Siddhesh Kadam. "Gajabhau (Kirtikar) had said that he will not contest the polls owing to his age. But how did he become young after Uddhav Thackeray declared his son (Amol Kirtikar) as a candidate for the seat. Is there a plan to get a ticket for your son from Eknath Shinde because you and your son operate from the same office," Kadam said.

Kadam said he will not ask for a ticket for his son Siddhesh. While Gajanan Kirtikar



belongs to the Shiv Sena led by CM Shinde, his son Amol Kirtikar is still affiliated to Shiv Sena (UBT). Ramdas Kadam is a senior Sena leader and former state minister, whose other son Yogesh Kadam is an MLA from Dapoli.

Amid a war of words between the two leaders, Kirtikar on Monday dubbed Ramdas Kadam as 'gaddar' (traitor). Kadam met CM Shinde at the latter's official residence in Mumbai on Tuesday to discuss the development with him.

After meeting Shinde, Kad-

am said the matter between him and Kirtikar should be resolved before the latter talks to the media. Kadam also said he has no problem with Gajanan Kirtikar contesting from the Northwest Mumbai Lok Sabha seat. Taking a dig at the two leaders, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anil Parab said the two leaders have exposed each other and also their "gaddari". He asserted that Amol Kirtikar will be fielded from the Northwest seat by Shiv Sena (UBT) and expressed confidence of his victory. PTI

Centre to launch Rs 24,000 crore scheme for welfare of tribals: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the Centre will launch a scheme worth Rs 24,000 crore for the welfare of tribals in the country on Wednesday when the entire nation will celebrate Bhagwan Birsa Munda's birth anniversary.

Addressing a public meeting in Betul district, Modi noted the presence of a large number of people on the last day of his campaign for the Madhya Pradesh assembly elections scheduled on November 17, and said it is an indication that the BJP's victory is assured in these polls.

Modi said he has seen "unprecedented trust and affection" for BJP among the people of Madhya Pradesh, and added that the Congress has accepted defeat ahead of elections. "Tomorrow is Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, I will go to Jharkhand to pay respect to (tribal icon) Bhagwan Birsa Munda. The entire country will



celebrate Bhagwan Birsa Munda's jayanti and the Centre will announce a scheme worth Rs 24,000 crore for the welfare of tribals," the PM said.

He said the Congress accepted defeat and is now turning to seers for reviving its fortunes in the last phase of poll campaigning. "The Congress knows that its fake promises won't work in front

of Modi's guarantees," the PM said. "As November 17 is nearing, Congress' claims are getting exposed. The Congress has accepted defeat and now they're relying on luck," he said.

The Congress never believed that abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, law against triple talaq and the construction of Ram temple will ever be a reality,

but "we have done all these things," Modi said. All promises made to the people will be fulfilled and "this is my guarantee," he added. Modi also said India has become the second largest manufacturer of mobile phones in the world.

He took a swipe at former Congress president Rahul Gandhi over his remark during a rally on Monday that mobile phones in the

people's pockets were "Made in China" and they should rather be "Made in Madhya Pradesh".

"A 'mahagani' from Congress yesterday said people of India have 'Made in China' phones... moorkhon ke sardar (king of fools) ...in which world do they live. They have the disease of not seeing their country's progress. India has become the second largest manufacturer of mobile phones in the world," the PM said.

Modi also said some Congress leaders are "sitting at home" and they don't even feel like going out. "Congress leaders don't know what they will say to people. The Congress has accepted that their fake promises don't stand a chance in front of Modi guarantees," he said. "This election is to stop corruption and loot by Congress in Madhya Pradesh," Modi said. "You know that wherever the Congress comes, they bring destruction," he added. PTI

BJP toppled Cong govt in MP by purchasing MLAs, says Rahul



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused the BJP of toppling his party's government in Madhya Pradesh in 2020 by purchasing MLAs, and expressed confidence that the grand old party would win around 150 seats in the assembly elections in the state to be held on November 17.

He was addressing an election rally in Vidisha, around 55 km from the state capital.

"A storm is going to come in favour of the Congress. The party will be winning 145 to 150 seats. Five years back, you (people) elected a Congress government but

BJP leaders (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi, (MP Chief Minister) Shivraj Singh and (Union Home Minister) Amit Shah purchased the MLAs and stole your government," Gandhi said.

