

Kotak Bank promoter Infina Finance donated Rs 60 crore to BJP via electoral bonds

NEW DELHI, APR 24: Infina Finance, one of the promoter group entities of Kotak Mahindra Bank - currently facing RBI action, had donated electoral bonds worth Rs 60 crore to the BJP.

Infina Finance, owned by the Kotak family, is listed as one of the promoter group entities of Kotak Mahindra Bank. However, it does not own any shares in the private sector lender, which has been barred by the RBI from issuing fresh credit cards.

As per the shareholding data with the BSE, as of March 2024, the promoter and promoter group entities hold a 25.89 per cent stake in Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Uday Kotak is the promoter and single largest shareholder of Kotak Mahindra Bank, with a



25.71 per cent stake. The remaining 0.18 per cent stake is held by other promoter group entities.

The Mumbai-based Infina Finance donated electoral bonds worth Rs 60 crore to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The NBFC firm purchased these bonds in the denomination of Rs 1 crore in 2019, 2020 and 2021, according to the data given by the

State Bank of India (SBI) to the Election Commission. The data was made public last month.

Infina Finance Private Ltd, according to its website, was incorporated in 2008 and is in the business of capital market financing and proprietary trading and investments.

Infina, a non-deposit accepting, systemically important non-banking fi-

ancial company registered with the RBI, had reported a profit of Rs 105.55 crore in 2022-23. The firm posted a total income of Rs 227.84 crore during the fiscal.

On Wednesday, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) barred Kotak Mahindra Bank from onboarding new customers through its online and mobile banking channels and issuing fresh credit cards with immediate effect after the regulator found "serious deficiencies" in the lender's IT risk management.

These actions, the RBI said, are necessitated based on significant concerns arising out of the Reserve Bank's IT examination of the bank for the years 2022 and 2023, and its continuing failure to address these concerns in a comprehensive and timely manner.

Tihar administration cancelled Atishi's meeting with Arvind Kejriwal at last moment: Sanjay Singh

NEW DELHI, APR 24: Alleging the Tihar Jail administration cancelled Delhi Minister Atishi's meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at the last moment, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Wednesday said "even the British rule did not see this kind of behaviour".

According to Tihar official sources, Atishi's name was added after Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj's name into the list of visitors for Kejriwal. She will be meeting him on April 29. Sources said that Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot's name will also be added to the list of visitors and he will be meeting Kejriwal soon.

Addressing a press conference, Singh said that Bharadwaj and Atishi were supposed to meet the chief minister in Tihar.

"But Atishi's meeting was not confirmed yesterday. Delhi Education Minister Atishi applied for the meeting and at the last moment her meeting was cancelled," Singh said.

"After her meeting was cancelled, party national general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak was supposed to accompany Bharadwaj, but he



was informed around 9.30 am today that even his meeting was cancelled," he added.

Tihar sources said that Pathak himself did not come.

Singh questioned the reasons behind the move and feared that Kejriwal might not even be allowed to meet his wife in future.

"You are cancelling an MP's meeting, a minister's meeting with Kejriwal. You had cancelled my meeting with him earlier. Tomorrow you might cancel the meeting with his wife. Even the British rule did not see this kind of behaviour," he said.

An inmate is allowed to write down the names of 10 people, including his family, whom he is allowed to meet, he said.

"If any prisoner wants to meet any of these, he cannot be stopped from meeting these people," he added.

Singh said that he would be writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena regarding the same.

"He is being meted out worse treatment than the one meted out to terrorists or hardcore criminals. They are allowed to meet in person their lawyers and their families but you are stopping his meetings," he said.

"If he kept asking for insulin for 23 days and you did not provide it to him, why is he being provided the same insulin after 23 days? This means that we were right throughout that

the CM's life was being played with, a deep conspiracy was being hatched to kill him, which we have been saying again and again," Singh said.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said that "no reason was given" for cancellation of the meeting.

Earlier in the day, Bharadwaj had a 30-minute-long meeting with Kejriwal.

"I had a half-an-hour meeting in the 'mulakat jangla'.

He said that people should not worry about him. He said he is strong and he will continue his fight with the blessings of the people of Delhi, he told reporters after the meeting.

The 'mulakat jangla' is an iron mesh which separates the inmate from the visitor in a room inside the jail. A visitor and an inmate can talk to each other by sitting on different sides of the mesh.

Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case on March 21. The chief minister has not stepped down post his arrest with the AAP asserting that he would continue to run the government from jail.

Divya Pahuja murder case: Gurugram court rejects interim bail plea of main accused

GURUGRAM, APR 24: A local court here on Wednesday rejected the interim bail plea of the main accused in the murder of ex-model Divya Pahuja, police said.

