

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

7 Rebel AAP MPs Officially Merge With BJP; Rijiju Says They Have Bid Goodbye To 'Tukde-Tukde INDI Alliance'

NEW DELHI, APR 27: **Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan on Monday officially accepted the merger of seven Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MPs with the BJP, reducing the strength of Arvind Kejriwal's party in the Upper House to three.**

After this transition, the BJP's strength in the Upper House has increased to 113.

Raghav Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Harbhajan Singh, Sandeep Pathak, Vikramjit Sahney, Swati Maliwal, and Rajinder Gupta are the seven MPs who merged with the BJP.

The Rajya Sabha website now shows that the seven MPs are part of the BJP list of members.

Of the total seven MPs representing Punjab in Rajya Sabha, six are with the BJP and only one remains with AAP.

In Delhi, of the total three MPs two now remain with the AAP and one with the BJP. Sanjay Singh and N D Gupta (both AAP) and Swati



Maliwal (BJP) represent Delhi in Rajya Sabha.

The seven MPs petitioned the Rajya Sabha Chairman on Friday to be treated as BJP MPs after the merger, sources said, adding the petition has been accepted. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju welcomed the seven MPs into the NDA, and said they have bid goodbye to the "Tukde-Tukde INDI Alliance".

"Hon'ble Chairman Rajya Sabha Shri C.P. Radhakrishnan Ji has accepted the merger of 7 AAP MPs with BJP. Now, Raghav Chadha ji, Sandeep Pathak ji, Ashok Mittal ji, Harbhajan Singh ji, Swati Maliwal ji, Rajinder

Gupta ji and Vikramjit Singh Sahney ji are Members of BJP Parliamentary Party," he said on X.

"For a long time I've observed that these 7 Hon'ble MPs have not resorted to abusive languages and never created any indiscipline and Un-Parliamentary conducts," Rijiju said in a post on X.

"Welcome to nation building NDA under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji and good bye to Tukde-Tukde INDI Alliance," the minister said.

The AAP had earlier on Sunday termed their merger as "unconstitutional" and said they have moved a peti-

tion before the RS Chairman seeking the termination of the membership of the seven MPs, who had switched sides.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh had said that he has submitted a petition to Chairman Radhakrishnan seeking the disqualification of the seven party MPs in the Upper House who recently quit the AAP and announced their merger with the BJP.

On Friday last, the AAP suffered a jolt when the seven Rajya Sabha MPs quit and announced their merger with the BJP, alleging that the Kejriwal-led party had strayed from its principles, values and core morals.

Chadha announced on Friday that exercising the provisions of the Constitution, more than two-thirds of the AAP MPs in Rajya Sabha have merged with the BJP.

He said seven MPs signed the document, which was submitted to the Chairman of Rajya Sabha and he personally handed over the signed documents. (Agencies)

Akola hottest at 46.9 Deg C

NAGPUR, APR 27:

Akola in Maharashtra has recorded the highest temperature in the country at 46.9°C, while Nagpur and several other parts of Vidarbha reeled under a severe heat wave.

Heat wave conditions are expected to persist across parts of the state's Vidarbha region till Tuesday, as maximum temperatures may reach 45 to 46 degrees Celsius and touch 47 degrees Celsius at isolated locations, MeT officials said.

Akola recorded 46.9 degrees Celsius, the highest temperature in the country, followed by Amravati at 46.8 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department's Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) in Nagpur.

Wardha sizzled at 46.4 degrees Celsius, Yavatmal logged 46 degrees Celsius, Nagpur scorched at 45.4 degrees Celsius, while Chandrapur recorded 45 degrees Celsius, as per the data.

Akola, Amravati, Wardha, Yavatmal, Chandrapur and Nagpur experienced heat wave conditions, while several other districts reported above-normal temperatures, RMC scientist Dr Praveen Kumar said.

The prevailing above-normal and persistently high temperatures over Vidarbha can be attributed to an anticyclonic circulation over Maharashtra and adjoining areas. At the same time, hot and dry north-westerly winds have been continuously affecting the region, he said.

In addition, weak western disturbances and the absence of moisture incursion or any significant weather systems have contributed to the intensification of heat over the region, the official said.

As per the Met department, heat wave conditions are likely to continue at a few or isolated places over the region till Tuesday.