The Kamal Nath-led Congress dispensation, which was in power in Madhya Pradesh for 15 months till March 2020, waived farm loans of 27 lakh farmers. But by toppling that government, the BJP deceived labourers, farmers, small traders and unemployed people, he alleged.

The Congress ousted the BJP from power in Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh through love and

not hatred, he said.

"The BJP ran a 40 percent cut government in Karnataka... (After Congress came to power there) I told the Karnataka chief minister to return the money that was snatched by the BJP government from the pockets of poor people in five years. I told him to return the money to the poor, which the BJP had given to the rich," he said.

People in the Congress-ruled Karnataka and Chhattisgarh are getting LPG cylinders at Rs 500 each, while people in other states are paying Rs 1,200-1,400 here for the same, Gandhi said.

The former Congress president said the Congress fulfilled all its promises in Karnataka, including farm loan waiver and free bus travel to women.

Farmers in Chhattisgarh are getting the guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) of the crop and labourers are being paid Rs 10,000 as wages. This is strengthening the local economy, he said. PTI

No hung assembly, BJP will get majority to form govt in Telangana: Kishan Reddy



In the face of "simmering anger" against the ruling BRS in Telangana, the BJP will get a comfortable majority to form its first government in the state after the November 30 polls, state BJP chief G Kishan Reddy has said. There will be no hung assembly and the saffron party will land in the ruling saddle comfortably, Reddy, Union Minister for Tourism, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

Reddy said it is palpable that Telangana people want a change as they have lost faith in both the BRS and Congress, believing that "they are in cahoots." "There is no ques-

tion of a hung assembly because there is simmering anger against the BRS government. It will explode like a volcano. People are not coming out because of the fear of police and goons."

"The Bharatiya Janata Party will get an absolute majority. We are working with the intention that the party would get an absolute majority and it will come also," Reddy said. He further said Telangana people want a change which will not come with the BRS or Congress because even if the grand old party wins, there is a perception that some of its MLAs will join the BRS.

World

Amid ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, families are protesting for people's release



The families of Israelis being held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip have started a protest march in Tel Aviv for their release, along with their supporters, according to The Times of Israel. The kin of hostages will be walking to Jerusalem in the upcoming days and will converge on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office to demand the freedom of their loved ones.

Shelly Shem-Tov, mother of a hostage Omer, made an impassioned plea for the release of his son, who was abducted from the music festival on October 7. "I don't know if you can imagine what it's like for me, as a mother, to be unable to do anything for my son. We're losing people," she said, mentioning the Marciano family, who were told today that their daughter, a soldier, had died in captivity, The Times of Israel reported. Furthermore, she said, "Where are you?", further requesting the PM, "I demand that Benjamin Netanyahu and the

cabinet give us answers and take action. We have no strength left." Yuval Haran of Kibbutz Be'eri, seven of whose family members are being held hostages in Gaza, "We are running out of time. I call on all of the people of Israel, the mayors, the Knesset members and the youth groups, to march alongside us; to demand an answer from the decision makers why our families are still in Gaza." The announcement of the protest march comes after Israel and Hamas reportedly negotiating a deal to release dozens of women and children held by the Hamas terror group, The Times of Israel reported. According to the hostage release proposals, one involves a small number of people to be released, and the other involves the release of 100 or more civilians held in Gaza, according to the officials, The New York Times reported. ANI

Canada: Jewish school was targeted by gunfire for the second time, claims media reports

For the second time in a week, a Jewish school in Montreal was targeted by gunfire, Canada-based CTV News reported. As soon as the gunshots were reported, police were called to the Cote-des-Neiges neighbourhood around 5 am on Deacon Road, near Van Horne Avenue.

Police officers discovered bullet holes in the facade of the Jewish school Yeshiva Gedola. However, no one was inside the building at the time of gunfire and no injuries were reported, according to CTV News. Moreover, the witnesses told Montreal police (SPVM) that they saw a vehicle speeding off after the shots were fired. "Bullet casings were found on the ground," police spokesperson Veronique Dubuc said.

