

# Arvind Kejriwal moves HC against arrest

NEW DELHI, Mar 23 (PTI)

**CHIEF** Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday moved the Delhi High Court challenging his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in the money laundering case linked to the Delhi Excise Policy scam.

Sources in his Aam Aadmi Party said his legal team would request the High Court to hear the matter urgently, preferably on Sunday. In his plea, Kejriwal, who was apprehended by the ED on Friday night, contended that his arrest and remand were illegal and that he was entitled to be released from custody immediately.

The ED had arrested Kejriwal hours after the High Court

refused to grant him protection from coercive action. Kejriwal had approached the High Court for quashing and setting aside all proceedings including the summonses against him.

In that petition, Kejriwal said he is a "vocal critic" of the ruling party, an Opposition leader and a partner in the I.N.D.I.A. bloc, and the ED, being under the Centre's control, has been "weaponised".

**I WILL RETURN SOON, SAYS KEJRIWAL IN MESSAGE READ OUT BY WIFE:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal, in perhaps her first such public appearance, read out his message sent from Enforcement Directorate custody on Saturday in which the

AAP chief said he cannot be kept behind bars for long and he will return soon to fulfill his promises to the people.

The video statement by Sunita Kejriwal, a former IRS officer who has so far maintained a distance from active politics, was streamed live by the AAP. "Whether inside or outside, every moment of my life is dedicated to serving the country. Every drop of my blood is dedicated to the country," Kejriwal was quoted as saying by his wife. "Aisi salakhein nahi jo aapke bhai, bete ko zyada din andar rakh sakhe (No jail can keep your brother, your son inside for long). I will soon come out and fulfill my promise," he said in the message.

## AAP office in Delhi 'sealed', matter to be raised with EC, says Atishi

NEW DELHI, Mar 23 (PTI)

**THE** Aam Aadmi Party office in Delhi has been "sealed" from all sides, its senior leader Atishi claimed on Saturday and said the party will report the matter to the Election Commission.

A Delhi Police officer refuted the charge that the AAP office was sealed. Police personnel were deployed at DDU Marg to stop the gathering of people since CrPC section 144 is imposed.

In a post on X, Atishi questioned the "sealing" of the party office, saying it goes against the concept of having a "level playing field" in elections

as promised by the Constitution.

"How can access to a national party's office be stopped during the Lok Sabha election? This (is) against the 'level playing field' promised in the Indian Constitution. We are seeking time with the EC to complain against this," the Delhi Minister said in her post.

Another senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged that all access to the party office has been stopped by the Union Government. "We will approach EC. Centre has closed all access to the AAP head office at ITO, that too in Model Code of Conduct," he said in a post on X.

# Protesters call on UN to urge Pakistan to vacate PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan

GENEVA, Mar 23 (ANI)

**POLITICAL** activists from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Gilgit-Baltistan held a protest outside the United Nations in Geneva on Friday, demanding Pakistan vacate its forces from the occupied territories in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution.

The protest was organised under the auspices of the National Equality Party JKGBL during the 55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Prof Sajjad Raja, a political activist from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Chairman of the National Equality Party JKGBL, stated, "We are here today to raise our voice against the violation of basic human rights in PoJK and Gilgit Baltistan. We are living like animals in GB and PoJK. We want Pakistan out of PoJK and Gilgit Baltistan as advised by the United Nations. It marks the 77th consecutive year of oppression, lacking basic human rights, and fundamental freedom in PoJK and Gilgit Baltistan."

"So, we are here to call on the United

Nations to implement its resolutions. The first part of the resolution stipulates that Pakistan must withdraw its army and citizens so that the people of Jammu & Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, and PoJK can decide their future," said Prof. Sajjad.

The protesters carried banners reading "Act 1974 of Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir & Order 2018 of Gilgit Baltistan is a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and "Why is the UN continuously failing to force Pakistan out of Pakistani occupied Jammu Kashmir & Gilgit Baltistan".