Abhijeet Singh's counsel had filed the bail application on his behalf on the medical grounds, they added.

In his petition, Singh had said that four of his teeth were removed on November 25 last year. The remaining have also deteriorated and 14 more teeth have to be removed.

According to police, the counsel also said that Bhondsi jail, where Singh is lodged, does not have adequate facilities.

During the hearing in the court of Additional District and Session judge Virender



Malik, Dr Pooja, a dentist working in the jail hospital, said that some teeth of the accused have been extracted correctly while for other treatments, it can be done at PGIMS, Rohtak.

The court accepted that if treatment is not available in the hospital in Rohtak, then the accused can be taken to AIIMS in Delhi but

for Pahuja's murder.

On January 2, Pahuja was taken to Hotel City Point by five people and shot in the head because she had allegedly been extorting money from hotel owner Singh by blackmailing him with his "obscene pictures".

After Pahuja was murdered, Gill had allegedly kept her body in the trunk of a BMW car and later threw her body in the Bhakra Canal near Munak in Sangrur, Punjab.

Police said he carried out the alleged act with Banga at the behest of Singh who is also in judicial custody.

Pahuja's body was recovered from the canal on January 13, 11 days after she was killed.

One of the accused, Nadeem, is still at large.

considering the seriousness of the case, the court rejected the interim bail plea of the accused, a senior police officer said.

Earlier in April, the Gurugram police had filed a chargesheet against seven people -- Singh, Ravi Banga, Hemraj, Om Prakash, Megha, Pravesh and Balraj Gill -- arrested

West Bengal govt moves SC against Calcutta HC order cancelling appointment of over 25,000 teachers

NEW DELHI, APR 24: The West Bengal government has moved the Supreme Court against the Calcutta High Court order invalidating the appointment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff made by the state's School Service Commission (SSC) in state-run and state-aided schools.

Challenging the high court order, the state government, in its appeal filed before the top court, said the HC cancelled the appointments "arbitrarily".

"The high court failed to appreciate the ramifications of cancelling the entire selection process leading to straightaway termination of teaching and non-teaching staff from service with immediate effect, without giving sufficient time to the petitioner state to deal with such an exigency, rendering the education system at a stand-still," the plea said.

The Calcutta High Court

had on Monday declared the selection process as "null and void" and directed the CBI to probe the appointment process. It had also asked the central agency to submit a report within three months.

The high court said those appointed outside the officially available 24,640 vacancies, appointed after the expiry of the official date of recruitment, and those who submitted blank Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) sheets but obtained appointment to return all remunerations and benefits received by them with 12 per cent interest per annum within four weeks.

Observing that it has given "anxious consideration to the passionate plea" that persons who had obtained the appointments legally would be prejudiced if the entire selection process is cancelled, the bench said it hardly had any

choice left.

The high court held that all appointments involved were violative of Articles 14 (equality before law) and 16 (prohibiting discrimination in employment in any government office) of the Constitution.

"It is shocking that, at the level of the cabinet of the State Government, a decision is taken to protect employment obtained fraudulently in a selection process conducted by SSC for state-funded schools, knowing fully well that, such appointments were obtained beyond the panel and after expiry of the panel, at the bare minimum," the high court had said.

It said unless "there is a deep connection between the persons perpetuating the fraud and the beneficiaries" with persons involved in the decision-making process, such action to create supernumerary posts to

protect illegal appointments is "inconceivable".

The division bench had also rejected a prayer by some appellants, including the West Bengal School Service Commission (SSC), for a stay on the order and asked the commission to initiate a fresh appointment process within a fortnight from the date of the results of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

The bench, constituted by the Chief Justice of the high court on a direction of the Supreme Court, had heard 350 petitions and appeals relating to the selection of candidates for appointment by the SSC in the categories of teachers of classes 9, 10, 11 and 12 and group-C and D staffers through the SLST-2016.

In its 282-page judgment, the high court had said retaining appointees selected through "such a dubious process" would be contrary to public interest.

Allegation of conspiring against PM cannot be levelled irresponsibly, says Delhi High Court

NEW DELHI, APR 24: Delhi High Court on Wednesday said allegations of conspiring against the prime minister amount to treason and cannot be levelled irresponsibly without any cogent material.

The court was hearing a lawsuit by BJD MP Pinaki Misra against lawyer Jai Anant Dehadrai over his allegedly defamatory tweets and statements, including that the lawmaker -- along with expelled TMC MP Mahua Moitra -- conspired against the prime minister.

Justice Jasmeet Singh observed that while a politician cannot be "sensitive", Dehadrai should await the outcome of his

complaint to the authorities and cannot be "trigger happy".

Moitra was expelled from the Lok Sabha on December 8 following accusations by Dehadrai, her former partner, that she took bribes from businessman and Hiranandani Group CEO Darshan Hiranandani to ask questions in Parliament.