The attack on Yeshiva Gedola is the third time, a Montreal Jewish school has been shot this

week. Earlier on Thursday, police discovered bullet holes at Yeshiva Gedola as well as at United Talmud Torahs of Montreal Inc., reported CTV News. Meanwhile, the first two shootings are being investigated as hate crimes, according to the police. According to the Service de police de la Ville de Montreal (SPVM) statistics gathered from October 7 to November 7, showed that 73 hate crime incidents targeting Jewish communities in the city, as well as, 25 targeting the Arab-Muslim community have been reported.

Charles Abelson, who lives near the school, said, "Everybody feels a bit nervous. Of course, I mean you're living right next door to where bullet shots were fired." Moreover, following the shootings, several patients said that they felt uneasy bringing their kids to classes, according to CTV News. ANI

Russia- Ukraine war: Convicted killer of journalist Anna Politkovskaya was pardoned by president



Sergei Khadzhikurbanov, a convicted killer of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, was pardoned by President Vladimir Putin after he fought for the Russian army in Ukraine, the Moscow Times reported, citing RBC news website on Tuesday. Investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya, a fierce critic of Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin's wars in Chechnya, was shot dead on October 7, 2006, at the entrance of her apartment in central Moscow. She was 48 years old.

Khadzhikurbanov, a former police officer, was handed a

20-year prison sentence nearly a decade ago for his involvement in Politkovskaya's killing, an investigative journalist who covered stories for the independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta. "Khadzhikurbanov participated in [Russia's military campaign in Ukraine] as a prisoner under his first contract," RBC quoted Khadzhikurbanov lawyer Alexei Mikhalechik as saying.

"He was then pardoned and now participates in [Russia's campaign in Ukraine] as a freelance military man having signed a contract with the Defense Ministry," Mikhalechik added. However, Khadzhikurbanov's lawyer did not specify when his client signed up for the war and received the presidential pardon, Moscow Times reported. Russia's Defense Ministry and the private military outfit Wagner began recruiting prisoners to fight in Ukraine last summer amid a manpower shortage on the front line. ANI

UK: Newly appointed Home Secy James Cleverly talks about Hamas group, posts a cruptic video on social media

Following a contentious discussion with talk show host Piers Morgan on Monday, former leader of the UK Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn declined to designate Hamas as a terrorist organisation, however, the newly appointed Home Secretary James Cleverly "confirmed" Hamas as a terror group. Posting a video of Jeremy Corbyn getting involved in a heated debate with talk show host Piers Morgan on X (formerly Twitter), Cleverly wrote, "As Home Secretary, I can confirm that Hamas is a terror group."

Cleverly's reactions came after a video surfaced that showed



Morgan repeatedly asking the far-left politician if the Palestinian militants who conducted a catastrophic attack on Israel last month were terrorists, but he wouldn't respond directly. It happened during a "Piers Morgan Uncensored" programme. "Are they a terror group?" Mor-

gan asked the former UK Labour Party leader. "Everybody knows what they are," the member of Parliament replied to the TalkTV host. "Are they a terror group?" Morgan asked again. "Can you say it? Can you say it? Can you call them a terror group?" The New York Post reported. "Is it possible to have a rational discussion with you?" Corbyn told Morgan following his repeated questioning. Morgan persisted in inquiring about Hamas, while Corbyn attempted to push for a cease-fire. The two then got into a full-blown yelling war, the New York Post reported. ANI

Pakistan: Terrorist gunfire leaves 1 soldier and 2 civilians killed, reports

One soldier and two civilians were killed after terrorists opened fire in the general area of Darazinda in Pakistan's Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan-based Geo News reported citing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement on Tuesday. The ISPR said that the terrorists fired upon a private company vehicles working

on a development project in the area and killed one soldier and two civilians, according to Geo News report.