Speaking to ANI, Habib-ur-Rehman, a member of the Jammu Kashmir People's National Party, said, "I am here to raise my voice against the Pakistani occupation at the United Nations. Pakistan is exploiting the resources of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, and I am here to represent the people against this occupation, looting, and killing of our people. Our history has been dismantled by the Pakistani regime, and I am here to raise awareness."

# Chinese Coast Guard ships blast Philippine boat with water cannon

MANILA, Mar 23 (AP)

TWO Chinese Coast Guard ships fired at a Philippine supply boat with water cannon on Saturday in the latest confrontation near a disputed South China Sea shoal, causing heavy damage to the wooden vessel, Philippine officials said. It was not immediately clear if the Philippine navy crew was injured, or whether their damaged boat, the *Unaizah May 4*, managed to manoeuvre past the Chinese coast guard blockade to deliver supplies to Philippine forces manning a territorial outpost in the nearby Second Thomas Shoal. It's the second time this month the *Unaizah May 4* has been damaged during an attempt to resupply the outpost.

The shoal has been occupied by a small contingent of Philippine navy personnel on a marooned warship since the late 1990s, but has



recently been surrounded by Chinese coast guard and suspected militia vessels in an increasingly tense territorial standoff.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei also have overlapping claims in the resource-rich and busy waterway, a key global trade route. The United States lays no claims to the strategic waters but has deployed Navy ships and fighter jets in what it calls "freedom of navigation" operations, which have been criticised by China.

# Muizzu calls India closest ally, seeks debt relief

MALÉ, Mar 22 (IANS)

IN AN about-turn, Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu called India its “closest ally” and hoped it would provide debt relief to repay heavy loans that the successive Governments in the island nation have taken from New Delhi.

Further, the President with a pro-China tilt, stated that he has not taken any action or made any statements that may strain the relationship between the two countries, ‘The Edition’ newspaper reported.

The total amount of loans taken from the Export and Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) stood at USD 1.4 million (MVR 22 million) and together with this, the amount owed by the Maldives to India by the end of 2023, stood at MVR 6.2 billion. In his first interview since taking office last year with Edition’s sister publication, ‘Mihaaru,’ Muizzu said: “The conditions we have inherited are such that there are very large loans taken from India. Hence, we are holding discussions to explore leniencies in the repayment structure of these loans.”

Muizzu’s remarks come weeks after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar took a veiled dig at Muizzu on his “big bullies” comment on India, saying: “Big bullies do not offer \$4.5 billion aid or vaccine or food when neighbouring countries are in distress.”

# Netanyahu rejects US plea to halt Rafah offensive

TEL AVIV, Mar 22 (AP)

US SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken on Friday once again left the Middle East empty-handed as Israel's Prime Minister rejected American appeals to call off a promised ground invasion of the southern Gaza city of Rafah, which is overflowing with displaced civilians.

The tough message from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sets the stage for potentially difficult talks next week in Washington between top US officials and a high-level Israeli delegation. Netanyahu said Israel is ready to "do it alone" in Rafah if necessary. Despite their differences, the

Biden administration has continued to provide crucial military aid and diplomatic support, even as Israel's war against Hamas has killed more than 32,000 people in Gaza and led to a worsening humanitarian crisis. Israel says Rafah is the last remaining stronghold of Hamas and says the militant group's forces there must be defeated for Israel to meet its war objectives. Israel vowed to destroy Hamas following the group's October 7 attack, which killed some 1,200 people, took 250 others hostage and triggered the fierce Israeli air and ground offensive in Gaza.

But Rafah now shelters over one million homeless Palestinians who fled fighting

elsewhere in Gaza. The US, along with most of the international community, fears a Rafah ground invasion will endanger civilians' lives and impede the flow of desperately needed humanitarian aid into the territory, most of which comes through Rafah. Netanyahu said he told Blinken that Israel is working on ways to evacuate civilians from combat zones and to address the humanitarian needs of Gaza, where international aid officials say the entire population is suffering from food insecurity and famine is imminent in the hard-hit north.



