

NEET: Apex Court tells NTA to publish city, centre-wise results

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday said a re-conduct of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Under Graduate 2024 can only happen if there are sufficient grounds for it and directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to publish by Saturday the full city and centre-wise results on its website while masking identities of students.

Hearing a batch of petitions concerning grievances related to NEET-UG 2024 and prayers to cancel the exam due to malpractices, a Bench comprising Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Justice J B Pardiwala, and Justice Manoj Mishra told the senior advocate Narendra Hooda, appearing on behalf of the petitioner students, "You have to show us that the leak was so systemic and affected the entire examination to warrant the cancellation of the entire exam."

At the time of ordering publication of results, the Apex Court was unwilling to defer the counselling for selected students which is scheduled to begin from Monday. The CJ said, "If



we accept your wider submission, we would like your assistance on the lines on which the investigation must happen."

The CJ said that an investigation is going on. If what the Central Bureau of Investigation has told us is revealed, it will affect the investigation. "People will become wise."

Hooda said there is a five-fold increase in the scores. "This is one of the red flags."

He said that the handicap is that they have not declared the entire results. The Union Public Service Commission

declares the entire result of all the people. At least, NTA should have declared the results of the one lakh people who would get admission.

CJI then asked Hooda, "How many seats are there in government medical colleges?"

Hooda said there are 56,000 seats.

And how many seats in private colleges, the CJ asked. "There are 52,000 seats in the private colleges," he said. So a total of 1.08 lakh seats. If a re-exam happens, the total number is 1.08 lakh and not 23 lakh,

the CJ asked.

There is a problem with that argument. Merely because out of 23 lakh only 1 lakh will get admission, we cannot order a re-examination. Re-examination has to be on a concrete footing that the entire exam is affected, the CJ said.

Hooda said that the stake is of only one lakh people, not 23 lakh and segregation of untainted is not possible. The CJ said, "Conceptually, if you can establish that, then the whole exam will go." Justice Pardiwala asked, "We would like to know, out

of the 1.08 lakh, how many petitioners are before us?"

CJI asked the NTA counsel, "Tell us how many students are involved in the petitioner." Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde appearing for NTA said some who are within the top 1.08 lakh group are also before the court since they want government seats.

CJI asked the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta what was the minimum mark received by the petitioners.

Solicitor General replied that 131 students are not falling within 1.08 lakh segment which wants a re-test and there are 254 who are falling within 1.08 lakh group and are opposing the re-test.

The CJ then asked NTA, "What is the cut-off mark for the 56,000 (government seats) and the 1.08 lakh?"

NTA counsel Naresh Kaushik then showed a table consisting of a list of top 100 rankers.

The court later ordered the publication of entire results as petitioners pleaded that doing so would increase public confidence in the NTA. The hearing is likely to continue on Friday.

Some BJP MLAs are keen on joining NCP (SP): Anil

NAGPUR: Former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh on Thursday claimed that some BJP MLAs are keen on joining the NCP (SP).

He said the "switch" to the Sharad Pawar-led outfit has started in the form of ex-corporators, referring to the resignation of Ajit Pawar-led NCP's Pimpri-Chinchwad unit chief Ajit Gavhane and two former corporators.

Gavhane had said on Wednesday that they would seek the blessing of Sharad Pawar.

Speaking to reporters after a press conference here, the senior NCP (SP) leader claimed that some MLAs from the BJP are also interested in being a part of his party as they are "disappointed after not getting representation in the government".

"MLAs from the NCP (headed by Ajit Pawar) will also return. However, Sharad Pawar will decide who will be taken into NCP (SP)," he said.

Asked if Ajit Pawar is one among them, Deshmukh said, "He is making his own party. Let him expand it."

Sharad Pawar said on Wednesday that a decision on the potential entry of any leader in his party will be a collective one, refusing to confirm whether Ajit Pawar will be accommodated if he chooses to return.