In the statement, ISPR said that two civilian employees of the company - Muhammad Faisal (35) and Asif Kamran (29), were killed in the attack. According to ISPR, Sepoy Syed Muhammad Shaheen Shah (33),

who was employed on the security of the project was also killed while fighting terrorists. The ISPR in the statement said, "Sanitisation operation is being carried out to eliminate the terrorists present in the area." It further said that Pakistan's security forces are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism. ANI

Expression

Vote for Strong Democracy and Qualified Candidates



Lalit Garg

Columnist

As the assembly elections in five states are coming closer, election excitement and aggression are increasing. There is complete aggression regarding the selection of candidates, winning the elections and forming the government, but there is deep silence on issues of public interest. The biggest irony being seen in these elections, like every time in the past, is that these elections are issue-less and the situations of defection have come to the fore. In Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana, the key to the fate of political parties and leaders is now in the hands of voters. Like every other time, in these elections also, attempts to woo the voters on the basis of cattiest passion, and communal fanaticism are weakening the roots of democracy. Elections are the times to meet citizen groups, listen to their problems and be ready to solve them. Political parties should get complete information about the basic problems of their people, and then present a roadmap to solve them, and thereby seek votes from the public. If seen, this is the real concept of democracy. However, in the current times, money power and muscle power are dominating the elections, politics was once a means of service, but today it is becoming a business and means to loot the nation, this is a matter of concern and the roots of democracy are weakening due to such nefarious practices.

This is the first ever election in the immortal era of Independence, elections are the basis of the democratic system. Public welfare schemes are discussed in these times. Political parties started the practice of presenting public welfare policies to the public on the occasion of elections in form of manifesto. There are different circumstances of every election; hence new manifestos are also presented every time. But the irony is that after the manifestos and the formation of the government



of the victorious party, there is a lot of difference in its policies and plans. Therefore, voters should vote consciously so that the promises made to them are fulfilled as much as possible. In the elections in these five states, the voter will have to play a dual role - that of the owner of the house and also that of the guard of the house. As an owner, it will be his duty to check those who are called contractors of public interest. And as the guard of the house, it is his duty not only to stay awake, but also to be constantly alert. This awareness and caution is required to weigh the words and actions of those who want to come to power on the scales of conscience. Since he has the most to lose and the most to gain, the biggest responsibility also rests on him. Voters should also fulfill this responsibility at the individual level - by asking himself as to what will be the basis of his voting. The first decision the voter will have to make is that he has to vote. Then it has to be decided that he will not vote in favour of the 'wrong' candidate and party. When every voter uses his vote very thoughtfully, democracy becomes stronger and only then strong India can be built.

Strengthening and developing the nation in a holistic manner and supplying the basic needs of the growing population are the basic responsibilities of the elected governments in any democracy. These elected governments are not the masters of the people, but are their servants, because the public entrusts them with the responsibility of running the country's system and shaping the country's development plans only for five years. During this period, elected governments try to fulfill their responsibilities towards the public by implementing their public welfare

policies. There is never any dearth of options in the multi-political system of democracy; this is also the beauty and originality of this system. Due to this, we have seen governments of different political parties from the Center to different states. Every political party has its own basic principles under which they claim to take public welfare measures, if they come to power. One such public welfare step was to give every person in India the right to eat food both times. Even though this step was taken by Dr. Manmohan Singh's Congress government, its effective implementation was done by the Modi government in 2020 during the Corona period. Then arrangements were made to provide a five kg free ration every month to about 80 crore people. Now Prime Minister Narendra Modi has decided to continue this scheme for five more years. This means that making public welfare policies is the primary responsibility of every government. The Modi government has implemented many such public welfare schemes. Ashok Gehlot in Rajasthan and Shivraj Singh government in Madhya Pradesh have also started many such public welfare schemes seeing the elections approaching, which we can call more as freebies, than public welfare.

To make voters aware, Anuvrat Vishwa Bharti and Indian Voters Organization have been running voters' awareness campaigns. The purpose of which is to force the voters to think over how to get criminals out of our system? How do the corrupt people who play with the nation's wealth become our role models? Why do we vote for corrupt people, opportunists and criminals? But for how long will we continue to accept this situation silently? How long will we continue to be deceived? How long will we

continue to be silent spectators and watch the nation being looted? Change can come in society only through the combined improvement of the individuals and the system. Unless the hands that operate the system are pure, even changing the system will be inadequate. To strengthen democracy, selection of qualified candidates is necessary. Just as criteria are necessary in various examinations, in the same way the criteria of qualification should be fixed in politics also. Vote for the one who is honest, free from corruption, away from cattiest passion and communal fanaticism and who believes in national unity, human values and social harmony. Just as a person thinks while giving his daughter's hand, similarly while voting, one should think earnestly before casting his/her vote.

