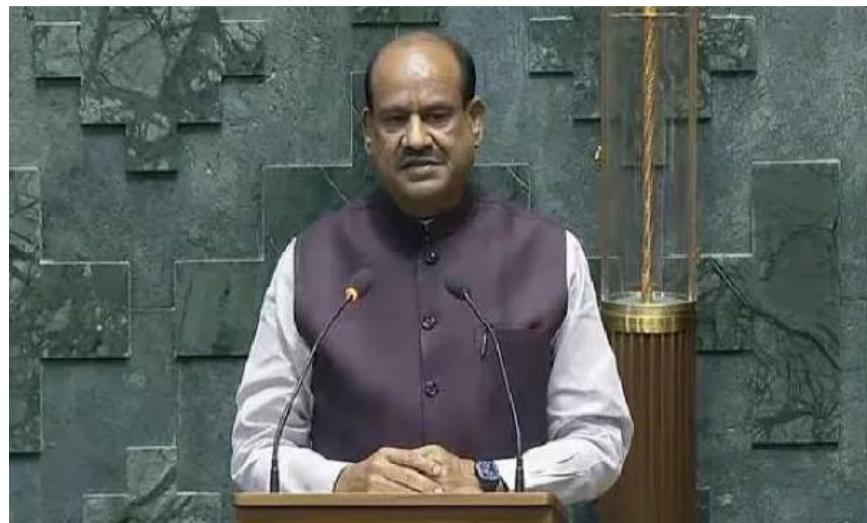


Om Birla Becomes Speaker Of Lok Sabha For Second Consecutive Term



New Delhi, June 26: National Democratic Alliance (NDA) candidate for the Lok Sabha speaker's post, Om Birla won the election with voice-vote on Wednesday, June 26. Om Birla became the speaker of Lok Sabha for second consecutive term. The proposal of Om Birla's name for the speaker's post was moved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, leader of the house, and was supported by the rest of the parties in NDA. Soon after the election, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi walked up to Mr Birla to congratulate him and also shook hands with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. All members of the house stood up at their places to applaud Om Birla, when he was walking towards the chair to take charge. He was escorted by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju. In his congratulatory message, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "I want to congratulate you on behalf of the House. It is a huge responsibility for you to sit on this post for the second time during the Amrit Kaal. With your experience, we hope that you will guide us for the next 5 years. 'Aapke chehre par yeh meethi meethi muskaan poore Sadan ko prasann rakhti hai'. Becoming the Speaker for the second time is a record in itself. Balram Jakhar got the opportunity to serve as the Speaker for the second term after competing 5 years and today you are doing the same..." Prime Minister added the works that didn't happen during 70 years of independence, were made possible by this House under your chairmanship. "Several milestones come in the long journey of democracy. A few occasions are such when we receive the opportunity to establish milestones. I am very confident that the country will be proud of the achievements of the 17th Lok Sabha," PM Modi said. After Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi addressed the house and congratulated Om Birla. He said "I would like to congratulate you for your successful election that you have been elected for the second time. I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the entire Opposition and the INDIA alliance. This House represents the voice of India's people and you are the final arbiter of that voice. The government has political power but the opposition also represents the voice of India's people and this time, the opposition represents significantly more voice of the Indian people than it did last time. The opposition would like to assist you in doing your work. We would like the House to function often and well. It is very important that cooperation happens on the basis of trust. It is very important that the voice of the Opposition is allowed to be represented in this House."

