

## Shaurya International School shines in '67th National School Games 2024'

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The students of Shaurya International School brought laurels to school by winning medals in '67th National School Games 2024, organised by School Games Federation of India at Satna, MP.

Shaurya International School students-Tamanna Saini clinched two Gold and one Bronze medals while Abhinav Bakshi bagged one Gold and one Bronze medals.

School Management and Principal Dr. Rajesh Gandral congratulated the students for their merited victory and felicitated them in the school.



## Heat hits BJD campaign in Odisha's Puri Lok Sabha seat, Arup Patnaik hospitalized

BHUBANESWAR,

APR 23: Former Mumbai police commissioner and ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD)'s candidate for the Puri Lok Sabha seat, Arup Patnaik, was taken ill on Monday while campaigning in the Pipili area of the district, about 20km from Bhubaneswar. He was taken to the hospital for treatment. Though he recovered, doctors advised him rest.

Patnaik said: "There was an open road show. More than 5,000 people participated in the roadshow. I was in the open jeep along with others. Suddenly I fell ill and party leaders including Pipili MLA, Rajya Sabha member and others took me to the hospital for a medical check-up. I am feeling better now." Sources said Patnaik returned home late Monday night and did not have proper rest before venturing out for campaigning on Monday morning.

The soaring mercury and rising humidity have hit the campaign of all the parties severely. The temperature in many parts of the state has been hovering above 42°C making the job of the political leaders tough. Bhubaneswar recorded the highest-ever temperature this year registering a temperature of 43.8°C, making



things extremely difficult for leaders.

To avoid the heat wave, the political parties and their leaders start their campaign early in the morning, sometimes visiting popular parks and tea joints (Chai Khhati) where people gather and interact with them.

The campaign has so far remained low-key in the morning hours. The campaign is over by noon. There is hardly any campaigning between 12 noon and 4pm. During this time, the leaders prefer to remain engaged with senior leaders to chalk out their plans.

But the campaign kicks

off in the evening hours after 4 pm. In colourfully decorated open jeeps and followed by their hundreds of followers, the leaders move out for campaigning during the evening hours. The campaign remains active till late evening up to 10 pm and later followed by meetings of the leaders with their workers to chalk out the plan for the next day. The meeting with workers sometimes wraps at 1 am leaving a few hours for the leaders to take rest. All of them wake up early in the morning to reach out to the people and avoid being exposed to the heat.

"We need to take only a few hours of sleep during

this election campaign. We have a lot of work to do," Bhubaneswar BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi told her followers.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) candidate for the Bhubaneswar (Central) assembly seat, Ananta Narayan Jena said "Campaign is important. However, we are taking all possible steps to avoid the sun. I personally advise my friends, and followers to adhere to the guidelines to avoid sunstroke."

But in the rural pockets of the state where the campaign has started gathering momentum, the leaders' campaign is going on till 2 pm.

## Just wait for June 4, INDIA bloc will sweep Lok Sabha polls in Jharkhand: Kalpana

JAMSHEDPUR, APR

23: Enthused with a huge turnout of over 2 lakh crowd at the Ulgulan Nyay Mahahrally in Prabhat Tara Ground in Ranchi on Sunday, Kalpana Soren, wife of former chief minister Hemant Soren on Monday claimed INDIA bloc will sweep the Lok Sabha polls in the state.

"Just wait for June 4 (day when votes would be counted), INDIA bloc will sweep the Lok Sabha polls in Jharkhand. People are eager to give a befitting reply to the Centre for sending popular leaders like Hemant Soren and Arvind Kejriwal to jail," said Kalpana Soren to reporters at Ranchi.

Independent political writers associated with Hindi vernaculars admitted that the turnout even surpassed that of the Prime Minister function in September 2018.

"The crowd was well over 2.5 lakh which braved the over 40 degree Celsius scorching heat at the ground in Ranchi. We were there also during the September 2018 function in



which Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched nationally the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme at the same venue. But this crowd surpassed that," said a political writer based in Ranchi.