The IMD has issued an 'orange' alert for Akola, Amravati and Wardha and a 'yellow' alert for Nagpur, Chandrapur and Yavatmal for Tuesday, saying that the maximum temperatures are likely to reach 45 to 46 deg C and possibly up to 47 deg C at isolated locations.

A relief from the heat wave is expected thereafter and the mercury is likely to dip by 2 to 3 deg C, with the possibility of rainfall and gusty winds in the coming days, it added.

RS chairman accepts merger of 7 AAP MPs with BJP

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Historic milestone for Ladakh

5 new distts notified; Saxena says it will strengthen governance

Himalayan Mail News LEH, APR 27



In a historic decision, L.G. Vinai Kumar Saxena today approved the issuance of notification for the creation of five new districts in Ladakh, saying that the decision would strengthen governance in the Union Territory.

The new districts were created to meet the aspirations of people of Ladakh and fulfill their long-pending demand, according to officials.

With this, Ladakh will now have a total of seven districts from the existing two. The five new districts are: Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar and Drass.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, had approved the formation of five new districts in August 2024.

The decision of forming five new districts will significantly enhance administrative efficiency, improve service delivery, and fulfill the long-standing aspirations of the people, particularly those residing in remote and far-flung areas.

The LG said the move was aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of a developed and prosperous Ladakh, which was envisioned with the inception of Ladakh as a

Ladakh's immense potential and ensuring balanced, inclusive, and sustainable development across the Union Territory," he said.

Ladakh, one of India's largest Union Territories in terms of geographical area, has long faced administrative challenges due to its difficult terrain, sparse population, and remote habitations. The creation of five additional districts will decentralise governance, reduce travel distances for citizens (often exceeding 300 km), and ensure faster and more effective delivery of public services.

Importantly, the creation of new districts is also expected to generate significant employment opportunities through the establishment of new administrative offices, supporting infrastructure, and allied services. This will further boost local employment, skill development, entrepreneurship and economic opportunities.

Notably, the MHA in August 2024 had also directed the UT Administration of Ladakh to constitute a committee to examine various aspects related to the formation of new districts. The committee undertook extensive consultations with delegations from across the region and conducted field visits and prepared a final report.

Justice Must Be Seen To Be Done: Kejriwal On Refusal To Appear In Excise Case Before HC Judge

NEW DELHI, APR 27: **Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal has written to Delhi High Court Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma, saying he will not appear in the excise case personally or through a lawyer before her, the party said on Monday.**

Pointing to a "grave miscarriage of justice", Kejriwal, in a four-page letter, said he has "serious and unrecconciled" concerns regarding the matter.

"I have decided that I shall not participate in the further proceedings in this matter, either in person or through counsel. I do not take this step lightly," Kejriwal added.

In his letter, Kejriwal further said that "justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done".

"The principle that justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done, is among the most sacred assurances that a court gives to a citizen in a democracy," he said.

The assurance cannot be dishonoured by asking the citizen to ignore what "any-

one can plainly see" in a case like this, he added in the letter. The letter also invoked the principles of Satyagraha and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, with Kejriwal saying that his intent is "strengthening of judiciary and prevent its weakening".

He added that he has given the authority an opportunity to consider and correct what he perceived to be a grave miscarriage of justice. His earlier plea seeking the recusal of Justice Sharma, which was rejected on April 20, was interpreted as a personal attack, the AAP chief claimed.

"After the said judgment, I am left with the painful and inescapable impression that what I had urged as a lawful plea of apprehension was received and answered as a personal attack upon Your Ladyship and as an assault on the institution itself.

"Those are not, with respect, answers to the case I had brought. They show me that my plea of apprehension has been judicially understood as a personal and insti-

tutional affront," he said in the letter.

The letter further noted the leader's belief that it was now "impossible to receive an impartial hearing" in Justice Sharma's court. Kejriwal also reiterated two grounds cited earlier in his recusal plea.

"First, the issue of Your Ladyship's repeated public association with the RSS's legal front, the Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad (ABAP) — an organisation belonging to the ideological ecosystem of the ruling dispensation," he wrote, further pointing out that Justice Sharma's children "are professionally engaged on multiple advocates' panels of the Union government which happens to be the opposite party in this case".

Reflecting on his personal experience during the proceedings, the former Delhi chief minister expressed concern over the broader implications of his case on public trust in the judiciary, while he said he maintains respect for the institution.

