

Court acquits husband, kin in dowry death case, cites history of wife's suicidal tendency

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court has acquitted a man and his family of all charges related to domestic cruelty and causing the dowry death of his wife in less than a year of marriage, pointing to text messages suggesting a long history of suicidal tendencies.

The messages referred to in the case were exchanged between the deceased wife and her friend.

Additional Sessions Judge Nipun Awasthi acquitted accused Daman Deep, Harpreet Singh, Amarjeet Kaur and Milan Deep Kaur of all charges under Sections 489A (cruelty by husband or in-laws towards wife), 406 (criminal breach of trust), 304B (dowry death) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

"It is proved that the accused persons cannot be imputed with any conduct of cruelty or harassment to-



wards the deceased, and it is also proved that deceased was troubled by negative feelings and suicidal tendencies.

"Hence, this court finds that the prosecution has failed to prove its case and the accused persons are not proved to have subjected the deceased to cruelty or harassment in respect of dowry demand," the court said, acquitting all four in its judgment dated March 30.

According to the pro-

secution, the deceased, Harinder Kaur, had been married to accused Daman Deep since December 6, 2017. On the evening of February 16, 2018, Harinder hanged herself in her matrimonial home.

Since she died within months of the marriage, the executive magistrate conducted inquest proceedings. An FIR was then filed based on the allegations levelled by the deceased's mother against her husband, brother-in-law, mother-in-law

and sister-in-law.

The deceased's mother alleged her husband and in-laws used to harass her, demanding dowry of Rs 10 lakh and a big vehicle. She alleged they also did not allow the deceased to visit her parental home after marriage.

The defence argued that the deceased had suicidal tendencies and had exhibited the same throughout her lifetime. It was argued that her suicide was a result of the tendencies and not induced by the accused's conduct.

The Forensic Science Laboratory retrieved all data from the mobile handset of the deceased and produced it in court as evidence. The court highlighted a few text messages between the deceased and her friend in April 2017 and July 2017 clearly expressing suicidal tendencies even before her marriage.

Elephant kills man in Chhattisgarh's Marwahi district

GAURELA: A 55-year-old man was trampled to death by a wild elephant in Chhattisgarh's Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district on Friday, forest officials said.

Trilochan Singh, the victim, was collecting mahua flowers in the forest near his house in Dandiya village under Marwahi division in the wee hours when he ran into the tusker.

On being alerted about the incident, forest department personnel reached the spot and the body was shifted to hospital for post-mortem, said an official.

The elephant, who had been moving in the forests along the border of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh over the past few days, is still in the area and the local people have been alerted, he said.

According to official data, at least 325 people have been killed in elephant attacks in the state in the last five years.

Cong's 'vote theft' movement right, but Rahul, Kharge should back claims with proof: Ambedkar

MUMBAI: Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) chief Prakash Ambedkar on Friday said while the Congress' allegations of "vote theft" were right, its leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge need to substantiate their claims with evidence.

Talking to reporters, he said their claims would carry weight only if backed by verifiable data placed before a court.

"Rahul Gandhi's 'vote theft' movement is correct. However, in which constituencies were the names of the voters who were deleted listed? How many names were excluded? If this had been shown and provided, their movement would have gained weight," Ambedkar said.

The results of the 2024 Maharashtra assembly elections were "fabricated, illegal and unconstitutional", he said, stressing that any such claims must be



proven through proper legal channels.

Courts are the only platform where such data can be tested and verified. People should not be misled by unverified assertions, he said.

He said Gandhi and Kharge had not given adequate thought to substantiating their allegations and they should do so.

Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, has time and again targeted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) and also the Election Commission of India (ECI), accusing them of indulging in massive voter fraud in various assembly elections. Gandhi had earlier accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of "protecting" those allegedly attempting to delete voters' names, citing instances in Karnataka's Mahadevapura assembly seat and Maharashtra's Rajura constituency. The ECI rejected the allegations as incorrect and baseless.