Ajit Pawar split the NCP, founded by Sharad Pawar, in July 2023 when he led some MLAs loyal to him to join the Eknath Shinde-led Mahayuti government, also comprising the Shiv Sena and BJP.



Speculations about unrest in the Ajit Pawar camp started doing rounds after the NCP led by him lost three of the four seats it contested in recent Lok Sabha elections. By contrast, the NCP (SP) won 8 out of 10 constituencies it contested in alliance with Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT).

Addressing a press conference in Nagpur, Deshmukh on Thursday asked the state government to make public the report of a commission that probed into bribery allegations against him and warned that he would move court if it didn't happen.

He leader accused the Maharashtra government of internationally holding back the report of the Chandivall Commission, which he claimed has given him the clean chit.

The NCP (SP) leader told reporters here that former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh had levelled allegations against him when he was the state's home

minister following which he himself had asked the then chief minister Uddhav Thackeray to initiate an inquiry. The state had formed a commission under Retd Justice Kailash Chandivall, which submitted a 1,400-page report after 11 months two years ago, he said.

"Despite several requests the report has neither been made public nor placed before the state legislature so far," said Deshmukh.

He claimed that several newspapers in Maharashtra had reported that the Chandivall Commission had cleared him of any wrongdoing.

"The government is purposely delaying in making it public as I have got the clean chit from the commission," he said.

Deshmukh asked the government to bring the Chandivall Commission report into the public domain and warned that he would be left with no other option but to approach the court if the state failed to do it.

Freebies being announced despite heavy debt as Mahayuti suffered losses in LS polls: Sanjay



MUMBAI: Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday alleged that the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra was announcing freebies despite the state reeling under the debt burden of Rs 8 lakh crore as the ruling parties suffered setbacks in the Lok Sabha elections.

His remark comes a day after Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced a job training and stipend scheme for youth, tentatively named 'Ladka Bhau' Yojana. The scheme was announced days after the government introduced a monthly financial assistance scheme for eligible women.

Under the 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin' scheme announced in the state Budget, married, divorced, and destitute women aged 21-60 will receive Rs 1,500 per month, with the annual family income of beneficiaries capped at Rs 2.5 lakh.

"The government copied the Madhya Pradesh government's (Ladli Behna) scheme to provide women Rs 1,500 per month, while under the Ladka Bhau scheme, men who are Class 12 pass will get Rs 6,000 and unem-

ployed graduates will get Rs 10,000. So why should women get just Rs 1,500..Will they be able to run their houses in this amount? We demand that ladki bahin (beloved sister) should also get Rs 10,000 per month," he told reporters.

"The state already has a debt of Rs 8 lakh crore. This is not a small amount," he added.

Before the Lok Sabha polls, the ruling Mahayuti alliance used to say that the opposition will not be able to win even 10 parliamentary seats in Maharashtra, but the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) bagged 31 seats, he said.

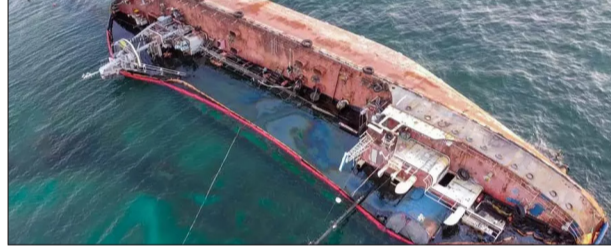
The BJP's seat count in Maharashtra dropped drastically from 23 in 2019 to just nine in the recent Lok Sabha polls, with its ally Shiv Sena led by CM Shinde securing seven seats and the NCP, led by deputy CM Ajit Pawar, managing to win in just one constituency.

In contrast, the opposition MVA, comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar), and the Congress, put up an impressive show and collectively won 30 out of the 48 seats.

In the upcoming assembly elections, the opposition MVA will win 280 (out of total 288) seats, Raut claimed.

"There is no formula decided as yet for the MVA. At present, we are assessing all the 288 assembly constituencies. We will sit together and decide who will contest which seat," he said. When asked about senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal from the Ajit Pawar faction meeting NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, Raut said, "Bhujbal is a big actor."

