

Welfare board, electricity at domestic rate among Kejriwal's guarantees for Delhi's Dhobis

NEW DELHI: AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday announced seven guarantees for the national capital's Dhobi community that included establishing a welfare board for them, charging electricity and water at domestic rate, and providing education and skill training to their children if the party retains power in Delhi.

He also promised to regularise makeshift ironing shops, resume the halted licensing process and frame welfare schemes for the elderly members of the community as part of comprehensive support for them.

Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal said these guarantees aim to uplift the livelihoods of the Dhobi community, ensure access to basic services and secure their socio-economic condition.

Representatives from the Delhi Dhobi Mahasabha met the former Delhi chief minister on the occasion, expressing their gratitude and support for AAP. They



expressed confidence that the proposed measures would benefit the lives of thousands of Dhobis across the city.

"As the national convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party and a chief ministerial candidate, I accept the demands of the Dhobi community and announce that if our government is formed, the Delhi government will establish a Dhobi Samuday Welfare Board," Kejriwal said.

Talking about the challenges faced by the com-

munity, he highlighted the lack of a common platform to voice their concerns and said that AAP's proposed welfare board would solve this problem.

"When a problem arises, they search for a leader to address it. They approach one leader and then another, pleading at different places. The Dhobi community does not have a single platform to voice their issues."

"If the Dhobi Samuday Welfare Board is established, it will become a platform where Dhobis from all over Delhi can present their issues and suggestions. Additionally, policies can be formulated to improve the Dhobi community and their profession across Delhi," Kejriwal said.

Regarding the regularisation of makeshift ironing shops, the former chief minister said such shops in various colonies in Delhi would be regularised. "Currently, many such shops are not regularised, resulting in harassment from the administration and police."

He also stated that the halted licensing process for Dhobis would also be resumed. Highlighting the financial struggles of the Dhobi community, Kejriwal said, "Dhobis are generally underprivileged... They earn very little and has to cover household expenses, their children's school fees and medical expenses."

"Surprisingly, Dhobis are charged commercial rates for water and electricity. That means the Dhobis are charged the same rate

as large malls and shops. Hence, I announce today that electricity and water rates for all Dhobis in Delhi will be converted to domestic rates," Kejriwal announced.

The AAP's chief ministerial candidate also promised to introduce welfare schemes for the elderly members of the community. "The responsibility of formulating these schemes will be entrusted to the Dhobi Samuday Welfare Board," he said.

Additionally, Kejriwal said his government would ensure appropriate arrangements for quality education and scholarships for the children of the Dhobi community. Youths from the community would be provided skill training, either for their traditional profession or other trades, to improve their livelihood, he said.

On this occasion, Ravi Kumar, the president of the Delhi Dhobi Mahasabha, expressed his appreciation for the proposed initiatives.

Tourism development project launched in Manali: CM Sukhu

SHIMLA: A tourism development project worth Rs 150 crore, approved by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), has been launched in the key tourist destination of Manali to strengthen the tourism infrastructure and create additional facilities, said Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.

Inaugurating the cultural evening of the five-day national level Sharad-Utsav (Winter Carnival, Manali) at Manu Rangshala on Monday late evening, Sukhu reiterated to develop tourism and also announced Rs 15 crore for the construction of a bridge connecting Rang-di to the left bank to ease traffic congestion at the entrance of Manali.

He said there is a plan to develop a hot water bath facility, a nature park and other amenities at Kalath, besides reinforcing natural hot springs in the area.

The chief minister also



announced an increase in the incentive for women groups who participated in the Carnival's Shobha Yatra to Rs 30,000 and lauded their efforts in preserving traditional attire and local culinary traditions.

He also honoured the winners of the Ski Mountaineering Competition, aimed at promoting winter sports and tourism in Manali.

Man shot dead over property dispute

NEW DELHI: A 54-year-old man was shot dead near his residence in Outer Delhi over an alleged property dispute, an official said on Tuesday.

Two juveniles have been apprehended in connection with the case, the official said. Dharamvir, who worked at a state-run liquor shop in Rohini Sector 3, was returning home when the incident took place on Monday night. He was found unconscious in his car and bleeding from a gunshot wound, the official said. The incident was reported to Bawana police station by the victim's son, police said, adding Dharamvir was declared dead on the spot.

"Preliminary investigations indicate that the murder stemmed from a long-standing property dispute. Our teams have apprehended two juveniles," the police officer said, adding that a county-made pistol used in murder and 14 live cartridges were recovered from their possession.