Political parties are busy preparing for the elections in their own way. There was no talk of alliances, strategies for alliances started being prepared. Defection is taking place in the season. Various political parties have started manipulating to settle the equations. There is a tussle among some national parties, while for some regional political parties; these elections remain a question of prestige. Voters also have to be aware amidst these situations. In the coming elections, voters should present their role in such a strong form that political parties cannot dare to ignore it after the elections. This is the biggest expectation and a powerful message of the present that political parties should be above even the efforts to woo the voters and mislead them. This system of king and people, ruler and ruled has always been there and will always be there. Methods keep changing. Earlier the king was born from the queen's womb and now he is born from the 'ballot box'. That is why elections are the most important part of democracy. It is a reflection of the national character. To maintain healthy values in democracy, healthy elections and active participation of the common voter in it is essential. Voters will have to wake up in view of the rotting political system.

Entertainment

Rapper Badshah shares a post amid dating rumours with Mrunal Thakur, says 'Sorry..'



A recent video of rapper Badshah and actor Mrunal Thakur walking hand-in-hand at a Diwali bash sparked their dating rumours on social media. On Tuesday early morning, Badshah took to his Instagram account and issued a note that seemed to be regarding all the dating speculations.

Badshah wrote on his Insta stories, "Dear Internet, sorry to disappoint you yet again but jaisa aap soch rahe hain waisa nahi hai," followed by a laughing emoticon. However, Badshah didn't mention dating rumours with Mrunal.

The clip was from actor Shilpa Shetty Kundra's Diwali party which both Badshah and Mrunal attended. In the video, Mrunal is seen in a pastel green lehenga, while the rapper is seen in a black ethnic outfit. **ANI**

Actor Angelina Jolie expresses concern over expulsion of Afghan refugees from Pakistan



American actor Angelina Jolie has expressed her deep concern and sadness over the mass expulsion of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. In a heartfelt Instagram post, Jolie slammed Pakistan for the unexpected decision to send back vulnerable Afghan families, confronting the hard reality of survival in today's Afghanistan.

Jolie emphasized Pakistan's long history of supporting Afghan refugee families. She lamented the sudden expulsion, especially in light of Afghanistan's current catastrophic circumstances, in which women are being denied basic rights, education is becoming increasingly inaccessible, many face jail and a severe humanitarian crisis is brewing.

"Pakistan has been a supporter of many Afghan refugee families for decades. I am saddened they would so abruptly push back refugees who face the impossible realities of trying to survive in today's Afghanistan, where women have again been deprived of all rights and the possibility of education, many are being imprisoned, and there is a deep humanitarian crisis," she wrote. "It is yet another example of the backsliding in human rights globally, and is a new tragedy in the long history of the suffering of Afghan people - who have experienced nothing but war and conflict and displacement for over forty years, and are being abandoned by the world after all the promises that were made of a better future for the Afghan people," she continued.

ANI

Star actor Brad Pitt introduces Ines de Ramon as his girlfriend



American actor Brad Pitt and jewellery designer Ines de Ramon are in a "good place," 'People' reported citing a source. "This is Brad's first proper relationship since the divorce," the US magazine cited the source as saying, referring to the actor's split from ex-wife Angelina Jolie.

"He introduces Ramon as his girlfriend," added the source, who said Pitt "is doing great with Ines." "It's great to see him in a good place. Ines makes him very happy," said the source. Pitt and de Ramon made their first public appearance together earlier this month when they attended LACMA's Art+Film Gala in Los Angeles, where the actor introduced a tribute to filmmaker and frequent collaborator David Fincher. The couple did not pose for photos, but they were seen having a good time at the annual event. The couple spent a lot of time together this summer in Europe, where de Ramon visited Pitt several times while he was filming a Formula One racing movie.

In July, a source close to de Ramon told People, "The pair was doing great and their relationship was still going very strong." "The two have been spending a lot of time together this summer as they truly enjoy each other's company and are very into each other," the insider said at the time, adding that it is "apparent to anyone who sees them together." Their first public appearance together was backstage at a Bono concert in Los Angeles in November 2022. Sources told People magazine at the time that they had been dating for a few months. The following month, Ramon attended Pitt's Babylon premiere party in Los Angeles and celebrated the actor's 59th birthday. The pair celebrated several additional holidays together, including a trip to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, for New Year's Eve and the following days.

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