

# After over 4 decades, Haryana BJP gets its second woman chief in Archana Gupta

**CHANDIGARH:** The Haryana BJP on Thursday got its second female president in more than four decades when the party appointed Archana Gupta as its new chief.

Gupta, a doctor by profession (radiologist), is at present the party state general secretary.

Kamla Verma, a veteran BJP leader, served as the first female president of the BJP's Haryana unit from 1980 to 1983. She died in 2021 at the age of 93.

BJP president Nitin Nabin on Thursday named chiefs for the party's Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Tripura units, according to separate notifications issued by BJP national general secretary Arun Singh.

Gupta, who takes over from incumbent Mohan Lal Badoli, thanked the party leadership for en-



trusting her with the responsibility.

Speaking to reporters in her hometown, she said the BJP has continuously been working to give opportunities to women in every field by treating them as equal partners.

She accused the Congress and the other opposition parties of betraying women by opposing the amendment to the women's quota law in Parliament, and alleged that they repeatedly blocked

efforts to ensure reservation for them.

Gupta thanked her predecessors, including Mohan Lal Badoli, Nayab Singh Saini, Om Prakash Dhankar and Subhash Barala, for strengthening the party in Haryana.

She also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and BJP President Nitin Nabin.

Gupta said she will strive to ensure maximum participation of women in

both the economic and social spheres.

Gupta first became the Panipat District Mahila Morcha (Women's Wing) president on September 9, 2015.

On August 13, 2019, she assumed the responsibility of BJP's Panipat president and served in that capacity until January 5, 2024.

On January 5, 2024, the party entrusted her with the responsibility of state general secretary.

Before entering active politics, since 2014, Gupta had been serving as the Haryana vice president of 'Bharatiya Swasthya Rekha', a wing of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). From 2013 to 2014, she was a co-convenor for the Medical Cell of the VHP.

By profession, Archana Gupta is a gold medalist doctor. She completed her MBBS in 1990 from

PGIMS, Rohtak, followed by her MD in radio-diagnosis in 1994 from the same institute.

The 1968-born spent her childhood amid discussions on patriotism and nation-building. She was deeply influenced by her grandfather, Surajbhan, a freedom fighter.

Her father, Purushottam Das Gupta, holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and runs a business in Samalkha, while her mother, Santosh Gupta, is a homemaker.

Gupta's husband, Dr Anil Gupta, is an ophthalmologist. The couple has one daughter, Arushi Gupta, who is also a doctor and one son, Aviral Gupta.

The chief minister, who was in Panipat, congratulated Gupta on her appointment and offered her sweets.

# Par panel summons Education Ministry, NTA, CBI officials over conduct of exams

**NEW DELHI:** A parliamentary panel has summoned officials of the Union Education Ministry, the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the CBI to appear before it on Friday in connection with the assurances pertaining to the conduct of examinations by the testing agency.

According to a notice issued by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat on May 27, the Committee on Government Assurances will hear the views of Vineet Joshi, Secretary of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, along with Abhishek Singh, Director General of NTA and Praveen Sood, Director of CBI.

The committee meeting is scheduled for 11 am on Friday.

The matter pertains to an assurance given in Rajya Sabha in reply to an unstarred question (USQ) dated November 27, 2024, regarding "Conduct of Examination by NTA", the notice said.

In its written reply to

the question in November, 2024, the Education Ministry had stated that as informed by NTA, contracts for conducting examinations are awarded to agencies "as per the extant rules, orders and guidelines issued by the Government of India".

The ministry had also informed the House that complaints against vendors are dealt with in accordance with the terms and conditions laid down in the work order or tender document and action ranges "from deduction of payment to debarment" upon ascertaining deficiency of service.

On the NEET-UG 2024 paper leak case, the ministry had said the CBI was conducting a "comprehensive investigation into the entire gamut of alleged irregularities including conspiracy, cheating, breach of trust etc." and had filed five charge sheets against 45 accused as on November 22, 2024.

