

Sawant hands over resignation, remains Goa interim CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PANAJI, MARCH 12

TWO DAYS after BJP won the Assembly elections in Goa, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday tendered his resignation to Governor P Sreedharan Pillai. After accepting his resignation, Pillai appointed Sawant as caretaker chief minister until the next government is formed. Stating that the Governor gave him a letter 'appointing me as the caretaker CM till the procedures are completed', Sawant said afterward: "After BJP won

the mandate, we had a cabinet meeting yesterday (Friday) to complete our procedures. One resolution was to thank the people of Goa for giving us an opportunity to work for (last) three years. The second resolution was to dissolve the Assembly." While formation of the next government will take place after BJP's central observers arrive in Goa, Sawant said procedures laid down by the central leadership are being followed. "The swearing-in is in four states," he said. "A decision has not been taken regarding the arrival of the central observers yet..."

Paytm founder held for 'ramming' DCP's car

Vijay Shekhar Sharma, founder and CEO of Paytm, was released on bail by the Delhi Police last month

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

VIJAY SHEKHAR Sharma, founder and CEO of Paytm, was arrested and released on bail by Delhi Police last month after being booked under IPC Section 279 (rash or negligent driving). According to an FIR filed in connection with the case, a Jaguar Land Rover, allegedly being driven by him, had hit the ve-

hicle of DCP (South district) outside The Mother's International School on Aurobindo Marg. The incident took place on February 22 and police lodged an FIR on a complaint filed by Constable Dipak Kumar, posted as driver with DCP (South) Benita Mary Jaiker. Delhi Police spokesperson Suman Nalwa confirmed that police had 'arrested Sharma, and released him on bail'. DCP Jaiker refused to comment on the case. Constable Kumar, when con-

The incident took place on February 22 and police lodged an FIR on a complaint filed by Constable Dipak Kumar

tacted, said he was posted with DCP (Jaiker), and had taken her vehicle to a petrol pump around 8 am.

"Constable Pradeep, an operator, was with me when we reached Mother's International School and found a traffic jam there. I saw a gathering of people dropping their children (to school). I slowed down and asked Pradeep to get down to clear the traffic," he said. "I was waiting when a car came speeding from the side and rammed my vehicle. There was a Haryana registration number plate and the person managed to drive away. Our vehicle got damaged and Pradeep asked me to park on the side of the road. We informed our DCP and she asked me about the car. We told her that we had noted down the number, and then we lodged an FIR at Malviya Nagar police station," he said. In the FIR, Kumar stated he "can identify the driver". Police traced the car with the help of the transport department, and discovered it was registered with a Gurgaon-based company.

The company told police it had given the vehicle to Sharma, a resident of Greater Kailash-II. Sharma was called to Malviya Nagar police station, where he was arrested and released on bail. Multiple attempts to reach Sharma through phone calls, text messages and emails were unsuccessful. When contacted, a Paytm spokesperson declined to comment on the matter. Police also impounded the car after the accident.

WOMEN'S CAR RALLY TO THE VALLEY 318 take part in rally till Nashik to spread awareness about women empowerment

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, MARCH 12

THREE HUNDRED and eighteen women participated in 'Women's Car Rally to the Valley', which started on Saturday morning in Mumbai, where they drove their fancy cars themed around messages of women empowerment, road safety, social evils and global issues to create awareness and to celebrate International Women's Day. The annual event was organised by the Western India Automobile Association (WIAA), presented by J K Tyres, co-partnered by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited's Ufill and powered by Westside. The rally, which began at 8 am from Jio World Drive in BKC, was flagged off by Zita Goenka and Viveck Goenka, president of WIAA and Chairman of The Indian Express group. Pankaj Kumar, Director (Offshore), ONGC, who flagged off the cars, said: "I am happy to see so many women spreading awareness with different messages on women empowerment. We too have two teams participating in the rally." Nitin Dossa, Executive Chairman of WIAA, said, "The response was very good and we plan to have 300 entries next year." The participants touched upon several issues like 'Beti Padhao', gender equality, violence against women, patriotism, 'say no to war', mental health, self-love, 'trans lives matter', animal cruelty, yoga, mental health, saving mangroves, climate change and road safety. The women seated in 106



