

## Himachal Pradesh: Two dead in landslide in Shimla, 10 injured in Bilaspur as bus falls from bridge

**SHIMLA, APR 28:** Two people were killed here on Sunday when an SUV they were travelling in got trapped in the debris of a landslide in Shimla's Rohru area, police said on Sunday.

In a separate incident in Bilaspur district on Sunday, around 10 people were injured after a Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) bus slipped from a bridge, they said.

The landslide in Rohru subdivision occurred on the Hatkoti-Tiuni road where two vehicles got stuck in the debris, the police said.

On receiving information, teams of police and the district administration reached the spot and extracted the two bodies from the SUV.

Shimla Superintendent of Police (SP) Sanjeev Kumar



Gandhi said the rescue operation is underway and further information from the spot is awaited.

The bus accident in Bilaspur took place near Ghyal village after the driver

lost control of the vehicle. Around 25 passengers were travelling in the bus, the police said.

Police reached the spot on information and rescued the injured passengers,

they said.

Seven injured people were to AIIMS Bilaspur, while three others were admitted to a community health centre in Markand, they added.

## Uttarakhand forest fires: IAF helicopter assists in fire-fighting for second day, blaze doused in many areas

**DEHRADUN, APR 28:** The firefighting operation in Uttarakhand's forests with the help of an Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopter continued for the second day on Sunday with the blaze brought to control in several areas, officials said.

Efforts have also intensified to extinguish the raging forest fires in the state, especially in the worst-affected areas of Nainital, Haldwani and Ramnagar forest divisions, forest officials here said on Sunday.

The forest fires are gradually being controlled with the flames already doused in many areas. The fires in Marora and Khanana civil areas in Maniknath range of the Narendranagar forest division have been completely extinguished, they said.

The forest blaze in Nainital and adjoining areas is gradually being brought under control after the deployment of an IAF helicopter for the firefighting operations on Saturday morning. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said after reviewing the situation in the Kumaon region on Saturday night.

According to the Indian Air Force, a Mi-17 V5 helicopter has been deployed in Nainital and surrounding areas to douse the flames.

Apart from the IAF helicopter and Army personnel, Prantiya Rakshak Dal volunteers and homeguard personnel have also been



roped in to help in the firefighting operations, Kumaon Commissioner Deepak Rawat said.

Additional government vehicles, two each for the three forest divisions, have been provided to rush firefighting teams to the affected areas, he added.

Help from locals with the involvement of forest panchayat officials is also being taken as they are the first responders to forest fires, Rawat said.

Forest department personnel are going from village to village in the hills to raise awareness about forest fires, Garhwal DFO Anirudh Swapnil told reporters in Pauri.

Loudspeakers are being used to spread the messages. People are being asked to report any forest blaze immediately to the authorities and not to burn garbage in the open or

carelessly throw burning cigarette butts or bidis in the forest areas, Swapnil said.

People are also being asked to report to the authorities if they catch someone setting a fire in the forests, he said, adding that any person reporting such a violation will be rewarded by the forest department.

Legal action under the Forest Act 1927 will be taken against anyone caught setting fire to the jungles, he added.

Burning forests in order to obtain fresh grass for their cattle is a widely prevalent practice in the hills of Uttarakhand. The chief minister has cancelled the leaves of forest department officials until the fire situation is completely brought under control.

Leave applications of forest department personnel

will be considered only in case of medical emergencies, Dhami said.

Forest officials said the IAF helicopter collected water from the Naini and Bhimtal lakes in a Bambi bucket and poured it over the burning forests of the Pines, Bhumiadhar, Jyolikot, Narayan Nagar, Bhawali, Ramgarh and Mukteswar areas.

The bucket can hold up to 5,000 litres of water at a time.

As many as 31 fresh incidents of forest fire were reported from various parts of the state on Friday, destroying 33.34 hectares of forest land, according to officials.

The fire that broke out in the forest near Nainital took a horrific form on Friday, posing a threat to the residents of High Court Colony. It also affected traffic movement in the area.

## Aam Aadmi Party claims Election Commission has banned party's Lok Sabha poll campaign song

**NEW DELHI, APR 28:** The AAP on Sunday claimed the Election Commission (EC) has imposed a ban on the party's Lok Sabha campaign song, 'Jail ke jawab mein hum vote denge', stating that it shows the ruling BJP and central investigation agencies in a bad light.

There was no immediate response from the poll panel to the AAP's claim.

Addressing a press conference, senior AAP leader Atishi said, "It is probably the first time that the EC has imposed a ban on a party's campaign song." According to the EC, she said, the song shows the



ruling party and investigation agencies in a bad light.