"I also said that we have no way to defeat Hamas without entering Rafah," Netanyahu said. "I told him that I hope we would do this with US Support but if necessary - we will do it alone."

Blinken, wrapping up his sixth visit to the Mideast since the war broke out, told reporters that the US shares Israel's goal of defeating Hamas. "But a major ground operation in Rafah is not, in our judgement, the way to achieve it and we were very clear about that," he said, adding that Israel faces growing isolation if it presses ahead. The looming Rafah invasion

has cast a shadow over ongoing efforts to forge a cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas. Blinken, who also met with Arab leaders during his trip this week, acknowledged "there's still a lot of work to be done."

Blinken spoke shortly after a US-sponsored ceasefire resolution in the UN Security Council was vetoed by Russia and China. Blinken said it was "unimaginable" that the measure had been rejected.

The US initially sided strongly with Israel after the October 7 attack. But relations have increasingly soured as the war drags on into its fifth month.

Palestinian health officials in Gaza said Friday that at least 32,070 people have been kill,

with at least two thirds of them women and children. Israel claims at least one-third of those killed are Hamas militants, and says the group is responsible for civilian casualties by hiding and operating in residential areas.

The US position on a Rafah operation has shifted in recent days. Initially, US officials called for a plan for getting civilians out of harm's way. Now, they say there is no credible way to do that. "It risks killing more civilians. It risks wreaking greater havoc with the provision of humanitarian assistance. It risks further isolating Israel around the world and jeopardising its long-term security and standing," Blinken said.

# New curriculum, books for grades III and VI from 2024-25; no change for other classes

NEW DELHI, Mar 23 (PTI)

THE National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) will release a new syllabus and textbooks for Classes 3 and 6 while there will be no change in the curriculum and textbooks for other grades for the academic year 2024-25 commencing from April 1, according to CBSE officials.

The NCERT has informed the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that new syllabi and textbooks for classes 3 and 6 are currently under development and will soon be released, the CBSE said in a communication sent to affiliated schools.

"Consequently, schools are

advised to follow these new syllabi and textbooks for classes 3 and 6 in place of textbooks published by NCERT till the year 2023," said Joseph Emmanuel, Director (Academics), CBSE.

"Additionally, a bridge course for class 6, and concise guidelines for class 3 are being developed by the NCERT for facilitating a seamless transition for students to new pedagogical practices and areas of study aligned with new curriculum framework, 2023. These resources will be disseminated to all the schools online once they are received from NCERT," he said.

"The Board will also organise capacity-building pro-

grammes for school heads and teachers to orient them with the new teaching learning perspectives as envisioned in NEP-2020," he added in the letter.

In a revision of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) after 18 years, the Ministry of Education had last year notified the changes. The NCF had undergone four revisions in the past - in 1975, 1988, 2000, and 2005.

The council is in process of preparing new school textbooks in line with the new national curriculum framework for school education (NCF-SE) 2023 as a part of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

# Modi inaugurates hospital in Bhutan **built with India's help**

THIMPHU, Mar 23 (PTI)

**PRIME** Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay on Saturday inaugurated a modern hospital built with Indian assistance here which will offer quality healthcare for women and children and be a shining example of India-Bhutan development cooperation.

The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema

Wangchuk Mother and Child Hospital is a state-of-the-art 150-bedded facility that has been built with the assistance of the Government of India in Thimphu.

"Inaugurated the Gyaltsuen Jetsun

Pema Wangchuk Mother and Child Hospital, which stands as a beacon of hope for several families, offering quality healthcare," Modi posted on X.