From EC Head To CBI Chief, LoP Rahul Gandhi's Say In Key Postings Matter Now



New Delhi, June 26: Rahul Gandhi's new role as the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha marks a key development in Indian politics. As LoP, Rahul Gandhi will participate in the appointment process for important positions like the CBI director, Chief Election Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission chairperson, and Chief Vigilance Commissioner. This role grants him a say in these crucial appointments, although the Centre maintains a 2-1 advantage in the selection panels. Rahul Gandhi is the third member of the Gandhi family to hold the position. His father, Rajiv Gandhi, was the Leader of the Opposition

lighted the role of the Speaker as the final arbiter of the people's voice. "The Opposition would like to assist you in doing your work. We would like the House to function. It is very important that cooperation happens on the basis of trust. It is very important that the voice of the Opposition is allowed to be represented in this House. The question is not how efficiently the House is run. The question is how much of India's voice is being allowed to be heard. So the idea that you can run the House efficiently by silencing the voice of the Opposition is a non-democratic idea. And this election has shown that the people of India expect the Opposition to defend the Constitution," he said. "We are confident that by allowing the Opposition to speak, you will do your duty of defending the Constitution," Gandhi added. Gandhi was elected from two constituencies - Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh and Wayanad in Kerala. He has vacated the Wayanad seat, and his sister Priyanka Gandhi-Vadra will contest the bypoll for that constituency. His return to the Lok Sabha and his elevation to this role come after his disqualification as an MP last year due to a conviction in a defamation case, which was paused by the Supreme Court, allowing him to return to Parliament.

The Reasons Behind Congress Missing Leader Of Opposition Post In 2014 And 2019



New Delhi, June 26: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will occupy the post of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a letter about the decision has been sent to Pro-tem Speaker Bhartruhari Mahtab. The decision on Rahul Gandhi's appointment as the Leader of the Opposition was made after a meeting of the floor leaders of the INDIA bloc at Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's residence. The Congress, being the single largest opposition party, gets the post of opposition leader after a gap of 10 years. The grand old party did not get the said post after failing to secure 10 per cent strength in the 543-member Lok Sabha. In 2014, they won only 44 seats, and in 2019, they secured 52 seats. For a party to get the LoP post, it should get at least 55 seats. However, the Congress has increased its tally to 99 in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Hence, the grand old party is getting the Leader of the Opposition post. As a result, the Congress did not get official LoP status and the associated privileges, making it difficult to effectively hold the government accountable and influence legislative proceedings. Hence, the decade is considered to be the toughest phase for the grand old party since its inception. The Congress is now positioned to play a critical role in parliamentary debates. The National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) candidate, Om Birla, is leading significantly over his Congress rival K Suresh, with support from at least 293 MPs for the Lok Sabha Speaker election. This election is notable for being only the fourth in Lok Sabha history where the Speaker is chosen through an election, rather than by consensus.

Pawan Kalyan Questions Officials on Missing Rs. 1000 Crores from Central Government



Amaravathi, June 26 : Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan questioned the whereabouts of the Rs. 1,066 crores released by the Central Government over the past five years. On Wednesday, he conducted a review meeting on the Swachh Andhra Corporation. High-ranking officials and engineers attended this meeting. The officials gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Deputy Chief Minister on the corporation's performance. Subsequently, he inquired about the details of the funds received from the center and their expenditure. He noted that over Rs. 1000 crores were received from the central government over five years. He questioned the officials on where these funds had gone. However, the officials brought to Pawan Kalyan's attention that the finance department of the previous government had not released the funds from the center to Swachh Andhra.

UK PM Rishi Sunak's Yorkshire Home Trespass: Four Arrested By North Yorkshire Police

