

Jyotiraditya Scindia's dig at Congress

Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday took a dig at the Congress by comparing its last three election results with that of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and said that the grand old party is "jumping unnecessarily". Scindia's comments came as the Opposition created an uproar on the first day of the 18th Lok Sabha session over several issues, including the appointment of BJP leader Bhartruhari Mahtab as the pro-tem Speaker, the alleged irregularities in the NEET UG-2024 examination and the relocation of statutes within the Parliament building complex. "The people who are jumping unnecessarily after winning 99 seats (in the Lok Sabha election) need to understand that their combined total seats in the last three elections stand less than the BJP's seats in 2024. Count their 99 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, count their 56 seats in 2019, and add their 42 seats in 2014; even after this, they have got less than 240 seats," Scindia told news agency ANI. In the recently concluded general elections, the Congress bagged 99 seats, while the opposition INDIA bloc won 234 seats. The BJP emerged as the single largest party, winning 240 seats. It, however, fell short of the simple majority mark of 272 in the 543-strong Lok Sabha.

India's second longest expressway to be built in this route, travel time to reduce by 50%, top speed to be...

Infrastructure plays an important role in driving India's economic growth and overall development. To improve transportation connectivity, the central government is actively connecting major cities under the direction of PM Modi. An expressway project linking Punjab and Gujarat is currently underway. It is expected to reduce the travel time between the two states by half highlighting the government's commitment towards better transportation connectivity. This is the second longest expressway in the country. The National Highway Authority (NHAI) has set a target to complete it by December 2025. The Amritsar-Jamnagar expressway, a 1,316 km long expressway that connects Amritsar, Punjab, and Jamnagar, Gujarat, is almost finished, according to the National Highway Authority (NHAI). This expressway, which will traverse the arid and sandy regions of Haryana, is expected to bring significant advantages to the general people as well as the move-



ment of commodities and commercial enterprises. A significant portion of the Amritsar-Jamnagar expressway, which covers around 500 km in Rajasthan, is currently in use. This segment cost Rs 11,125 crore to build and ran from Jhakhrawali hamlet in the Hanumangarh district to Khetlawas in Jalore. It is expected that the completion of this green corridor will facilitate travel between key towns in Rajasthan and Haryana-Punjab. The existing 1,516 km route between Amritsar and Jamnagar is predicted to be shortened by 216 km after the expressway is built. Currently, the trip takes about 26 hours, but with the development of the expressway, that time should only take 13 hours.

Vans are allowed to travel in the high-speed corridor at up to 100 km/h. It is stated that Gujarat, Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan, and Haryana will all benefit from the Amritsar-Jamnagar expressway. It would also be connected to the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra expressway, making commuting to Delhi and Kashmir simpler. It will be easier to drive from Gujarat to Kashmir thanks to this link. In addition, several cities, including Amritsar, Bathinda, Moga, Hanumangarh, Suratgarh, Bikaner, Nagaur, Jodhpur, Barmer, and Jamnagar, are expected to profit greatly from the Amritsar-Jamnagar expressway. The construction of 5 railway overbridges, 20 river overbridges, 26 interchanges, 55 underpasses, and 311 tiny underpasses are all part of the expressway's infrastructural development. Additionally, to improve convenience and sustainability, automobile charging stations will be installed along the road at intervals of 20 to 30 kilometers.

Why did Muslim-majority Tajikistan ban the hijab?