"The song does not mention the BJP and does not violate the Model Code of

Conduct. It includes factual videos and incidents," she added.

Atishi, who is also a Delhi government minister,

accused the EC of not acting on poll code violations committed by the BJP.

"If the BJP does dictatorship, it is right. But if someone talks about it, that is wrong. This shows that democracy is in danger. I want to urge the EC to act on the (poll code) violations committed by the BJP and not stop campaigns of opposition parties," she said.

The AAP's over two-minute campaign song has been penned and sung by AAP MLA Dilip Pandey. The song was released at the party headquarters here on Thursday.

## Siddaramaiah orders SIT probe over alleged sex scandal involving H D Deva Gowda's grandson Prajwal Revanna

**BENGALURU, APR 28:** The Karnataka government has decided to form a Special Investigation Team to probe an alleged sex scandal involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna.

Prajwal is the grandson of JD(S) patriarch and former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda.

He was the NDA candidate in the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency, which went to polls on April 26.

The JD(S) joined the NDA in September last



year. "The government has decided to form a special investigation team in connection with Prajwal Revanna's obscene video case," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said in a post on

X' on late Saturday night. Obscene video clips are circulating in Hassan district, where it appears that women have been sexually assaulted, the chief minister said.

"In this background, the Chairperson of the Women's Commission (Dr Nagalakshmi Chowdhary) had written a letter to the government to conduct an SIT investigation. This decision has been taken in response to their request," Siddaramaiah said.

## PM Narendra Modi fighting imaginary ghosts, should debate 'real' issues in Cong manifesto: P Chidambaram



**NEW DELHI, APR 28:** Taking a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday said the PM has imagined a Congress manifesto written by one of his ghost speech writers and he should debate the real issues included in the document.

Chidambaram's remarks come amid repeated attacks by the prime minister

over Congress leader Sam Pitroda's 'inheritance tax' comments amid the row on the issue of 'wealth redistribution'.

**ADVERTISEMENT** "The Hon'ble Prime Minister continues to discover and read in the Congress' manifesto words and sentences that are not there! He has imagined a Congress' manifesto written by one of his ghost speech writers," Chidambaram, who was the chairman of the committee that drafted the Congress manifesto, said.

The phrase 'inheritance tax' does not occur anywhere in the manifesto, the

former finance minister said in his post on X.

"The Congress' promises on taxation are quite clear: Bring an era of transparency, equity, clarity and impartial tax administration of Direct Taxes; Maintain stable personal income tax rates for the term of 5 years; Lessen the burden of tax on MSMEs," Chidambaram said.

He further said that the Congress promises to end the duplicitous 'cess' Raj of the Modi government and shopkeepers and retail businesses will be given significant tax relief and GST 2.0 will be introduced.

"It is disappointing to see

the Hon'ble PM fight imaginary ghosts. He should debate the 'real' issues included in the Congress' Manifesto," Chidambaram said.

In a statement on Thursday, Chidambaram had said the "manufactured" controversies on 'redistribution of wealth' and 'inheritance tax' showed that fear has gripped the BJP, which has fallen back on distortion, falsehoods and abuse" as 'Modi ki Guarantee' has vanished without a trace.

Chidambaram had asserted that the document is religion-neutral and promises justice for all sections of the people.

## United States: Crackdowns at four college protests lead to nearly 200 arrests

**BOSTON, APR 28:** Nearly 200 protesters were arrested Saturday at Northeastern University, Arizona State University, Indiana University and Washington University in St. Louis, according to officials, as colleges across the country struggle to quell growing pro-Palestinian demonstrations and encampments on campus.

More than 700 protesters have been arrested on U.S. campuses since April 18, when Columbia University had the New York Police Department clear a protest encampment there. In several cases, most of those who were arrested have been released.

At Washington University in St. Louis, the campus was locked down amid protests and several arrests were made Saturday evening, according to campus police and updates on the university website. Jill Stein, the Green Party candidate for the 2024 presidential election, was among those arrested, along with her campaign manager and another staff member, a spokesperson for the campaign said. It was not immediately clear how many people were arrested.

Earlier in the day, at Northeastern in Boston, protesters had set up an encampment on the campus's Centennial Common this past week that drew more than 100 supporters. The administration had asked the protesters to leave, but many students did not.

Around dawn Saturday, Massachusetts State Police officers arrived at the encampment and began to arrest protesters, putting them in zip-tie handcuffs and taking several tents down. They said they had arrested 102 protest-

ers. It was unclear how many of those arrested were students, but the university said students who showed their university IDs were being released.