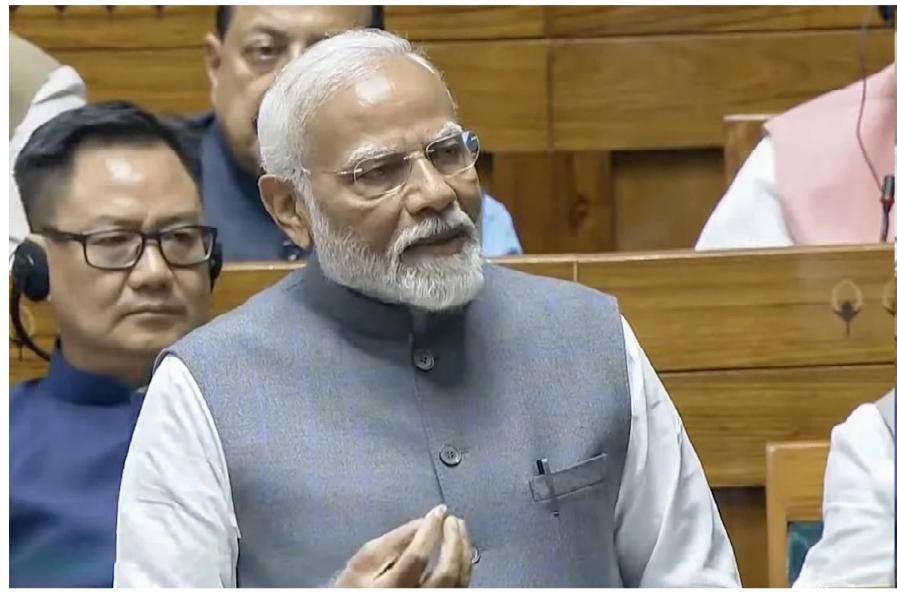


Four men have been arrested on suspicion of aggravated trespass at the prime minister's constituency home in Yorkshire, according to police reports. The suspects were apprehended on Tuesday within the grounds of Rishi Sunak's residence in Kirby Sigston, near Northallerton, around 12.40 pm. North Yorkshire police stated that the men, aged 52 from London, 43 from Bolton, 21 from Manchester, and 20 from Chichester, remain in police custody while inquiries are underway. In a statement, North Yorkshire police mentioned, "Four people were arrested in the grounds of the prime minister's constituency home this afternoon. Our officers were with the four men within one minute of their entry onto the grounds. They were detained at around 12.40 pm before being escorted off the property and arrested on suspicion of aggravated trespass," as reported by The Gaurdian. The arrests are linked to a protest organized by Youth Demand, a campaign group advocating for "the Tories and the Labour party to commit to a two-way arms embargo on Israel, and to stop all new oil and gas licences." The group has staged several actions against government policies. A spokesperson for Youth Demand noted that three of the arrested individuals were participating in the protest, while the fourth was an independent photographer. In a separate incident reported by police, a motorist crashed into the gates of Sunak's official country residence, Chequers, in Buckinghamshire, as reported by India Today. The incident occurred shortly after midday on Tuesday when a white Volkswagen Scirocco struck the entrance barriers. At the time of the incident, Sunak was away attending events linked to the Japanese state visit in London, as per media reports. Thames Valley police arrested the driver, a 44-year-old man from the county, on suspicion of criminal damage and drink-driving. The driver sustained serious injuries and was hospitalized, where he remains. Thames Valley police emphasized that, "While we are still in the very early stages of our investigation, there is currently no evidence to suggest there was any intention to harm anyone."

K'taka govt drops Deve Gowda, Kumaraswamy from Kempe Gowda Jayanthi invitation; stirs row