Tajikistan's government passed a law banning the hijab, the latest in a string of 35 wide-ranging religion-related acts, in a move described by the government as "protecting national cultural values" and "preventing superstition and extremism". The law, approved by parliament's upper house Majlisi Milli last Thursday, bans the use of "foreign clothing" - including the hijab, or head covering worn by Muslim women. Instead, Tajikistan citizens are encouraged to wear Tajik national dress. Those violating the law are set to be fined on a scale ranging from 7,920 Tajikistani somoni (almost €100) for ordinary citizens, 54,000 somoni (€6,694) for government officials and 57,600 somoni (about €5,000) if they are a religious figure. Similar laws passed earlier this month affect several religious practices, such as the centuries-old tradition known in Tajikistan as "iydgardak," in which children go door-to-door to collect pocket money on Eid holidays. The decision was seen as surprising, as the central Asian country of some 10 million is 96% Muslim, according to the last census in 2020. Yet, it is a reflection of the political line that the government has been pursuing since 1997. Turning mosques into tea houses in Tajikistan, the government of president-for-life Emomali Rahmon has had its sights set on what they describe as extremism for a long time. After a peace deal to end a five-year civil war in 1997, Rahmon - who has been in power since 1994 - first found a way to coexist with the opposition Tajikistan Islamic Resurrection Party (TIRP), which was granted a series of concessions. According to the UN-brokered agreement, representatives of the pro-Sharia TIRP would share 30% of the government, and TIRP was recognised as the first post-Soviet political party in Central Asia founded on Islamic



values. However, Rahmon managed to push out TIRP from power despite the party becoming more secular over time. In 2015, he then managed to shut down TIRP altogether, designating it a terrorist organisation after the party allegedly took part in the failed coup attempt in which General Abdulhalim Nazarzoda, a key government bureaucrat, lost his life. Meanwhile, he turned his attention to what his government described as "extremist" influences among the citizens. After first banning the hijab in public institutions, including universities and government buildings, in 2009, the regime in Dushanbe pushed for a number of formal and informal rules meant to prevent neighbouring countries from exerting influence but also strengthen its control over the country. Tajikistan President Emomali Rahman in 2023 AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool While there are no legal restrictions on beards in Tajikistan, multiple reports state that law enforcement has forcibly shaved men sporting bushy beards, seen as a potential sign of someone's extremist religious views. The Law on Parental Responsibility, which entered into force in 2011, penalises parents who send their children to religious education abroad, while according to the same law, those under 18 are banned from entering places of worship without permission. A 2017 statement by the

Tajikistan Religious Affairs Committee said that 1,938 mosques were closed down in just one year, and places of worship were converted into tea shops and medical centres, for example. The latest set of laws was said to have been spurred by the deadly Crocus City Hall attack in Moscow in April. Four of the attackers captured by Russian law enforcement - said to be part of the Khorasan branch of the so-called Islamic State, or ISIS-K - had Tajikistan passports, according to Russian authorities. President Rahmon, who said he aimed to make Tajikistan "democratic, sovereign, law-based and secular" - quoting the opening line of the 2016 Constitution - advised the people to "Love God with (their) heart". "Do not forget your own culture," he stated. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) designated Tajikistan a "country of special concern" in its 2023 report. Where else is the hijab banned? In Europe, the hijab has been a point of contention in a number of countries. Dutch far-right politician Geert Wilders - whose party recently formed a government after scoring an unprecedented win in the general election - has long proposed a ban on hijab as part of a much larger set of anti-Islam measures, including a ban on the Muslim holy book, the Quran, and any non-western immigration. UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron is greeted by women in traditional costumes as he visits the Nurek Hydro-Electric Project, some 70 km south of Dushanbe, 22 April 2024 Stefan Rousseau/Pool Photo via AP In 2004, France introduced legislation prohibiting wearing "symbols or clothes through which students conspicuously display their religious affiliation," including the hijab, in public primary schools, middle schools, and secondary schools, but not its universities. A similar law was