NCW forms panel to probe heinous crime against 12-yr-old in Hazaribagh

NEW DELHI: The National Commission for Women (NCW) has taken suo motu cognizance of a horrifying crime against a 12-year-old girl in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district and expressed serious concern over the incident. According to the reports, the girl's body was discovered under suspicious circumstances on March 25, showing signs of extreme cruelty. The incident has sent shockwaves across the community and raised pressing questions about the safety of women and children.

In response, NCW Chairperson Vijaya Raghav has constituted a three-member

investigation committee to conduct a detailed inquiry.

The panel, comprising Mamta Kumari (former member, NCW), Manmohan Verma (legal officer, NCW), and Kanchan Khattar (senior coordinator, NCW), is scheduled to visit Hazaribagh to collect facts, review the case, and interact with local authorities to assess the circumstances surrounding the crime and the actions taken so far. Rahatkar has directed state administration and police officials to ensure swift, impartial, and effective action against the perpetrators, stressing that the strictest punitive measures.

Special package for Kandi region if SAD govt forms in 2027: Sukhbir

CHABBEWAL: SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal announced on Friday that if the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) forms the government in 2027, it will implement a special industrial package for Punjab's Kandi region and establish a Kandi Area Development Ministry.

Addressing a rally at Chabbeawal, he stated that the package would include power and tax subsidies and that road improvements would involve constructing highways connecting Pathankot to Chandigarh and Amritsar to Anandpur Sahib.

He said the proposed ministry would focus on the overall development of the Kandi (sub-mountainous) belt, including the installation of government tubewells and providing drip irrigation and underground pipeline

facilities to farmers.

Targeting the Aam Admi Party (AAP) government, Badal alleged that law and order in the state had deteriorated, claiming that ministers were collaborating with gangsters to threaten people and engage in extortion. He also criticised Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, alleging that he had lost touch with the public and was implementing the agenda of AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal.

Badal further accused the AAP of corruption, alleging that political rallies were being held using public funds and large amounts were being spent on arrangements.

Challenging the state government's investment claims, he pointed out that while the AAP had asserted an investment of Rs 1.5 lakh crore, the

actual investment was only approximately Rs 2,600 crore, according to RTI data.

He said investors were hesitant to invest in Punjab due to extortion and "gangster raj" and added that the SAD would ensure better law and order and provide incentives to industries.

Badal emphasised that industries would be encouraged to provide at least 75 per cent of jobs to locals.

Outlining his plans, he announced the establishment of a World Skill University with centres in every district, as well as the opening of medical and veterinary colleges.

He also announced interest-free loans of up to Rs 10 lakh for youth, the expansion of welfare schemes, and an increase in the old-age pension to Rs 3,100 per month.

Cong MLA Rajendra Bharti disqualified from MP assembly after conviction in cheating case

BHOPAL: Madhya Pradesh Congress MLA Rajendra Bharti has been disqualified from the state legislative assembly following his conviction in a case involving the tampering of bank records to secure illegal interest payments, officials said on Friday.

The disqualification, however, has triggered a political row, with the opposition party terming the "midnight" move a "blatant violation of the democratic process".

Following deliberations on the issue on Thursday night, the Vidhan Sabha authorities issued a notification annulling Bharti's membership from the Datia assembly seat, after his conviction in a case involving the tampering of bank records to secure illegal interest payments, officials said.

The Congress leader had defeated former MP home minister Narottam Mishra of the ruling BJP from the seat in the 2023 assembly polls.

Reacting to the development, Madhya Pradesh Congress president Jitu Patwari claimed that the Delhi court had given Bharti 60 days to appeal against his conviction. However, despite this, Assembly Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar opened the Assembly Secretariat at midnight and terminated his membership.

He described this action as the one taken under pressure from the government and "a blatant violation of democratic process".

The assembly's principal secretary, Arvind Sharma, issued a notification, citing a Delhi court order sentencing Bharti to three years' imprisonment and declaring the Datia seat vacant, on the night of April 2 and released to the

media on Friday morning.

A Delhi court on Thursday sentenced Bharti and a former bank employee to three years' imprisonment in a cheating case involving the forging of bank records to obtain illegal interest payments between 1998 and 2011.