Bengaluru, June 26: The move by the Congress government in Karnataka to leave out former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy from the invitations to celebrate Kempe Gowda Jayanthi has stirred a controversy. Reacting to the development in Delhi, Kumaraswamy stated on Wednesday that "Kempe Gowda does not belong to anyone. He belongs to the state. I got to know that our names were dropped from the invitation. I won't give much importance to it. I will not make an issue out of my name not being mentioned in the invitations anytime." "I have contributed to the growth of Bengaluru city during my tenure as chief minister twice. I will do things that will bring honour to Kempe Gowda. If they include my name now, it is not possible for me to attend the event. Tomorrow, the President is addressing both Houses of Parliament, and I need to be present here. I will pay my respects from here," Kumaraswamy said. Kempe Gowda Jayanthi is celebrated in different ways. Kempe Gowda's photo is kept in every house and worshipped. The world is talking about Bengaluru city, and Kempe Gowda is behind it. The lakes built by him in Bengaluru are encroached upon; they need to be saved, Kumaraswamy stated. "People claim that the Mekedatu project should be implemented. There is no drinking water presently, and it is not known what will happen after 15 years. If the government wants to celebrate the birth anniversary, let it save the lakes. Let them think about making use of rainwater. If this is done, I will salute the government," he said. BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra opined in Delhi that one cannot become a community leader by cunningness and conspiracy. The people of the community will not agree to this. "We were successful in the Lok Sabha election. We don't have sympathies for the Congress party, but we have sympathies for the people of the state," he said. Kempe Gowda, who hails from the Vokkaliga community, is the founder of Bengaluru city. The government celebrates the ruler's birth anniversary every year on June 27. This year, the Congress government is celebrating Kempe Gowda Jayanthi with much fanfare. The decision to exclude the names of prominent leaders of the Vokkaliga community, former PM Deve Gowda and his son Kumaraswamy, has been criticized. According to sources, Dy CM and Karnataka Congress president D.K. Shivakumar, who also hails from the Vokkaliga community, wants to project himself as the face of this influential community and ensure that the names of Deve Gowda and Kumaraswamy are omitted.

'Emergency exemplified what a dictatorship looks like': PM Modi reacts after Speaker's 2-minute silence



New Delhi, June 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday gave a shout-out to the newly elected Speaker Om Birla for condemning the Emergency (1975-1977) in his first speech, in the 18th Lok Sabha. "I am glad that the Honourable Speaker strongly condemned the Emergency, highlighted the excesses committed during that time and also mentioned the manner in which democracy was strangled. It was also a wonderful gesture to stand in silence in honour of all those who suffered during those days," PM Modi said. Om Birla, in his maiden speech in the 18th Lok Sabha, invoked the 'dark days' of Emergency and also called for a 2-minute silence over the 'black chapter' of Indian democracy, triggering protests from the Opposition benches. Notably, June

25, 2024, marked the 50th anniversary of the Emergency, imposed during the Indira Gandhi-led Congress government. The 21-month-long period saw the basic rights and freedom of citizens taken away and the Constitution trampled upon. PM Modi further underlined the need to impress upon today's new generation about those 'dark days' to make them understand, 'what a dictatorship looks like'. "The Emergency was imposed 50 years ago but it is important for today's youth to know about it because it remains a fitting example of what happens when the Constitution is trampled over, public opinion is stifled and institutions are destroyed. The happenings during the Emergency exemplified what a dictatorship looks like," PM Modi further said on X.

LoP Rahul Gandhi offers full support to LS Speaker Birla; also sends a message



New Delhi, June 26: Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, congratulated the newly-elected Speaker Om Birla, and assured him of full co-operation in running the House. The Congress MP from UP's Raebareli however also had a message for the LS Speaker as he said, "By allowing the Opposition to speak, you will do your duty of defending the Constitution of India." In his welcome speech to congratulate the newly-elected Speaker, MP Rahul Gandhi, amid thumping of desks from Opposition benches said, "The Government has the political power but the Opposition also represents the voice of India's people. This time the Opposition represents significantly more voices of the Indian people than last time." Assuring Om Birla of the Opposition's support and co-operation in daily functioning of the House, Rahul Gandhi said, "The Opposition would like to assist you in doing your work. We would like the House to function often and well." He,

however, added that it would be good if the co-operation happens on the basis of trust. "It is very important that the voice of the Opposition is allowed to be represented in this House", he observed, adding, "I am confident that you will allow us to represent our voice, allow us to speak, allow us to represent the voice of the people of India." Rahul Gandhi advised Om Birla to be watchful of any attempts to silence the voice of the Opposition and said, "The idea that you can run the House efficiently by silencing the voice of the Opposition is a non-democratic idea and this election has shown that the people of India expect the Opposition to defend the Constitution, the Samvidhan of this country." "The question is not how efficiently the House is run, the question is how much of India's voice is being allowed to be heard in this House", he said, amid a clamour by the Opposition over the NDA's choice of re-electing the 'controversial' Speaker.