Search for remaining 6 crew of sunken oil tanker continues; one Indian found dead



MUSCAT/NEW DELHI: Search and rescue efforts are continuing to locate the six remaining missing crew members of the sunken oil tanker Prestige Falcon, even as the rescued eight Indians and one Sri Lankan are in good health. One Indian crew member was found dead.

The Oman Maritime Security Centre in a post said that 10 crew members of the Prestige Falcon that sank off the Oman coast on Monday night were rescued from the sea, with one of them found dead.

It said the nine rescued men are in good health and are receiving necessary medical care, while search and rescue operations are continuing for the remaining missing men. "The surviving

crew members of the distressed oil tanker 'Prestige Falcon' include eight Indian nationals and one Sri Lankan national.

"They are in good health and have received the necessary medical care. Search and rescue efforts are still ongoing to locate the remaining missing crew members."

On Tuesday evening, the Oman Maritime Security Centre said: "Search and rescue operations have successfully found 10 crew members of the oil tanker Prestige Falcon, 9 found alive."

"Tragically, one crew member was found deceased. The search and rescue operations continue for the remaining members of the vessel's crew."

Avoid hate speeches against PM Modi, BJP cautions Cong

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Thursday urged Opposition parties, particularly the Congress and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, to refrain from using words that could incite violence against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, citing the assassination attempt on former US President Donald Trump on July 13.

Addressing a press conference here, BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said, "The use of words like violence and murder for short-term political gains by some political parties is unfortunate."

Quoting an article written by a former Indian Police Service Officer, in which he has drawn attention towards

an environment of negativity, security activities and its impact on India, the BJP spokesperson said the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the recent deadly attack on Trump speak volumes about the gravity of the situation.

"It is unfortunate and a matter of concern that such words and language that provoke violence are being used," he said.

He blamed Rahul Gandhi, the Opposition leader in Lok Sabha, for using language that could incite violence against Modi.

"Violent words like 'death' and 'digging a grave' have been used in the speeches of Congress leaders.

New MCD school to open soon in Ashok Vihar: Mayor

NEW DELHI: Delhi Mayor Shelly Oberoi on Thursday announced the opening of a new MCD school in North West Delhi's Ashok Vihar area to provide primary education to local children.

The school will be the third primary school built by the AAP-led Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Oberoi told reporters in a press conference here.

Located at C-2 block of Ashok Vihar in the Keshavpuram zone, the school will be inaugurated in the next 15 days, she said.

Sharing details about the facilities at the new school, the mayor said it is equipped with 14 classrooms, 2 nursery rooms, a computer room, office space, library, science room, staff room, medical room, sports room and a hall. "This will be the third MCD school built by the Kejriwal-led AAP government in the last 1.5 years. Last year we inaugurated an MCD school in Vishnu Garden in the West Delhi zone and one at Bawana in Narela zone," she added.

The mayor said these schools provide primary education to students in the local area and help in strengthening their foundational learning.

The MCD has 1,535 schools at 1,185 sites across 12 zones of the city where around 8.5 lakh students study, Oberoi said.

2 held for creating, distributing fake forest rights certificates to villagers in Kabirdham

KAWARDHA: Two men have been arrested for allegedly creating and distributing counterfeit forest rights certificates to 19 villagers in Chhattisgarh's Kabirdham district, police said on Thursday.

The duo, along with two others wanted in the case, collected Rs 3.34 lakh from the villagers for issuing these fabricated documents, they said.

Forest rights certificates are distributed by government authorities to adivasis and other traditional forest dwellers who are in possession of forest land for the last three generations under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

These papers establish the ownership of the land in their possession.

The accused, identified as Mannul Khushre (34) and Mukesh Yadav (32), residents of Rengakhar area of the district, were arrested on Wednesday, a police official said.

Efforts were on to trace two more accused in the case, Devilal Kushre and Ramkumar Yadav, natives of the same area, he said.

