

Centre's Big Praise For Former PM Manmohan Singh In Supreme Court

The BJP-led central government commended former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao and his then finance minister, Manmohan Singh, for their pivotal roles in initiating economic liberalisation and opening up the Indian economy in 1991. During a hearing in the Supreme Court, the government said that the move effectively marked the end of the era of 'licence raj'. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed a nine-judge bench led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud that the economic reforms introduced by Mr Rao and Mr Singh had liberalised numerous laws, including the company law and the Trade Practices Act MRTP. However, he highlighted that subsequent governments over the following three decades did not see the need to amend the Industry (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951. The response came after the bench criticised of the IDRA, 1951, describing it as archaic and indicative of the restrictive policies of the 'licence raj' era. Mr Mehta emphasised that despite the winds of change brought by economic reforms, the IDRA remained untouched, allowing the Centre to main-



tain significant control over various industries. In 1991, faced with a foreign reserves crisis, the Narasimha Rao-led government introduced three transformative economic reforms: globalisation, liberalisation, and privatisation. Mr Mehta also clarified that the Centre's withdrawal from controlling industries did not indicate a lack of regulatory authority. He stressed that the Centre retained the power to regulate industries in the national interest, particularly during emergencies like the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr Mehta elaborated that had the Union government not had the authority to regulate industrial alcohol, especially for producing hand sanitizers during the pandemic, the robust response to the crisis would have been compromised.

Congress Leader Supriya Shrinete Calls Killed Naxals 'Martyrs'



In what could prove to be a self-goal for the Congress party ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, Congress leader and spokesperson Supriya Shrinete called the naxals killed in the encounter in Chhattisgarh as Shaheed ("martyrs"). The Congress leader was questioned about the encounter in which 29 naxals were killed in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday (April 16), in what is one of the biggest operations against the naxals in recent times. Replying to the question by a journalist who asked the Congress spokesperson if the party was playing politics over the issue, the Congress leader said that the party didn't want to do any politics over the issue. However, she added that the encounter should be investigated. She extended her condolences to the shaheeds (martyrs) killed in the encounter and the security officials injured in the encounter. Earlier, IG Bastar P Sundarraj had said that the autopsy of the bodies was on and that a large cache of arms and ammunition had been recovered from the Naxal cadre killed in the encounter. "Yesterday, an encounter broke out between security forces and Naxalites, which lasted for around 4 hours... Teams of DRG and BSF cordoned off the area and as a result, 29 CPI Maoist bodies were recovered, out of which 15 were female and 14 were male. Arms and ammunition were recovered in large quantities from the spot. The autopsy of the bodies of the Maoists is underway," IG Sundarraj said. This is not the first time that Congress leader Supriya Shrinete is in news for the wrong reasons of late. Recently, after Kangana Ranaut was announced as BJP candidate from Himachal Pradesh's Mandi, the Congress leader's purported post on Instagram has kicked up a political storm.

PM Modi sends letter to NDA candidates, calls election 'extremely important'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday wrote personalised letters to all BJP-led National Democratic Alliance candidates contesting in the first phase of Lok Sabha elections, asking them to convey his message to voters in their respective constituencies. This election is an opportunity to connect the country's present with a bright future, Modi said in his message. BJP sources shared two of the letters sent by Modi - one to Coimbatore candidate K Annamalai, who is also the president of the BJP's Tamil Nadu unit, in English, and another in Hindi to its chief spokesperson Anil Baluni who is contesting from Uttarakhand's Pauri Garhwal. The sources said the focus is also on taking the prime minister's message in regional languages. Expressing confidence of Annamalai's win, Modi said he will tell people of his constituency that this is not an ordinary election. "In the last 10 years, the quality of life of every section of society has improved, with many of these troubles removed. Yet, a lot more is still to be done and this election will be decisive in our mission to ensure a better life for everyone," he

India 'concerned' over deaths of students in US

Over a dozen young people from the country have died in America since the start of the year. The deaths of Indian students in the US, a popular destination for studies abroad, is a 'big concern' for New Delhi, Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said following a spate of such incidents. According to Times of India, 11 of the country's citizens have reportedly died under mysterious circumstances within one month in the US. Some reports put the figure at 14. The diplomat noted that the cases do not appear to be interlinked. "Wherever anything unfortunate has happened to the students, it is of great tragedy for the family, and a big concern for us", he said. "But our embassy or consulate has looked at every case and they're unconnected." The Indian embassy and consulates have been asked to warn students about potentially dangerous areas of US cities, the minister said, adding that student welfare