The NEET-UG for admissions into medical

courses took place on May 3 this year but was cancelled by the NTA on May 12 amid allegations of a paper leak. The CBI is currently investigating this matter, and a retest is scheduled for June 21.

The committee will also hear the views of Secretary of Union Health and Family Welfare Punya Salila Srivastava, National Medical Commission (NMC) chairman Abhijit Chandrakant Sheth and CBI Director regarding an assurance given in reply to Rajya Sabha USQ dated 29 July, 2025 regarding "Medical College Scam", according to the notice.

On the "Medical College Scam", the Health Ministry in a written reply had informed Rajya Sabha in July 2025 that the CBI had lodged an FIR in New Delhi under provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Prevention of Corruption Act in connection with alleged irregularities involving dummy faculty, fake inspections and falsified patient records.

# Transparent policies key for sustainable aquaculture growth: Andhra minister

**AMARAVATI:** Andhra Pradesh Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu on Thursday said transparent policy measures and coordinated efforts among stakeholders were essential to ensure stability and sustainable growth in the aquaculture sector.

The minister said the government had reviewed issues affecting the aquaculture sector, including the increase in shrimp feed prices, shortage of raw materials, export-related challenges and the growing financial burden on farmers.

"Long-term stability and growth in the aquaculture sector can be achieved only through transparent policies and coordinated cooperation among all stakeholders," Atchannaidu said in a release.

The agriculture and fisheries minister said farmers were facing pressure due to rising feed costs, while the industry was also struggling with increasing raw material prices.

The government would take balanced decisions to protect farmers' interests and ensure the sustainability of the sector, he added.

According to Atchannaidu, views and suggestions from aquaculture farmers, feed manufacturers, exporters and industry representatives were discussed during the meeting to identify measures to stabilise the sector.

He said the rise in feed prices during the ongoing summer crop season could adversely affect farmers and noted that the feed industry was also under strain because of escalating input costs.

The minister said the state government was prioritising the maintenance of feed and seed quality and would further strengthen technology-driven monitoring systems.

He said measures such as CCTV-based hatchery surveillance, seed traceability mechanisms and Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled monitoring systems were being reinforced to improve quality control and transparency in the sector.

Atchannaidu also said the state government would submit a comprehensive report to the Centre on issues concerning GM soy imports, fish meal availability, import licences and export competitiveness.

The minister said the government was committed to safeguarding the interests of aquaculture farmers, ensuring stability in the feed industry and promoting exports through transparent governance.

# DD News office protest: Delhi court rejects pre-arrest bail plea of accused



**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi court has dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of a man in a case regarding a protest outside Doordarshan Bhawan last month, saying the custodial interrogation of the accused was needed to unearth the "entire conspiracy".

On April 14, a protest was held outside the DD News office against anchor Ashok Shrivastav for allegedly using derogatory language against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, following which a case was registered at Tilak Marg police station. In an order dated May 26, Additional Sessions Judge Shefali Barnala Tandon said there are prima facie serious allegations against the applicant or accused Ranvir Singhania, noting that the investigating officer (IO) opposed the relief. The IO argued that the accused's custodial interrogation is required for identification of other accused persons.

"It is stated by IO that as per the CCTV footage collected by them, the applicant/accused is clearly seen bringing the protestors to Doordarshan Bhawan in multiple vehicles bearing Rajasthan registration numbers, and he is also seen protesting, shouting slogans and burning effigy," Judge Tandon said. The judge further said that according to the IO, after the accused joined the investigation under the protection of the court, CCTV footage had been shown to him and he identified himself and other 17-18 persons there, and his vehicle used for bringing the protestors to the spot was recovered and seized. "Since the matter is at the initial stage and the custodial interrogation of applicant/accused has been claimed by the investigating agency to unearth the entire conspiracy and the people involved in the commission of the offence and apprehend them, hence, this court finds that no ground is made out to grant anticipatory bail," the judge said, dismissing the plea.