He admitted that it was not a political rally. "The 2018 was not a political rally but the BJP under Raghuraj Das (he was the chief minister then) had mobilized all its resources to draw the crowd. Even if INDIA bloc parties had arranged the crowd, they remained in the ground for nearly two hours to listen to the speeches of Sunita Kejriwal and Kalpana Soren before starting to

leave the ground. It shows that they have managed to connect with the masses," said the writer.

The rally was planned by Kalpana Soren's new team which was the same team which had planned Hemant Soren's poll strategy during the 2019 polls. "Complete preparation of the rally was done under the supervision of Kalpana Soren aided by the team. The team helped her personally contact each of the INDIA bloc leaders over phone and also send invitations. This was confirmed by former Bihar deputy chief minister and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav," said a top JMM leader.

"In fact reading out the letter from Hemant Soren incarcerated (under judicial custody in Birsra Munda Central Jail since February) was aimed at connecting with the masses playing the emotional card. The speech which is attracting huge followers on X (formerly Twitter) is evident that the plot was successful," added the same leader.

The rally was also aimed at snubbing the BJP and its allies (AJSU) remarks that INDIA bloc parties were not united.

"Presence of almost all the INDIA bloc senior leaders at one stage sent the message that all were united to fight against the BJP and this message would reap dividends in all the 14 Lok Sabha seats in Jharkhand," said JMM central general secretary and spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya on Monday.

He claimed the scuffle between the Congress Chhatra candidate's supporters and alleged RJD supporters was sponsored by the BJP.

## 400-paar bows out to polarisation: After Modi, BJP returns to divisive agenda to corner Opposition

NEW DELHI, APR

23: The BJP and the saffron ecosystem on Monday segued into a shrill polarising rhetoric from the rallying "400-paar" cry, taking their cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

At Banswara in Rajasthan on Sunday, Modi had resorted to an undisguised attempt at polarisation by alleging that the Congress's poll manifesto had pledged to "survey" and "attach" citizens' properties and distribute them disproportionately among Muslims.

For the past couple of days, Modi had stopped raising the "abki baar 400 paar" slogan at his rallies.

Two top leaders of the BJP — home minister Amit Shah and party chief J.P. Nadda — on Monday intensified the polarisation effort with shrill cries of "Jai Shri Ram" and an all-out attack on the Congress by labelling it "Ram virodhi", "Sanatan virodhi" and "desh virodhi".

In a statement issued under the BJP's letterhead, home minister Shah accused the Congress of being "hell-bent on harming Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Christian, Sikh and Parsi communities to appease its vote bank".

Shah's statement was a rebuttal of Congress leader P. Chidambaram's claim on Sunday that the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act would be scrapped if the Congress was voted to power.

"Blinded by the politics



of appeasement, the Congress has lost its nerve upon seeing its crushing defeat in the first phase," Shah said.

He stressed it was "Modi's guarantee" that the persecuted minority communities who have come to India from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh would be given citizenship through the CAA. "And no one can stop it," he said.

"The Congress has a problem with Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis receiving citizenship," the home minister said.

Earlier, Shah accused the Congress of planning to take away the properties of Hindu "mutts and temples" and distribute them among the minorities.

BJP insiders said the change of tack was part of a strategy to draw the Opposition into the "tried-and-tested" polarising pitch and put it on the defensive.

Addressing an election rally in Kanker, Chhattisgarh, Shah accused the Congress of an intent to attach the properties of Hindu "mutts and temples" and distribute them disproportionately among the minorities.

"The Congress is raising questions over Modiji's 'survey' speech. I want to ask the Congress, doesn't their manifesto talk about conducting a survey of properties owned by citizens?" Shah told the crowd.

He went on to repeat Modi's claim that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said that "Muslims" had the first right over the country's resources.

"Their Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, had said that minorities and not tribals had the first right over the country's resources. Brothers and sisters, they are eyeing the properties of mutts and temples and of everyone,

and where will the money go?" Shah said.