Special Judge Dig Vinay Singh also imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on Bharti and former cashier Raghuvir Sharan Prajapati.

The duo was convicted on Wednesday for the offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery of a valuable security, forgery for cheating and using a forged document as genuine.

The case, which originated in MP's Datia, was transferred to Delhi by the Supreme Court in October last year, in light of the claim that efforts were made to intimidate defence witnesses.

The apex court, which had stayed further proceedings in the case pending before a court in Gwalior, had said it was the state's duty to ensure a fair trial was conducted.

In its 95-page judgment, the Delhi court rejected the defence plea that the accused, as "public servants", could not be prosecuted for discharge of official functions without government sanction, saying cheating and forgery are "dereliction of duty rather than the performance of a duty".

It said that Bharti and Prajapati, along with the MLA's mother Savitri Devi and possibly other unknown persons, conspired to cheat the complainant bank — Zila Sahkari Krishi Aur Gramin Vikas Bank — by continuing to draw interest at a much higher rate beyond 2011, even though their fixed deposit (FD) had an initial tenure of three years.

'Decisive, meaningful, giant step': BJP hails passage of Jan Vishwas Bill in Parliament

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Friday hailed the passage of the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026, in Parliament, describing it as a "decisive", "meaningful" and a "giant step" towards enhancing ease of living and ease of doing business in India.

Parliament on Thursday passed the Jan Vishwas Bill, (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, to amend 784 provisions in 79 central laws for decriminalising and rationalising minor offences to further improve the business environment and check harassment of people.

In a post on X late Thursday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "The passage of the Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 in Parliament is India's giant step towards accelerat-

ing ease of living and ease of business."

"Cutting down on several legal provisions makes Modi Ji's vision of New India a grand reality by making life easier and business simpler for all," he added.

BJP national president Nitin Nabin said the passage of the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026, marks an important step towards improving ease of living and ease of doing business in the country, with a clear focus on reform and simplification.

"By removing outdated legal provisions and reducing compliance burden, it reflects a governance model rooted in trust and efficiency. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, this initiative

strengthens the vision of a New India where citizens are empowered, businesses are encouraged and systems are simpler, faster and more effective," Nabin said in a post on X.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said the Bill will usher in a "new era" of trust-based governance and will prove to be a milestone.

"The Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026 truly is a milestone in the PM Narendra Modi ji-led government's efforts to boost ease of living and ease of doing business. The reduced compliance burden is set to benefit citizens, MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), small businesses and startups, ushering in a more enabling

and transparent ecosystem," the minister said in a post on X.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijji said it will be a big boost for citizens, MSMEs, startups and small businesses.

"The Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 is a milestone reform that reduces compliance burden and promotes a more transparent, enabling ecosystem," he said in a post on X.

Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil said in a post on X, "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026 is emerging as a significant and meaningful initiative in the direction of good governance."

Congress worked for infiltrators, people must remember old times while voting: Nitin Nabin

KAMALPUR: BJP leader Nitin Nabin on Friday alleged that Congress had worked for "infiltrators" and urged voters to remember its tenure while casting their votes in the Assam Assembly elections.

Addressing rallies in Kamalpur and Mangaldai, he expressed confidence that the BJP-led NDA would return to power for a third consecutive term under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

"The Congress government had opened the gates for infiltrators and gave our lands to them for vote bank politics. During their tenure, women and land were not safe," Nabin said.

The BJP government chosen by Assamese people showed the exit path to in-

filtrators and began a series of development works, he claimed.

"The last 10 years were the time of development in Assam. When you go to vote, you must remember the phase," the BJP chief said.

Nabin said that he has been visiting Assam since 2009-10 for various party work and had travelled extensively across the state.

"At that time, there was no talk of development at all. There were tensions when I wanted to travel from one location to another. People used to discuss only violence and agitation," he claimed.

Polling for the 126-member Assembly will be held on April 9, while the results will be declared on May 4.

Police busts cyber fraud racket offering 'escort service'; 12 held

JAIPUR: Rajasthan Police has busted a cyber fraud racket offering "escort service", which was operating from a remote island near a dam in Dungarpur district, and arrested 12 persons, officials said on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off received by the district cyber cell on Thursday, police raided a small island near the Som Kamlu Amba dam in the district.