*(Contd on page 5)*

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# Jaishankar says, Pak sponsoring terror at

## INDUSTRY LEVEL

SINGAPORE, Mar 23 (PTI)

**UNDERLINING** that Pakistan is sponsoring terrorism at almost an "industry level", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday asserted that the mood in India now is not to overlook terrorists and it "will not skirt this problem anymore".

Jaishankar, who is on a three-day visit to Singapore, made these remarks during a Q&A round held post his lecture session on his authored book 'Why Bharat Matters' at Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) of National University of Singapore (NUS).



In India now, the mood is not to overlook terrorists and India will not skirt this problem anymore, said Jaishankar

In India now, Jaishankar said, "the mood is not to overlook terrorists".

"Every country wants a stable neighbourhood. If nothing else, you want at least a quiet neighbourhood," he said in

response to a question on India's ties with Pakistan.

However, unfortunately, it is not the same with India, he said. Underlining that Pakistan has been sponsoring terrorism against India, Jaishankar asked,

"How do you deal with a neighbour who does not hide the fact that they use terrorism as an instrument of statecraft?"

"It's not a one-off happening. But very sustained, almost at an industry level. So what we have come to conclude is that we have to find a way of addressing (the menace), that dodging the problem gets us nowhere, it only invites more trouble," he said.

"I don't have a quick instantaneous fix (to this issue). But what I can tell you is that India will not skirt this problem anymore. We are not going to say, 'well, that happened and let's

*(Contd on page 5)*



# DEADLY ATTACK

# 143 killed, several hurt as gunmen open fire in Moscow concert hall

Russia detains 11 suspects

ISIS claims responsibility

MOSCOW, Mar 23 (AP)

SEVERAL gunmen burst into a large concert hall on the edge of Moscow on Friday night and sprayed visitors with automatic gunfire, killing at least 143 and injuring several others in an attack that came just days after President Vladimir Putin cemented his grip on the country in a highly orchestrated electoral landslide.

Videos posted online showed gunmen in the venue shooting



A massive blaze is seen over the Crocus City Hall on the western edge of Moscow Russia on Friday night after several gunmen burst into the hall in Moscow, and fired at the crowd. (AP/PTI)

## Modi condemns 'heinous terror' attack

NEW DELHI, Mar 23 (ANI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi condemned the terror attack inside a packed concert hall in Moscow on Saturday, calling it a 'heinous act' and expressing solidarity with the Russian Government and its people.

The ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack at the concert venue complex near Moscow on Friday that left at least 115 dead and 145 injured after assailants stormed the venue with guns and incendiary devices, 'CNN' reported.

"We strongly condemn the heinous terrorist attack in Moscow. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims. India stands in solidarity with the government and the people of the Russian Federation in this hour of grief," PM Modi posted from his X handle.

civilians at point-blank range. The roof of the theatre, where crowds had gathered on Friday for a performance by the Russian rock band Picnic, collapsed in the early hours of Saturday morning as fire-fighters spent hours fighting a fire that erupted during the attack.

On Saturday, Russian authorities detained 11 people, state media reported. Russia's Investigative Committee said, four of those detained were directly involved in the attack that left the sprawling shopping mall and music venue (Contd on page 5)

# Amul to launch fresh milk products in USA

ANAND, Mar 23 (ANI)

POPULAR dairy brand Amul, whose tagline is 'Taste of India', has now launched fresh milk products on the international stage for the first time and is now ready to cater to the people in the United States.

"I am pleased to inform that Amul shall be launching its fresh milk products in the United States of America. Happy to inform that we have tied up with a 108-year-old dairy cooperative in the US – Michigan Milk Producers Association, and this announcement was done at their annual meeting on March 20 at Detroit," said Jayen Mehta, Managing Director of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which



operates Amul.

"This is for the first time Amul fresh products range will be launched anywhere outside India and in a market like the United States, which has a very strong Indian and Asian diaspora," Mehta told ANI.

Further, he said Amul hopes to expand the brand and become the largest dairy company in line with the vision given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he attended its golden jubilee celebrations recently.