# Sustainable, inclusive, rapid growth to shape policymaking in coming years: Jairam Ramesh

**KOZHIKODE:** Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Thursday said SIR—sustainable, inclusive and rapid development—would be the dominant theme of policymaking in the coming years, irrespective of which party is in power.

Delivering the M P Veerendrakumar Memorial Lecture here, Ramesh said the country would face three major challenges over the next 10 to 15 years, which he termed as SIR, with 'S' standing for sustainable development, 'I' for inclusive development and 'R' for rapid development.

He said all three were important, as the country needed economic growth that was environmentally



sustainable, inclusive in ensuring benefits reached all sections of society rather than a select few, and rapid enough to create jobs

for the seven to eight million Indians entering the labour market every year.

The senior Congress leader said that irrespec-

tive of which party was in power at the Centre or in the states, the priority in the coming years would be integrating the environment with development.

"Secondly, we have to create wealth, but ensure that inequalities do not widen. Thirdly, we have to expand the economy to create more and more jobs," he said.

The AICC general secretary in charge of communications also spoke about his close association with Veerendrakumar and recalled the latter's contributions.

Ramesh said he first met Veerendrakumar nearly 30 years ago after the latter was sworn in as Union Minister of State for Fi-

nance.

At the time, Ramesh was serving as an adviser to then Finance Minister P Chidambaram.

"Over the years, till his death, we maintained a very close and cordial relationship," he said.

The Rajya Sabha MP said three aspects stood out in Veerendrakumar's life, one of them being the socialist tradition to which he dedicated his life.

He said the socialist tradition in India dated back nearly a century and included leaders such as Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay.

"It is said of the socialists that they could not live together for six months and

could not live apart for six months.

"So the socialists went through various avatars — the Congress Socialist Party, Socialist Party of India, Praja Socialist Party and others — till George Fernandes formed the Samata Party, which later became the JD, then JD(S) and JD(U). So all the alphabets of the English language were covered by the socialists," Ramesh said.

However, he said the socialist tradition stood for values rather than power.

"They were invested in people's struggles. Veerendrakumar represented and exemplified the grand socialist tradition, which is now gradually withering away," he said.

# Delhi plans to operate two hydrogen fuel buses in tie-up with NTPC: Delhi minister

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi government plans to operate two hydrogen-powered buses in the national capital as part of its push towards clean energy and sustainable public transport, Transport Minister Pankaj Singh said on Thursday.

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) is working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with state-owned NTPC Limited, which will provide the buses under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

"Delhi is steadily moving towards clean, future-ready public mobility solutions. Hydrogen fuel technology represents an important step in our journey towards sustainable and environmentally responsible transport systems," Singh said.

As part of the proposed operational framework, an initial deployment of

hydrogen fuel cell buses is being undertaken in coordination with NTPC.

The buses are proposed to operate under the Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model, with DTC facilitating operational deployment.

According to officials, costs beyond the approved GCC rate of Rs 45 per kilometre will be borne by the NTPC. "Under the proposed arrangement, operational expenditure at approved GCC rates would be borne by DTC, while support for costs beyond the GCC framework is being explored through NTPC's CSR mechanism," the minister said.

Singh said that the initiative aims to introduce advanced hydrogen fuel cell technology into Delhi's public transport ecosystem, complementing the city's ongoing clean mobility transition and environmentally sustainable transport solutions.

# Siddaramaiah thanks people of Karnataka in emotional post after resigning as CM

**BENGALURU:** Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Thursday shared an emotional message thanking the people of Karnataka for their love and support during his tenure as chief minister, after resigning from the post.

Siddaramaiah shared on X a photograph of himself standing on a stage with folded hands before a gathering in a gesture of gratitude.

He wrote, "Thank you. Your love. Your trust. My forever strength." The message appeared on the photograph carrying his signature.

Thanking the people for standing by him during difficult times, Siddaramaiah said in the post: "I bow my head before the people of Karnataka—the lakhs of affectionate hearts who treated me as one among their own, blessed me, encouraged me, corrected me, stood by me in difficult times and held my hand throughout this long



journey. Whatever I am today is because of you."