A Northeastern spokesperson, Renata Nyul, said the demonstration had been "infiltrated by professional organizers" and that the "use of virulent antisemitic slurs, including 'Kill the Jews,' crossed the line."

A police officer appeals to Jewish counter-protesters to disengage with pro-Palestinian students at their protest encampment on the campus at Northeastern University in Boston, Mass., on Friday, April 26, 2024.

Protesters denied both claims, and a video appeared to show that it was a pro-Israel counterprotester who used the phrase, as part of his criticism of the pro-Palestinian protesters' chants. In response to that video, Nyul stood by her initial comments, adding that "any suggestion that repulsive, antisemitic comments are sometimes acceptable depending on the context is reprehensible."

After protesters had been removed from the encampment by police and then handcuffed and brought into a nearby building, they moved to block a nearby alley where police vehicles were parked. They cheered in support when one of the arrested protesters — wearing a Northeastern sweatshirt — waved through the building's windows with zip-tied hands.

Alina Caudle, a sophomore at Northeastern University, reiterated the protesters' demands that the university disclose its investments and divest from companies that protesters view as sup-



porting Israel's war in the Gaza Strip.

"We want them to divest our money that we're paying for our tuition," Caudle said. "Our administration is not listening to us."

Caudle said she believed the vast majority of students in the encampment were Northeastern students, along with a large amount of Jewish students and faculty supporting the protest.

By 11 a.m. Saturday, the majority of the encampment was cleared. A moving company had been brought in to load up the tents, snacks and other items that had been scattered throughout the grounds.

The mass arrest at Northeastern was the second early-morning crackdown on protesters at a Boston campus in less than a week. Early Thursday, Boston Police officers arrested 118 people at Emerson College after protesters refused to move and formed a barricade.

More than 2,500 miles away, at Ari-

zona State, school police arrested 69 people early Saturday after they set up an unauthorized encampment, which was in violation of university policy, school officials said.

The school said that the protesters had created an encampment and that the group was instructed multiple times to disperse.

"While the university will continue to be an environment that embraces freedom of speech, ASU's first priority is to create a safe and secure environment that supports teaching and learning," school officials said in a statement.

Three people were also arrested at the school in relation to a protest Friday, officials said.

At Indiana University Bloomington, where university police had arrested 33 people at an encampment this past week, campus and state police arrested 23 more protesters Saturday. Officials said a group had "erected numerous

tents and canopies on Friday night with the stated intention to occupy the university space indefinitely."

Schools across the country have used differing strategies over the past week to tamp down protests. Some have backed off and sought to de-escalate tensions, while at other colleges, like the University of Southern California and Emory University, police have rushed in to break up encampments and arrest students and faculty members, among others.

At some demonstrations, there were some reports of injuries, but in many cases, the arrests have been peaceful, and protesters have often willingly given themselves up when officers moved in.

On Saturday, there appeared to be increased police presence on several campuses, though not all of them have made arrests. At the University of Pennsylvania, more than a dozen campus police officers were stationed along barricades, with more than 100 protesters in an encampment and about a dozen pro-Israel counterprotesters across the campus walk.

Across the country at the California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, officers were stationed all over the now-closed campus after protesters occupied two buildings this past week. About three dozen protesters were inside an encampment.

Beyond arrests, schools are using other measures to apply pressure.

At Harvard, access to its historic Harvard Yard was restricted, allowing in only those who showed a university ID. The university also suspended a pro-

Palestinian group, but the group and its supporters set up an encampment in the yard nonetheless.

On Saturday, Harvard's dean of students sent an email to the student body warning that anyone participating in the encampment faced discipline. But there was no sign of any impending police operation.

At Cornell University, the student newspaper, The Cornell Daily Sun, reported Friday that four students connected with the pro-Palestinian encampment on campus had been suspended from the school. Cornell officials confirmed the suspensions were issued but declined to provide a number.

In a statement Saturday afternoon, the university's vice president for university relations, Joel Malina, said that the school had asked the protesters to move to an area "where noise would not disturb classes" and where people could easily avoid the encampment, but he said that offer was rejected.

Malina also said the university was prepared to issue additional suspensions, "as well as referrals to HR for employee participants."

Nick Wilson, a student who said he was among those suspended, said in an opinion article for The Cornell Daily Sun that he and others had been withdrawn from their current courses and that they were not allowed on campus. Still, he wrote, the suspension "in an odd way" gave him hope. By his reasoning, institutions like Cornell would not have suspended him and others "unless they truly fear our movement may succeed."