On statehood day, Meghalaya CM Sangma lays foundation stone for new secretariat building

UMSAWLI: Celebrating the 53rd statehood day of Meghalaya, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for the Rs 1,188 crore new secretariat building to house various government offices.

The building will come up on a 53-acre plot in New Shillong Township. It will be constructed in two phases. In Phase I, the government will build 68 offices, facilities for 1,829 staff and a 700-people capacity auditorium while Phase II will see the establishment of 56 offices, facilities for 4,746 staff, and two auditoriums of 200 people capacity each, officials said.

Laying the foundation stone, Sangma said, "It is not just a building and a construction that is going to happen. It is the expansion of the city of Shillong."

Terming the new city as the administrative and knowledge city, the chief minister also said it would be a "growth centre" for the



state. He said, "While we invest in this Secretariat, we invest in the multiple roads connecting the existing city to this new administrative city. From this administrative city to the new knowledge city, we are laying the foundation for the community, for the people, for the landowners in about 30 sq km area to develop this entire New Shillong into a major growth centre for our state."

Sangma said Rs 5,500 crore investment has already been planned for the

New Shillong Township area by the government, while close to Rs 10,000 crore more is likely to be invested.

This investment will completely transform New Shillong city, he said.

"This secretariat is not just a secretariat. This secretariat is, in a way, a symbol that we as a government and as a state and as people, we dare to dream big. It is a symbol of the aspirations that we have as a society and as a state and as a government. It is a symbol of

hope that we would like to give to the people of the state," he added.

Stating that many will negate the idea of construction of a new secretariat building, the chief minister said the government is not only focusing on building infrastructure for the future but also accorded equal thrust towards social sectors.

"Our flagship schemes on youth, farmers and women ensure that we raise the living standard of our people."

Migrant women living outside Odisha get benefits of Subhadra Yojana: Govt

BHUBANESWAR: Ahead of releasing the fourth phase of the first installment of money under the Subhadra Yojana, Odisha deputy chief minister Pravati Parida on Tuesday urged migrant women living outside the state to enroll in the scheme to avail benefits.

Parida, who also oversees the women and child development department, said, "During review meetings in various districts, it was found that many eligible women beneficiaries, who have migrated outside Odisha, have not enrolled in the Subhadra Yojana. I request them to apply to avail benefits," she told reporters.

She said migrant women can apply online through the Subhadra portal or via Common Service Centers (CSCs) but they must be present in the state for the verification and biometric process.

Parida added that if migrant women apply now, they could receive benefits in the 4th or final phase of the first installment.

The state government has announced that registration will remain open until the

last beneficiary is enrolled. Nearly 20 lakh women are expected to benefit from the scheme in the last phase, she added.

The deputy CM emphasised the importance of Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures during enrollment under the Yojana, the state's flagship women empowerment initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 17, 2024.

This scheme is expected to benefit over 1 crore women in Odisha, targeting women aged 21 to 60. Under the Subhadra Yojana, eligible women will receive Rs 50,000 over five years. Starting from the financial year 2024-25, beneficiaries will get Rs 10,000 annually, credited in two equal installments to their Aadhaar-linked bank accounts.

According to the scheme's provisions, assistance will be disbursed twice a year—on International Women's Day (March 8) and Raksha Bandhan (August).

By the end of the third phase, around 80 lakh women had been enrolled in the Subhadra Yojana and received benefits under the scheme.

Truck dangles off Chambal Bridge after breaking railing

ETAHAWH: A 22-wheeler truck hung precariously over the edge of the Chambal River Bridge after breaking through the railing while trying to avoid a collision with a car on the Etawah-Gwalior Highway due to dense fog.

The driver and helper, who were trapped inside the truck's cabin, climbed out and jumped to safety onto the road. The accident disrupted traffic on the bridge, Baidpura Station House Officer (SHO) Ganesh Shankar said.

The incident occurred around 7 am near the Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh border in the Baidpura police station area, according to officials.

The SHO said, "Due to low visibility caused by heavy fog, a car suddenly appeared in front of the truck. In an attempt to avoid



hitting the car, the driver steered the truck sharply, causing it to crash through the railing and dangle off the bridge." The truck was heading toward Etawah from the Bhind district, he said.

The driver and helper, who were trapped inside the truck's cabin, climbed out and jumped to safety onto the road. The accident disrupted

traffic on the bridge, the SHO said.

After receiving the information, personnel from the PNC toll and police arrived at the scene. With the help of a crane and a challenging rescue operation, the dangling truck was removed, and traffic on the Etawah-Gwalior Highway was restored, he added.