On getting complaints about illegal encroachment on forest land in Rengakhar forest range, which shares border with neighbouring Madhya Pradesh, using fake documents a couple of months ago, forest department officials examined land rights certificates distributed in the area, the official said.

The examination found forest rights certificates of 19 residents from eight villages fake as they carried forged signatures and seals of the district collector and divisional forest officer (DFO), he informed.

Subsequently, forest department personnel lodged an FIR in this connection on June 29 under IPC sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security, will etc), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using as genuine a forged document) and 34 (common intention) at the Rengakhar police station against four persons.

A joint team of the forest department and the local police launched a probe into the case, he said.

The investigation revealed the four accused collected Rs 3.34 lakh from villagers and gave them fake forest rights certificates, the official said.



Rajasthan to hold citizenship camps for minority refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan government will hold special camps to grant Indian citizenship to minority refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Health Minister Gajendra Singh said on Thursday.

He was replying to supplementary questions on behalf of the home minister during Question Hour in the Rajasthan Assembly.

Singh said special efforts are being made by the state government to grant citizenship to refugees as soon as possible.

Rules and procedures have been simplified to grant Indian citizenship to minority refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan and

Bangladesh. District collectors have been authorised to give citizenship certificates, he said.

Special citizenship camps will be organised every month at the district level to provide citizenship certificates to Pakistani refugees.

Instructions have been issued to district collectors in this regard, the minister added.

According to Singh, 2,329 people have been granted citizenship in the state from 2016 to 2024 so far. A total of 1,566 applications are pending at present. Of these, Intelligence Bureau reports are awaited in 300 cases, Singh said.

Guj launches scheme to provide rented accommodation to construction workers

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Thursday launched a scheme to provide temporary accommodation to nearly 15,000 construction workers at a nominal rate of Rs 5 per day.

For the 'Shramik Basera' scheme, the CM performed the ground-breaking ceremony of 17 dwelling structures to house the labourers in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Vadodara and Rajkot cities, said an official release.

Patel was present at one such site in the Jagatpur area of Ahmedabad to lay its foundation stone. He launched the other such facilities virtually, it said. The CM also launched a portal for the



Shramik Basera scheme, the release said.

In his address at the event, the CM said the scheme will benefit about 15,000 construction workers once the facilities are ready. Accommodation will be provided to construction workers for a daily rent of Rs 5 per person. In the next three years, more such dwelling centres will be built across Gujarat for the

benefit of about 3 lakh construction workers. The project will cost Rs 1,500 crore, he said.

The move is aimed at bringing about a "qualitative change" in the standard of living of workers from the unorganised sector and construction workers by "providing them with food, health, housing and financial support", he added.

PM, Railway Minister must take responsibility for 'lapses': Congress on train derailment in UP

NEW DELHI: In the wake of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derailment, the Congress on Thursday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw must take responsibility of the "massive lapses" and the Kavach anti-collision system should be installed expeditiously on all routes.

Four people were killed and 20 injured when eight coaches of the Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express derailed near Gonda in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday, officials said.

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said four



people were killed in the accident. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the derailment of

Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express in Uttar Pradesh is yet another instance of how the Modi govern-

ment has "systematically jeopardised" rail safety.

"Our deepest condolences to the families of the bereaved and our thoughts and prayers are with the injured. A month ago, 11 people lost their lives when a goods train collided with the Sealdah-Agartala Kanchanjunga Express," he said.

Kharge pointed out that the Commissioner of Railway Safety has stated that the accident was "waiting to happen".

"Failure of automatic signal, lapses at multiple levels in managing operations and non-availability of critical safety equipment such

as walkie-talkie with the loco pilot and train manager are some of the reasons cited for collision in the probe report," Kharge said.

"PM Narendra Modi and his Railway Minister, who leaves no opportunity for self-publicity, must take direct responsibility of the massive lapses that have plagued the Indian Railways," he added.

The Congress president said his party's single demand was that the Kavach anti-collision system be "installed expeditiously" on all routes across India to ensure enhanced safety measures and prevent accidents.