"When I appeared before

Your Ladyship to argue my case, the question in my heart was simple: Will I get justice? Today, with the deepest respect, I must say that the same question has become graver and deeper in my conscience," he said.

This case has now become a matter of widespread public discussion. It is being discussed not merely in legal and political circles, but in homes across the country, the letter read.

Addressing potential criticism, Kejriwal clarified that his remarks should not be interpreted as opposition to the judiciary.

"As I write this, I am also cognisant of the fact that some might portray me as someone 'against' the judiciary. But how can that ever be the case when I have personally received relief from the judiciary, including orders of bail and the present discharge? "Today, I walk free because of the judiciary. Let there exist no figment of imagination that my present stand is against the institution," he asserted.

One-third of animal habitats could experience extreme events by 2085 under continued warming: Study

NEW DELHI, APR 27: **Under continued global warming, over one-third of animal habitats on land could face climate-driven extreme events, such as heatwaves or forest fires, by 2085, according to a new study.**

Published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution, the findings also adds that rapidly cutting emissions to net zero could largely avert these impacts.

Researchers, led by those from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, analysed climate projections and species data, including those from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

They found that in a scenario in which warming starts to reverse in the latter part of the century, only nine per cent of land animals' habitat could be expected to experience extreme events by 2085.

"I think climate change, and in particular extreme events, are still really being underestimated when it comes to conservation planning. It's not just going to be a gradual shift of temperature over many years," lead au-



thor Stefanie Heinicke, a postdoctoral researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said.

Multiple extreme events can have compounding effects and create "synergistic" threats to biodiversity.

For example, a study on the 2019-2020 Australian fire showed a 27-40 per cent greater decline across plant and animal species when the fire was preceded by a drought, the researchers said.

The team predicted changes in exposure to droughts, heatwaves, river floods and wildfires for

33,936 terrestrial vertebrate species and 794 ecoregions (ecological regions).

"By 2050, under a medium-high emission scenario, on average 74 per cent of the area within species' current geographic ranges are projected to be exposed to heatwaves, 16 per cent to wildfires, eight per cent to droughts and three per cent to river floods," the authors wrote.

Species-rich areas, including those in the Amazon basin, Africa and Southeast Asia, could be affected, they said. The researchers also projected that by 2050, 22

ecoregions, primarily in mid-latitudes, could be estimated to have at least 50 per cent of their area exposed to two or more types of extreme events, increasing to 236 ecoregions by 2085.

"By 2085, 36 per cent of the area within species' ranges are projected to be exposed to multiple event types," the authors wrote.

The findings highlight the need for further research into species' sensitivity and adaptive capacity to extreme events, and for conservation strategies that address the impacts of multiple extreme events, they said. (PTI)

'Sarke Chunar' row: Sanjay Dutt apologises; to sponsor education of 50 tribal girls

NEW DELHI, APR 27:

Actor Sanjay Dutt on Monday appeared before the National Commission for Women (NCW) in connection with the controversy over the song 'Sarke Chunar Teri Sarke' and submitted a written apology, expressing regret for any "unintended" harm caused to society.

During the hearing, held under NCW chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar, the commission raised concerns over alleged vulgarity and indecent representation of women in the song from the movie "KD The Devil" and questioned issues of intent, awareness and accountability.

The chairperson emphasised whether adequate due diligence was undertaken before participating in content that could be perceived as promoting objectification of women, while also underlining the responsibility of senior and influential public figures in ensuring that their



work remains within the bounds of legal and societal standards.

As a corrective measure, Dutt committed to sponsoring the education of 50 tribal girl children as part of efforts towards social welfare and women's empowerment, the NCW said in a statement. He also assured the commission that his future artist agreements would include mandatory legal due diligence provisions to ensure

dignified and appropriate representation of women and children in films and related creative projects. Actor Nora Fatehi, who was also summoned, could not appear as she is currently abroad and has sought a fresh date for the hearing.

On April 6, other individuals associated with the song, including director Kiran Kumar alias Prem, lyricist Raqueeb Alam and representatives of KVN Produc-

tion Company Gautam K M and Supriya, appeared before the commission and submitted their apologies. The NCW underscored that while artistic freedom is important, it must be exercised with responsibility and sensitivity, reiterating the need for accountability in content reaching wide public audiences and reaffirming its commitment to safeguarding the dignity and representation of women.