Saif walks out of hospital five days after knife attack

MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan on Tuesday walked out of a Mumbai hospital, five days after he was stabbed repeatedly by a Bangladeshi national inside his 12th floor apartment in Bandra, necessitating surgery. Clad in a white shirt and blue jeans, the 54-year-old actor, who sported dark goggles, was seen waving at the media and fans, as he stepped out of the Lilavati Hospital.

Saif was seen with a cast on his hand as he walked briskly to a waiting black vehicle, accompanied by security personnel.

His wife, actor Kareena Kapoor Khan, was also seen at the hospital shortly before he was discharged.



residence in Bandra, located at a short distance from the hospital.

The actor, who suffered multiple stab injuries in the attack by an intruder at his 12th floor home in the early hours of January 16, underwent an emergency surgery at the hospital soon after he was admitted.

Doctors had earlier said Khan had three injuries, two on the hand and one on the right side of the neck, and the major part was at the back, which was in the spine. They removed the sharp object that was lodged in the spine and repaired the injury. He underwent two critical procedures during his hospital stay -- neurosurgery and plastic surgery. Khan recovered well and was shifted from the intensive care unit (ICU) on January 17 to a special room. Police on Sunday arrested Bangladeshi national Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir (30) from neighbouring Thane city for the attack on the actor.

Man sets vehicle on fire in Bhopal



BHOPAL: A man allegedly set a vehicle on fire on the premises of the Bhopal district collectorate on Tuesday and also doused himself with petrol, claiming his pleas were not resolved.

Bystanders averted a potential tragedy by overpowering Hotam Singh, who had also poured petrol on himself.

Nobody was injured in the incident which occurred after the weekly public

hearing at the collector's office. District Collector Kaushlendra Vikram Singh confirmed that Hotam Singh set a vehicle ablaze.

He said Hotam Singh had claimed that one of his cases had been pending in the Sub-Divisional Magistrate's court and another in the High Court. "He also alleged threat from a person. We will verify Hotam Singh's claim and how he can be helped.

No govt in past 'insulted' Ambedkar the way Amit Shah did: Priyanka Vadra

BELAGAVI: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday said no government in the past had insulted the Constitution and its architect B R Ambedkar inside Parliament the way Union Home Minister Amit Shah had.

She alleged that the BJP wanted to "weaken" the Constitution and its institutions.

"Many governments have come and gone, including non-Congress governments, but no government had a minister who stood in Parliament and insulted Ambedkar," Priyanka Gandhi said at the 'Gandhi Bharat' event organised in Belagavi. The Congress organised the event to commemorate the centenary of the lone Congress session Mahatma Gandhi had chaired as the party's president in 1924.

Themed as 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan', the event targeted Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "insulting" the Indian



Constitution and its architect B R Ambedkar in the Rajya Sabha recently.

Vadra said people never imagined that Ambedkar would be "insulted" inside Parliament. By doing so, Shah had "insulted" the country and the freedom fighters who sacrificed everything for it, she alleged.

According to her, Shah dared to "insult" Ambedkar and the Constitution because, while the country fought for independence, another ideological stream emerged that was "anti-constitution".

Vadra also alleged that RSS members had burned Ambedkar's effigy and criticised him.

She said the BJP, being the off-

spring of the RSS, felt emboldened to "insult" Ambedkar and his Constitution.

"However, in 2024, the people taught the BJP a lesson, which was good because it scared Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After that, when he went to Parliament, he bowed before the Constitution. You made him do this," she said.

Noting that the BJP's priorities are not the country, the Constitution, democracy, or its people, she said Modi and Shah are "anti-Constitution" because their ideologies go against it and the diversity of the country.

"They are against the Constitution because their founder and ideology mocked the Constitution and the national flag, calling them foreign and inauspicious," Vadra said. She also alleged that when the BJP came to power at the Centre, it constituted a Constitution Review Committee.

"The BJP is against the Con-

stitution, reservation, and social justice. They want to weaken the judiciary and the RTI Act. They amended the SEBI Act to enable more corruption. They weakened the Lokpal Bill and the Election Commission of India," Vadra alleged.

She further stated that in BJP-ruled states, atrocities against women are high, as the party protects criminals rather than victims. The Wayanad MP also said the BJP amended labour laws, stripping the working class of their rights.

She added that the BJP brought laws that would have broken the farmers' backbone.

"The farmers demonstrated, and 700 farmers died during the agitation. Then they (the BJP) backtracked just before the elections. All their policies are anti-Constitution and will impact your day-to-day life," she told the crowd.