Big setback for BSP as both Rajasthan MLAs join Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena

Rajasthan Lok Sabha Election 2024: Two Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLAs in Rajasthan -- Manoj Kumar and Jaswant Singh Gurjar -- have joined the Eknath Shinde faction of the Shiv Sena in Mumbai, saying they will support Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Polling in Rajasthan will take place in the first and second phases of the Lok Sabha elections.

Who are BSP leader Manoj Kumar and Jawant Singh Gurjar?

Manoj Kumar represents the Sudalpur Assembly constituency while Jaswant Singh Gurjar is the legislator from Badi in Rajasthan. It has come as a big setback for the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati's BSP as the party had won only two seats in the Rajasthan Assembly election, held in December last year. And now, both the MLAs have joined Shiv Sena-Shinde camp. Manoj Kumar defeated Congress' Krishna Poonia whereas Gurjar won the contest against BJP's Giriraj Malinga. To recall, in the 2008 As-



sembly polls, the BSP won six seats but all its legislators joined the Congress a year later. Similarly, in 2018, the BSP won six seats but all its MLAs later joined the Congress. Rajasthan has a total of 25 Lok Sabha seats. A look at Lok Sabha seats in Rajasthan: Sikar, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Bikaner, Ganganagar, Jaipur, Jaipur Rural, Alwar, Dausa, Nagaur, Karauli-Dholpur, Bharatpur, Ajmer, Banswara, Barmer, Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Jalore, Jhalawar-Baran, Jodhpur, Kota, Pali, Rajsamand, Tonk-Sawai Madhopur, and Udaipur.

said in a message which was also the theme of the communication to other NDA candidates too. Families across India, especially the senior members, would remember the difficulties they had gone through in the five-six decades of the Congress' rule, Modi said. "This election is an opportunity to connect our present with a bright future. Every vote that the BJP gets will go towards forming a stable government and impart momentum in our journey to become a developed nation by 2047," he added. He urged BJP workers to make full use of the last few hours of the election campaign. "I am aware that the summer heat poses problems to everyone. But this election is extremely important for the future of our nation. Therefore, I appeal to the voters to cast their votes early in the morning, before the heat sets in," Modi said. He told the candidates to convey his assurance to each voter that every moment of his time is dedicated to the welfare of fellow citizens. In his letter to Annamalai, a former IPS officer who quit the service to join politics, Modi congratulated him on his decision to leave a prestigious job and



commit to serving the people directly. Modi said, "You have been truly instrumental in fortifying the BJP's grassroots presence across Tamil Nadu, championing critical issues including law enforcement, governance, and youth empowerment. Coimbatore stands to gain immensely from your committed leadership." Modi also praised Baluni's hardwork as a BJP leader and said he has raised development issues of Uttarakhand strongly as a Rajya Sabha member. As many as 102 seats across 21 states and Union territories will go to the polls on April 19 in the first of the seven-phase elections.



is 'very important,' with over one million Indian citizens currently studying overseas. Last week, the spokesperson for India's External Affairs Ministry noted that the causes of the deaths were multiple, and investigations in at least two recent cases were underway. He noted that 'community issues' have also been the cause in several cases, without elaborating. According to New Delhi, while some cases are suspected

to be murders, others are presumed to be suicides. Earlier this month, Mohammed Abdul Arfath, 25, a student of Cleveland State University in Ohio, was found dead days after going missing. Unknown callers who demanded ransom money from his father in Telangana, India, claimed he had been abducted by a 'drug gang.' Uma Satya Sai Gadde, another Indian student, was found dead in the same US state a few days earlier. In the most shocking of these incidents, Indian MBA graduate Vivek Saini was killed in Lithonia, Georgia by a homeless drug addict who bludgeoned him with a hammer nearly 50 times. Footage of the murder, captured by CCTV cameras, later surfaced online. The Global Hindu Heritage Foundation (GHHF) has started a petition seeking an independent investigation by the FBI into the deaths, and listed 12 Indian students who had died in the US.