"This is the Congress's line, and we (the BJP) say that the poor, tribals, Dalits and the OBCs have the first right over the country's resources," Shah said, trying to counter the fear of reservations being withdrawn if Modi returned for a third term.

Besides "Bharat Mataki jai" and "Vande Mataram", Shah raised the slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" at the rally. Like Modi, he refrained from raising the "abki baar 400 paar" cry.

Party strategists feel that the "400 paar" slogan, reeking of overconfidence, had given the Opposition a tool to level the Constitution-change charge.

Nadda was also in Chhattisgarh on Monday to address poll rallies. He too accused the Congress of opposing the Ram temple and "boycotting" its inauguration by Modi. Nadda referred to "anti-Sanatan"

## Russia to supply remaining two regiments of S-400 Triumph missile systems to India by next year

NEW DELHI, APR

23: India is set to receive the remaining two regiments of S-400 Triumph surface-to-air missile systems from Russia by next year under a new timeline that was firming up following some delays in the supplies in view of the war in Ukraine, authoritative sources said on Tuesday.

Russia has already supplied three units of the long-range missile systems to India under a USD 5.5 billion deal.

India is also expected to take delivery of warship Tushil, the first of the two Russian-built frigates, in September, the sources said.

The second warship Tamal will be supplied by Russia in January, they said.

According to the original timeline, the ships were to be delivered by 2022, they said, attributing the delays in the delivery to Russia's war in Ukraine.

Russia is supplying the stealth frigates under a four-frigates deal firming up in 2018. The remaining two ships are being made in India.

On S-400 missile sys-



tems, the sources said the deliveries will be completed by next year.

India is procuring the missile systems as part of efforts to bolster its air power capabilities primarily to deal with security challenges emanating from China.

In October 2018, India signed the USD 5.5 billion deal with Russia to buy five units of the S-400 air defence missile systems, notwithstanding a warning by the US that going ahead with the contract may invite US sanctions under the

provisions of Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

The CAATSA, which was brought in 2017, provides for punitive actions against any country engaged in transactions with the Russian defence and intelligence sectors.

Russia started delivery of the first regiment of the missile systems in December 2021 and it has been deployed to cover parts of the border with China in the northern sector as well as the frontier with Pak-

istan. The deliveries were to be completed by 2024.

"There were some delays in delivery of S-400 missiles due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. A new timeline has been firming up the supplies," said a source.

Unlike many other leading powers, India has not yet directly criticised Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

India has been pressing for the resolution of the crisis through diplomacy and dialogue.

## Australian journalist's claim that she was forced to leave India not correct: Sources

NEW DELHI, APR 23:

Australian journalist Avani Dias's contention that she was not allowed to cover elections and was compelled to leave India is not correct and is misleading, official sources said on Tuesday.

The South Asia correspondent of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, who left India on April 19, claimed on Tuesday that she was denied an extension of her visa by the Indian government because of her reports "crossed a line".

Dias was found to have violated visa rules while undertaking her professional pursuits, the sources said.

In spite of this, on her request, she was assured that her visa would be extended for the coverage of the general elections, the sources said, adding her previous visa was valid till April 20.



"The contention of Avani Dias, the South Asia Correspondent of Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), that she was not allowed to cover elections and was compelled to leave the country is not correct, misleading and mischievous," a source said. The sources said Dias paid the

visa fee on April 18 and her visa was extended till June-end the same day.

She, however, chose to leave India on April 20, they said adding at the time of her departure she held a valid visa and her extension of visa stood approved. Her point about not been given permission to cover elections is also factually incorrect, the sources said. Coverage of election activities outside of booths is permitted to all Journalist Visa holders, they added.

"Authority letters are required only for access to polling booths and counting stations. This, however, cannot be processed while the visa extension is under process," the source said.

"It is pertinent to note that other ABC correspondents -- Meghna Bali and Som Patidar -- have already received their letters," the source added.