Western India Automobile Association celebrated International Women's Day with a car rally only for women. The rally saw 106 cars being flagged-off from Jio World Drive in BKC. Pradip Das

cars (three women per car) passed by major Mumbai landmarks. The rally will end at Taj-The Gateway Ambad in Nashik. Some of the participants will be rewarded for best theme, best slogan and best decorated car. One of the participants, Jayshree Shinde, is specially-abled and has completed 101 marathon runs using crutches. Shinde, who was in the driver's seat, said, "I want to change the way society looks at disability." A few cars were decorated with photos of the Army, Navy

and Air Force. One of the women in the cars, Sarita Venkat, whose husband serves in the Navy as a captain, said: "Our message to women around the world is to break the barriers, step up the game and take the lead." Regional Transport Office (RTO) officials also participated in the rally. Pallavi Kothawade, Deputy RTO, Mumbai (West), said: "Several lakh victims of road accidents are from the young generation. So, we need to raise awareness among them as our future depends on them."

Cop dies of cancer, wife submits fake documents to seek govt job; FIR lodged

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PUNE, MARCH 12

AN FIR has been registered against the wife of a police sub-inspector who died due to illness for allegedly submitting fake documents to seek a government job on compassionate grounds. R S Waghmare, a senior clerk at the crime investigation department (CID) has lodged FIR at Chaturshringi police station Friday. A sub-inspector attached to the fingerprints department at the CID office in Washim district died due

to cancer on September 22, 2017. Later, his wife applied for a government job under compassionate grounds. She submitted an application for the same at the state CID office in Pune. Police said the woman had submitted a fake mark sheet and certificate of BA third year with her application. After the cheating came to light, CID officials lodged a complaint against the woman. Police have booked her under sections 420, 465, 468, 471 of IPC. Police said the accused woman has not been arrested yet and the investigation is still on.

Media casteist, stay away from them: Maya to spokespersons

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, MARCH 12

A DAY after she said the decision by Muslims to throw their lot behind the Samajwadi Party (SP) resulted in Dalits, upper-caste Hindus and OBCs backing the BJP to keep out the SP's 'jungle raj', BSP president Mayawati on Saturday alleged that the media worked "on the directions of their bosses and harmed the Aambedkarite BSP movement". In a tweet, she wrote, "During the general elections for the UP Vidhan Sabha, the media worked following directions of their bosses, and their attitude was casteist and malicious. The media harmed the Aambedkarite BSP movement, and the way it acted is

not hidden from anyone. Under these circumstances, party spokespersons will be given new responsibilities." The polls saw the worst performance by the BSP in three decades with the party being reduced to a seat and a mere 12.8% of the vote share. In another tweet, she directed party spokespersons Sudhendra Bhadoria, Dharamveer Chaudhary, Dr M H Khan, Faizan Khan and Seema Kushwaha not to attend debates on TV. Speaking to The Indian Express, a BSP spokesperson said that Mayawati has asked them to stay away from the media until further directions are by her. "She has told us to stay away from the media for some time. We will follow the path shown by her," said the spokesperson.

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RESERVED CATEGORY SEATS BJP tally dips from 2017, SP gains

LALMANI VERMA LUCKNOW, MARCH 12

IN THE Assembly seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC), where support of Dalit and non-Dalits for any political party is tested more than in the general category seats, the BJP and allies won more seats than the Samajwadi Party (SP) and its allies in the 2022 Assembly elections. However, this time the BJP's performance on such seats was poor in comparison with 2017 while the SP has now increased its tally on such seats. Of the total 403 Assembly seats in the state, 84 are reserved for SCs and two for STs (Odra and Duddhi). The BJP won both the ST reserved seats in 2022 as it had done in 2017 too when the party put up its best performance in the state in terms of Assembly elections till date. In 2017, the BJP had won 69 among the SC-reserved seats. The SP had won seven, BSP got two, Suheldeo Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) had won three, Apna Dal (Sonela) had won two and one seat was won by an Independent candidate. The Suheldeo Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) and Apna Dal (S) both were BJP's allies in the 2017 elections. In total, the BJP and allies had won 74 seats then. In the 2022 elections, the results of which were declared on Thursday, the BJP and its ally Apna Dal (S) collectively won 63 seats, 11 less than in 2017. Another BJP ally, Nishad Party, did not contest on any reserved seat. In the 2022 elections, the SBSP was in alliance with SP and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and other smaller parties. The SP won 16 reserved seats, SBSP won three seats and RLD emerged the winner on one seat. In total, SP and allies collectively won 20 SC reserved seats. This was a better performance than in 2017, when the SP itself had won only seven seats while its ally