Stating that the Constitution was his religion and the people his God, Siddaramaiah said his resignation was only from the post of chief minister and not from public life or his commitment to the people.

"Till my last breath, I will continue to fight for social justice and stand against divisive communal forces that go against the spirit of our

Constitution. Thank you for your love, trust and companionship through every step of this journey," he added.

Siddaramaiah resigned as Karnataka chief minister, two days after the Congress high command asked him to step down.

Flanked by his deputy and successor, D K Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah addressed a packed press conference shortly after submitting his resignation to the Governor's

Special Secretary at Lok Bhawan here.

Special Secretary Prabhushankar received the resignation as Governor Thawarchand Gehlot was out of the state.

"I have tendered my resignation from the post of chief minister," Siddaramaiah told reporters, expressing confidence that the Governor would accept it in accordance with constitutional provisions.

Siddaramaiah had made it clear time and again that he would resign whenever the high command instructed him to do so.

There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, who is also the party state president, for the coveted chief minister's post after Congress won the May 2023 Assembly election.

The party then managed to convince Shivakumar and made him the deputy CM.

# No place in Cong for men with calibre: BJP after Manish Tewari's dig over party's new Punjab chief

**NEW DELHI:** BJP national general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh on Thursday said there is no place for "men with calibre" in the Congress after its MP Manish Tewari took a swipe at the saffron party over the appointment of Sardar Kewal Singh Dhillon as its Punjab unit president.

BJP national president Nitin Nabin named Dhillon as the party's Punjab unit chief.

A two-time former Congress MLA from Barnala, Dhillon had joined the BJP in 2022 and was subsequently appointed vice president of the state unit of the party.

In a post on X, Tewari took potshots at the BJP over Dhillon's appointment as the Punjab BJP chief and said, "It is a tell-



ing comment on the state of the BJP in Punjab that they can only find former Congressmen to appoint as state presidents."

Reacting to the Congress MP's remarks, Santhosh hit back and wrote on X, "And, it's a known fact that there is no place

for men of calibre in the Congress."

Dhillon, the newly appointed Haryana BJP chief, is considered a close confidant of former Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh, who had also joined the BJP in 2022 about a year after

his bitter parting with the Congress.

The BJP appointing Dhillon, a Sikh, as its Punjab unit chief indicates the party's intent to strongly fight the state assembly polls due next year. According to sources, some state BJP leaders had been pushing for a Sikh face to lead the Punjab unit of the party.

The BJP has already started preparations for the 2027 Punjab assembly polls hoping to dislodge the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government from power in the state.

Dhillon, 76, replaces Sunil Jakhar, who was appointed as the Punjab BJP president in July 2023. Jakhar had also joined the BJP in 2022, ending his long association with the Congress.

# Telangana's Kazipet rail manufacturing unit to be operational soon: Vaishnav

**NEW DELHI:** Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Thursday reviewed the progress of the Kazipet rail manufacturing unit in Telangana and expressed satisfaction, saying that the versatile railway rolling stock manufacturing unit will soon be operational with the production of intercity trains.

"To begin with, Kazipet will manufacture 200 intercity trains over the next five years," Vaishnav said.

Officials said these trains will be deployed across the country for short-distance travel of up to 300 km, with frequent stops. Each trip will include multiple halts, enabling citizens to commute conveniently between towns and cities.

"Whether students travelling to nearby towns for higher education or common people commuting for healthcare and work-related needs, these trains will provide a new affordable

option for intercity travel," the Ministry said.

"These intercity trains will function like shuttle services connecting adjacent towns across India. With the production of these trains, a significant amount of local traffic is likely to shift from roads to railways," it added.

Speaking about the features, officials said the intercity trains will be equipped with modern facilities such as automatic door closing systems, superior ventilation, and a safe coach design with a 20-coach configuration.

"In addition, these intercity trains will feature modern jerk-free couplers and bogies. These trains will be designed to run at a speed of 130 kmph," they added.

The railway ministry also highlighted the trains' unique energy-efficient features, stating that they will have regenerative braking technology.