"When you say conspiracy against the prime minister, it is troublesome. You can't be trigger happy ... Conspiracy against the prime minister is an offence against the state, (it is) treason," the court said during the hearing.

"It has serious repercus-

sions on the general public ... Wait for the investigation (to conclude) before you say all this," it added.

Dehadrai and his counsel assured the court that he would not make further statements in relation to Misra "conspiring" against the prime minister till the next date of hearing.

"Mr (Raghav) Awasthi, who appears for the defendant, assures the court that no allegation of the plaintiff being involved in any conspiracy against the prime minister will be made till the next date of hearing," the court recorded.

It added that the Central Bureau of Investigation

(CBI) is already looking into the allegations and the dispute between Dehadrai and Moitra is also pending before the high court.

"Prima facie the allegation of conspiring against the prime minister is a serious allegation. The same tantamount to treason. The allegation of conspiring against the prime minister cannot be made irresponsibly and needs to be based on cogent and substantive reasons," the court said.

Taking the statement of the defendant on record, the court issued notices on the lawsuit to Dehadrai and two media houses, and listed it for further hearing in July.

EC starts examining complaints against PM Modi's speech

NEW DELHI, APR 24: Amid mounting opposition pressure, the Election Commission is learnt to have started examining complaints against a speech made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Rajasthan in which he suggested that if the Congress came to power, it would redistribute the wealth of people to Muslims.

The Congress and the CPI-M had separately urged the poll panel against Modi's speech on Sunday.

Modi on Sunday suggested that if the Congress came to power, it would redistribute the wealth of people to Muslims and cited former PM Manmohan Singh's remark that the minority community had the first claim on the coun-



try's resources.

Sources said the Election Commission has started examining complaints against the speech made by the prime minister.

The Congress, while urging the Election Commission to take action against Modi for his "redistribution

of wealth" remarks made in Rajasthan's Banswara, alleged they were 'divisive', 'malicious' and targeted a particular religious community.

Separately, CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechury, in a post on X, also urged the Election

Commission to take cognisance of the complaint and launch proceedings against Modi and the BJP.

He also demanded that an FIR be lodged.

"Urge the ECI to take cognisance of this latest complaint and immediately launch proceedings against Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). An FIR needs to be lodged for inciting communal passions and hatred," he said.

Congress leader and senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi said it was a "trial of the EC" too and the poll panel risks tarnishing its legacy and abandoning its Constitutional duty by setting a precedent of helpless inaction that will go down in infamy.

AAP workers detained during protest against 'mistreatment' of Arvind Kejriwal in jail

NEW DELHI, APR 24: Three AAP workers were briefly detained on Wednesday during a protest here at ITO Chowk against the alleged mistreatment of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar Jail, officials said.

Kejriwal, the AAP's national convenor, is lodged in Tihar in connection with a money-laundering case linked to the Delhi government's now-scraped excise policy. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21.

The protest was led by AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar



as a dozen party supporters gathered at the AAP headquarters at ITO Chowk around 9 am. Some of the protesters were doctors who wore aprons, a police officer said.

Carrying a placard in their hands, the protesters demanded that insulin be administered to Kejriwal, the officer said.

Police stopped them while they were marching

towards DDU Marg. Three of them were detained but Kuldeep Kumar and the rest were dispersed, the officer said.

Among the three who were detained, two were doctors. They were taken to a nearby police station and later allowed to leave, he added.

Speaking to PTI Videos, Kuldeep Kumar, AAP's candidate for the East Delhi Lok Sabha seat, said that since they were "just standing with the placards", they did not need any permission from the administration for it.

Saurabh Bharadwaj meets Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar jail for 30-minutes

NEW DELHI, APR 24: Delhi Cabinet minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Wednesday had a 30-minute-long meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar, saying he has asked people to not worry about him.

Bharadwaj said he met Kejriwal in the 'mulakat jangla' and had a conversation with him over the phone.

"I had a half-an-hour meeting in the 'mulakat jangla'. He said that people should not worry about him. He said he is strong and he will continue his fight with the blessings of the people of Delhi," Delhi minister told reporters after the meeting.



The 'mulakat jangla' is an iron mesh which separates the inmate from the visitor in a room inside the jail. A visitor and an inmate can talk to each other by sitting on different sides of the mesh.

The Delhi chief minister who was ar-

rested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case on March 21 has not stepped down and the Aam Aadmi Party has asserted that he will continue to run the government from jail.

Earlier, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and AAP's national general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak met Kejriwal in Tihar Jail on April 15.

After the meeting, Pathak told reporters that Kejriwal will meet two ministers each week and review the progress of work under their respective departments.