Congress had won none. In 2017, the BSP had won two SC reserved seats but it won none in 2022. The BSP, in the recent elections, fielded Dalit candidates on unreserved seats such as Karhal and Jaswantnagar as part of its social engineering. The SP improved its tally in reserved seats than 2017 but BJP recorded a higher victory margin. The average margin of votes for victory on SC seats for BJP in 2022 was 28,667. However, SP's average margin was 13,967, almost half to BJP's average margin. That difference indicates that out of Dalit votes that shifted from BSP, BJP got that larger share than the SP. As for the reserved seats it won in 2017, the BJP lost nine to SP and one to RLD in 2022. In an attempt to reach out to Dalit voters before the Assembly polls, particularly those from Jatav community that forms a chunk of BSP chief Mayawati's vote base, the BJP had projected party national vice-president Baby Rani Maurya, a former Uttar Pradesh governor and Agra mayor, as its Dalit face in the state. The BJP had organised functions to felicitate her, ensuring attendance of people from Scheduled Caste communities in various parties of the state. For these functions, the BJP had also highlighted Maurya's Dalit identity, by adding 'Jatav' to her name in hoardings and formal communications. The BJP had also held 'samajik pratidindi sammelans' to woo voters from different castes, including SCs and OBCs. Baby Rani Maurya won the election from Agra Rural (SC reserve) with a margin of 76,608 votes. The BSP finished second on this seat. SCs constitute more than 23% of the population in UP, and nearly half of them are from sub-caste Jatav. They are in decisive positions in more than 50 Assembly constituencies in western Uttar Pradesh and eastern region.



Punjab CM-designate Bhagwant Mann with Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Kamleshwar Singh

Mann meets Punjab governor, stakes claim to form govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE CHANDIGARH, MARCH 12

PUNJAB Chief Minister-designate Bhagwant Mann Saturday met Governor Banwarilal Purohit and staked claim to form the government in the state. Mann, who was unanimously elected AAP legislature party leader a day ago, handed over handed over a letter of support of his party MLAs to the Governor who accepted it. Addressing the media outside the Raj Bhawan, Mann said, "We staked claim to form the government and the governor sahib approved it". Mann said the swearing-in ceremony will be held at 12:30 pm on March 16 at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral village of legendary freedom fighter Bhagat Singh, in Nawanshahr district. "We invite the people of Punjab (for the ceremony). On March 16, not only us and our ministers, but every Punjabi will take oath...we will vow to sacrifice everything for the

progress of Punjab, he said. Replying to a question on the Cabinet formation, Mann said, "The cabinet will be good. Historic decisions will be taken." Mann has already invited AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the swearing-in ceremony. On Sunday, the two leaders will pay obeisance at the Golden Temple, Durgiana Mandir and Sri Ram Tirath Mandir. They will take part in a road show in Amritsar to celebrate the AAP's stupendous victory in the polls and thank voters. The AAP romped home by winning 92 seats in the 117-member Punjab Assembly. It decimated the Congress and the SAD-BSP combine and its candidates defeated several stalwarts, including the outgoing chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi, SAD patriarch Parkash Singh Badal and former chief minister Amarinder Singh. A Vidhan Sabha session has been called on March 17 when

all the newly elected legislators will take oath. Chief Secretary Anirudh Tewari held a meeting on convening the session and the file for the schedule is being sent to Vidhan Sabha secretariat by Department of Parliamentary Affairs. The session assumes significance as March 21 is the last date of nominations for the five Raja Sabha seats from state falling vacant on April 9. The Election Commission has notified the polls for March 31. Meanwhile, in first administrative change following the change of guard in the state, Additional Chief Secretary (Taxation) A Venu Prasad was Saturday appointed as Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister. A 1991-batch IAS officer, Venu Prasad held the additional charge of chairman-cum-managing director, Punjab State Transmission Corporation Limited. Venu Prasad will also hold the charge of ACS Parliamentary Affairs and CMD PSTCL, and ACS-cum-Financial Commissioner, Taxation.

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