The accused were found in an isolated area, using their mobile phones to carry out cyber fraud, police said.

"Police arrested 12 accused persons after surrounding the spot. During preliminary inquiry, the accused made contradictory statements. An inspection of their mobile phones and social media accounts revealed that they were running a fake escort service to cheat people across the country," SP Manish Kumar said.

Police also seized one SUV, 25 mobile phones, 50 SIM cards, two debit

cards and Rs 10,000 in cash during the raid. According to Kumar, the accused uploaded fake advertisements offering escort service and used objectionable images downloaded from the internet to lure their victims.

"The victims contacted the numbers listed in the advertisements after which the accused trapped them to extort money. They persuaded the victims to select profiles and transfer advance payments into multiple bank accounts," the officer said. During interrogation, the accused confessed to operating the racket and cheating people, he added.

The accused have been identified as Naresh (19), Ganesh Patidar (20), Mehul Suthar (26), Ganesh Patidar (27), Prakash Patidar (36), Vijay Patidar (25), Hitesh Patidar (21), Tejpal Patel (26), Dinesh Patidar (32), Naresh Patidar (27), Bhavesh Patidar (27) and Manish Patidar (25), police said.

BJP blaming Iran-Israel war for everything, says Akhilesh Yadav; questions foreign policy

LUCKNOW: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday alleged that the BJP was blaming the Iran-Israel conflict for a range of domestic issues and said such claims were an attempt to hide policy failures.

Responding to a question on the impact of the West Asia situation on industries in Kanpur during a press conference here, Yadav said that the responsibility for the condition of industries lies with the BJP government.

"These people may now even say that the Ganga is not getting cleaned because of the war in West Asia," the former UP chief minister remarked.

He said the government was diverting attention from farmers' issues and bringing up unrelated matters. Referring to fertiliser shortages, he said that farmers had to stand in long queues and fertilisers were not available even earlier, and "now such shortages could be attributed to the Iran-Israel conflict".

He added that this was a failure of government policy and ac-

cusced the BJP of shifting blame. Yadav also said that potato farmers were not getting fair prices and alleged that the government might attribute this as well to the ongoing conflict.

On a question related to foreign policy and India's ties with the United States, Yadav said he would not like to comment in detail as his knowledge on the subject was limited, but noted that the influence of the US was visible in many areas.

"If one studies past speeches of leaders, including those from the opposition, after Independence, it would be clear what kind of foreign policy India should have pursued and how it has evolved over time," the leader of the third largest party in Lok Sabha noted.

Yadav also referred to discussions around foreign funding to NGOs and their possible influence on policies, but said these were "contentious issues" on which he would not like to comment further at present. "Our immediate focus is on ensuring



respect for PDA (Backward classes, Dalits and minorities), establishing the rule of social justice and removing the corrupt BJP from government," he said.

On a question related to claims about late night voting during polls in Andhra Pradesh in 2024 coming to light now, Yadav said that concerns had been raised about voting continuing late into the night in some instances.

"Our stance is clear on this matter. In several progressive and developed countries such as the United States, Germany, Japan and England, voting is done through ballots despite their advanced technological capabilities. "In Germany, the use of electronic voting machines has even been considered unconstitutional," he said, and questioned the continued reliance on EVMs and VVPAT systems in In-

dia. Yadav reiterated his party's stand in favour of returning to ballot voting, saying it would at least allow poorer voters to visibly express their choice.

"The poor cannot vent out their anguish against the government by just pressing the button of the EVM. Using the ballot stamp, they can properly vent out their anger," he said in a lighter vein.

On a separate question regarding student politics and demands for the revival of student unions in universities, Yadav said that if the Samajwadi Party forms the government in Uttar Pradesh, it would send delegations of students from universities in the state to reputed global institutions such as the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge.

"These delegations would observe student union systems and share their experiences, and students from those institutions would also be invited to Lucknow for conferences to exchange ideas," he added.