India must aim to lower cost of access to space: ISRO Chairman



New Delhi, June 26: India must aim to lower the cost of access to space as other countries, said ISRO Chairman S. Somanath on Wednesday, at the third Annual India Space Congress (ISC) 2024, in the national capital. The three-day ISC 2024, organised by SIA-India, includes participation from over 300 global space organisations and 30 countries. "ISRO has created significant space capability and talent in the country. It's time for new actors to scale India's space operations," Somanath said at the event. "Bringing down the cost of access to space is a global trend, and India must also look at it. Space can never be solely for business and economy; it must inspire generations to innovate for humanity," he added. He also mentioned the upcoming launch of the GSAT-20 is a high-throughput Ka-band Satellite, with over 50gbps high bandwidth connectivity capacity. Dr Pawan Kumar Goenka, Chairman, IN-SPACe said that India's space startups will increase after the FDI policy. He also boasted about "the enthusiasm of the private sector and how the investments are looking highly positive with the private space sector in India receiving \$135 million in investment last year alone." The event aims to showcase the innovative initiatives taken by space startups, and their strategic foresight of investments for shaping humankind's destiny in space. "The Indian ecosystem is integrating into the global supply chain to bring the benefits of space to all, aiming to make India the hub of global satellite manufacturing," said Dr Subba Rao Pavuluri, President of SIA-India.

Telangana Congress may be forced to go slow on 'poaching' BRS MLAs



Hyderabad, June 26: The furore triggered by the defection of a BRS MLA may force Telangana's ruling Congress to go slow on poaching opposition legislators. After senior Congress leader T. Jeevan Reddy openly voiced his unhappiness over the party admitting Bharat Rashtra Samithi MLA M. Sanjay Kumar into the party, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and his loyalists may have to put on hold their plans to lure more BRS MLAs. With Jeevan Reddy threatening to resign as Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) and his supporters virtually on the warpath, the central leadership has taken note of the developments. As several state leaders including Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka failed to pacify Jeevan Reddy, the central leadership of the Congress has summoned him to Delhi. The AICC in-charge Deepa Dasmunshi has asked Jeevan Reddy to reach the national capital. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is already on a visit to Delhi. The central leadership may ask Revanth Reddy not to become aggressive in engineering defections as this could lead to further problems within the party. After the Lok Sabha elections, the Chief Minister and his loyalists had intensified their efforts to lure more BRS MLAs to the ruling camp. After coming to power in the state in December 2023 with 64 seats in the 119-member Assembly, the Congress successfully lured three BRS MLAs and several key leaders including BRS general secretary and Rajya Sabha member K. Kesav Rao and his daughter and Greater Hyderabad Mayor Gadwal Vijayalaxmi. Four MPs of the BRS were among those who had switched loyalties to the Congress. During the campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, some Congress leaders predicted that after the polls the BRS will be completely denuded. Minister for roads and buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy had even claimed that except BRS president K.