passed in Austria in 2017, banning headscarves in schools for children up to 10 years of age, with parents facing potential fines of €40 if they chose to send their kids to school wearing a hijab regardless. Italy has banned the hijab-like swimsuit, also known as the "burkini", from its pools and beaches since 2009. Several cases of women being fined or prohibited from swimming or sunbathing in public have caused turmoil in recent years, particularly in the country's north. In addition, Germany, Belgium, Norway and Bulgaria all have laws prohibiting the use of face-covering garments, known as burqas, in schools or public institutions. Opponents of such laws maintain that banning the hijab, in secular countries in particular, is a slippery slope that might see Europe's Muslim communities disenfranchised down the line. Some on both sides of the argument claim this is a women's rights issue: while those opposing the hijab and the burqa say they restrict a woman's choice of how to dress, others who are against the ban believe that women should also have the right to choose to wear either if they feel it's a part of their identity. In 2013, the Conservative government of David Cameron rejected the calls to ban the burqa in public, stating that "women should have the freedom to choose what to wear". In Ireland, then-Taoiseach Leo Varadkar also rejected the possibility of a ban on burqas in 2018, saying, "I don't agree with the doctrine of every religion or necessarily any religion, but I do believe in the freedom of religion." Several Muslim-majority countries have banned the burqa and hijab in public schools, universities, or government buildings, including Tunisia (since 1981, partially lifted in 2011), Kosovo (since 2009), Azerbaijan (since 2010), Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

'Modi Played No Role In Fighting Against Emergency, Has Bad Habit Of Grabbing Credit': Subramanian Swamy Attacks Prime Minister

Senior BJP leader and former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy attacked PM Modi on Tuesday, alleging that he has a tendency to take credit when it is not deserved. Taking to X, senior BJP leader wrote, "Modi played no role fighting against the Emergency. He was a RSS Pracharak in Gujarat where there was for most part no Emergency due to the Gujarat Govt of Janata Morcha headed by Babubhai. Modi has a bad habit of trying to grab credit when none is due to him." Swamy's fresh at-

tack on the PM coincides with the 50th anniversary of Emergency imposed by former prime minister Indira Gandhi on 25 June 1975. Yesterday, Swamy criticised PM Modi for rising unemployment in the country. "Who cares who won? The nation's losers are the youth (who despite a globe trotting PM who is without a party majority in Parliament), who are unemployed or semi employed I.e., in jobs well below their education. How heart breaking and dream destroying it must be for them,"



said Swamy in a tweet. Earlier today, PM Modi paid homage to all the men and women who resisted the Emergency. In

a social media post, PM attacked the Congress party stating, "subverted basic freedoms and trampled over the Constitution of India which every Indian respects greatly." In another tweet, he said, "Just to cling on to power, the then Congress Government disregarded every democratic principle and made the nation into a jail. Any person who disagreed with the Congress was tortured and harassed. Socially regressive policies were unleashed to target the weakest sections."

Vijay Mallya Poses With Sidhartha-Jasmine At Their Wedding At His Lavish Mansion, Lalit Modi Joins

Fugitive and former Indian businessman, Vijay Mallya's son, Sidhartha Mallya, has geared up in his personal front. The actor-model wedded his ladylove, Jasmine on June 22, 2024, in a white wedding, followed by a traditional Hindu wedding ceremony. The bride and groom looked so in love as they stepped into their forever journey with one another. While earlier, we stumbled upon glimpses from the duo's wedding, we yet again came across some inside glimpses of the ceremony that featured Vijay Mallya. In a couple of posts shared by Harsh Goenka, we could spot Vijay Mallya happily posing with his son, Sidhartha, and daughter-in-law, Jasmine. While the newlyweds donned their respective wedding attires, Vijay Mallya opted for a black tuxedo along with a white satin coat underneath. He finalised his look with a pair of black shades.

India supplying arms to Israel in return for Kargil support, claims former envoy



Former Israeli Ambassador to India Daniel Carmon has claimed that India might be supplying arms to Israel in its war with Gaza. In an interview with Israel's Ynetnews, Daniel Carmon said Israel was one of the few countries that provided India with weapons during its war with

Pakistan. "The Indians always remind us that Israel was there for them during the Kargil war... The Indians don't forget this and might now be returning the favour," Carmon, who served as Israel's ambassador to India from 2014 to 2018, said. During the 1999 Kargil War, Israel provided military supplies and equipment, including guided munitions and drones. Daniel Carmon's remarks come amid reports that India has supplied drones and artillery shells to Israel in its war with Gaza as the Middle Eastern country ran low on supplies. In February, media reports said that India had provided Israel with advanced Hermes 900 drones manufactured in