Chandrasekhar Rao, his son K. T. Rama Rao and nephew T. Harish Rao, all BRS MLAs will quit the party and join the Congress. After the Lok Sabha elections, in which the BRS drew a blank, Revanth Reddy and his camp stepped up their efforts to poach BRS MLAs. The BRS leadership was caught unawares when the Chief Minister reached the house of senior leader and former Assembly speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy on June 21 and invited him to join the Congress. Srinivas Reddy immediately accepted the invitation. Shaken by the sudden development, some BRS leaders rushed to Srinivas Reddy's house and wanted to barge in but were detained by the police. In the November 2023 election, Srinivas Reddy was elected to the Assembly from Banswada seat in Nizamabad district for the fifth consecutive term. Even before the BRS could recover from the shock of losing Srinivas Reddy, BRS MLA from Jagtiyal M. Sanjay Kumar joined the Congress on the night of June 23. He was the fifth BRS MLA to defect to the Congress after the latter came to power. In the November 2023 polls, the BRS had won 39 seats in the 119-member Assembly. Its strength has now come down to 33 as it also lost the recent Secunderabad Cantonment by-election to the ruling party. The ruling party was upbeat on the latest defections from the BRS and this was also seen as a move to counter the BJP, which consolidated itself by doubling its Lok Sabha tally to eight. The Congress, however, faced resistance from an unexpected quarter. Jeevan Reddy, who had lost to Sanjay Kumar in Jagtial in the recent Assembly elections, was fuming over the Chief Minister admitting his rival into the party without even informing him. Jeevan Reddy has dubbed the entry of Srinivas Reddy into the Congress as political opportunism. He also questioned the need for encouraging defections from other parties when the Congress government is stable with 65 MLAs. "There is no need for the Congress to allow defections into the party," he had said. Sanjay Kumar's entry came as a shock to Jeevan Reddy, who announced the decision to resign as MLA. Sanjay Kumar was Jeevan Reddy's main opponent in Jagtial in three Assembly elections. While the Congress leader was elected in 2014, the BRS candidate emerged winner in 2018 and 2023. Jeevan Reddy, who was first elected to the Andhra Pradesh Assembly in 1983 on a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) from Jagtial and served as excise minister in N. T. Rama Rao's cabinet, had joined the Congress in 1984 and since then he has remained loyal to the party. Jeevan Reddy, one of the prominent Congress leaders from north Telangana, had entered the fray in the recent Lok Sabha elections from Nizamabad but lost to the BJP's D. Arvind. His threat to resign as MLC is the first challenge faced by the Congress since it came to power. Political analysts say this episode may result in the intervention of the Congress leadership, which may ask Revanth Reddy not to encourage further defections. A section of the Congress leaders is worried over the internal problems further defections of BRS MLAs may create in various districts. The sitting legislators may feel insecure while the party leaders who suffered at the hands of the defectors may consider joining the BJP or the BRS to secure their political future.

Did not blame Manish Sisodia in liquor policy case: CM Kejriwal tells court

New Delhi, June 26: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal told a court here on Wednesday that he did not blame any Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, including former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, for alleged irregularities in the framing of the now-scraped liquor policy. Addressing the Rouse Avenue Court, CM Kejriwal claimed that the CBI sources were building a false narrative in the media to malign the image of the ruling party in the national Capital and its leaders. "I have never testified that Manish Sisodia is guilty. Manish Sisodia is innocent, AAP is innocent, I am innocent," he said. During the hearing, the CBI's counsel stressed that custodial interrogation of CM Kejriwal was necessary as he shifted the entire onus on former Deputy CM Sisodia, who handled the liquor portfolio at the relevant time. Meanwhile, a special court presided over by Vacation Judge Amitabh Rawat reserved its order on the CBI's application seeking five-day custody of the AAP supremo in the liquor case. Earlier in the day, CM Kejriwal, who was produced before the Rouse Avenue Court, was formally arrested by the CBI. Permission was granted to the CBI to produce CM Kejriwal in the special court on Wednesday, after he was questioned by the agency in Tihar Jail. CM Kejriwal withdrew his plea filed before the Supreme Court challenging the interim stay ordered by the Delhi High Court on his release on bail in the money laundering case linked to the same case. Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing the AAP supremo, submitted before a Vacation Bench of Justices Manoj Misra and SVN Bhattacharya that a fresh plea would be moved before the apex court in view of the latest decision of the Delhi High Court staying the trial court order granting bail to CM Kejriwal in the money laundering case. In its final verdict pronounced on a plea filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the Delhi High Court on Tuesday said that the trial court Vacation Bench did not apply its mind to the entire material and it ought to give equal opportunity to the ED to argue the bail application.