Hyderabad. The Hyderabad facility was set up by Israel to produce supplies for the Indian military. However, around 20 drones were sent to be used by the Israeli Defence Forces, the report said. India has, however, not confirmed the reports and has not reacted yet to Carmon's remarks. In May, Spain prevented a cargo vessel, 'Marianne Danica', from docking at the Cartagena port on its way to Israel. The vessel, which was coming from Chennai, was carrying 27 tonnes of military supplies, Ynetnews reported. Israel's war with Gaza has now entered its eighth month, killing around 38,000 people and displacing lakhs.

Ex-BJP leader Suryakanta Patil makes 'ghar-wapasi' to Sharad Pawar's NCP



Mumbai, June 24 Former scribe-turned-politician Suryakanta Jaywantrao Patil on Tuesday returned to the NCP(SP), 11 years after she had quit the undivided NCP to join the BJP in 2014. An ex-Union minister, Patil, 75, was welcomed to the party fold by NCP(SP) President Sharad Pawar, state Chief Jayant Patil and other senior leaders. Pawar and Patil extolled her leadership qualities and said that her return would boost the party's prospects in Nanded, Hingoli, Parbhani, Beed and other districts. On June 22, Patil abruptly quit the BJP ostensibly for being dropped as a Lok Sabha nominee following the party's lacklustre performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Formerly with the Congress, and then the undivided NCP, Patil joined the BJP in 2014 and had sought a party ticket from Hingoli in 2024 but was denied a nomination as the seat went to the ruling ally Shiv Sena's quota this time. The Shiv Sena had fielded Baburao K Kohalikar, but he lost by over 1.08 lakh votes to the rival Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate, Nagesh B Patil-Ashtekar. Political sources are optimistic that Patil's entry to NCP(SP) could offset the departure of the former Congress strongman from Nanded, Ashok Chavan to the BJP, plus give an edge to the Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections in October.

Roof of Ayodhya Ram temple leaks after first rain, claims Chief Priest

Ayodhya (UP): The roof of the temple of Lord Ram being constructed at Ramjanmabhoomi in Ayodhya, has started leaking in the first rain itself, the Chief Priest of the temple claimed on Monday. Chief Priest Satyendra Das said that the construction of the grand and divine Ram temple is going on, but except for the sanctum sanctorum, water is dripping at the place where devotees visit. Water has started dripping in the first rain of the first monsoon in Ayodhya. The leakage of water from the roof is surprising, as renowned



engineers in the country are engaged in the construction of Ram Temple, he said. He said that devotees have also been hurt by the water dripping from the roof of the temple. He said

that due to negligence in the construction of the temple, which was built with trillions of rupees, water is dripping from the same place where devotees visit Ram Lalla before the sanctum sanctorum. Das said that on Sunday night it rained very heavily, due to which water gradually collected in front of the sanctum sanctorum where devotees take darshan of Ram Lalla, which was later cleaned. He said that water had collected at the place where VIPs take darshan as well, and after a lot of effort, the rainwater was removed from there.

Russia sends coal to India by train for first time

The shipment is being made via the North-South corridor through Iran, according to a statement Russia has for the first time sent two trains laden with coal to India via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which connects Russia to India via Iran, according to Russia's national railway company. A multimodal route that includes a railway, roadway network and seaports, the INSTC spans 7,200km (4,500 miles) from St. Petersburg to the port of Mumbai in India. The corridor is part of Russia's push to find new transport routes in light of Western sanctions, which have forced it to shift trade flows from Europe to Asia and the Middle East. Construction of the INSTC started in the early 2000s, but developing it further has taken on a new impetus in light of the restrictions facing Moscow. New Delhi has also touted the route as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative. 'For the first time, two trains with Kuzbass coal headed to India

along the International North-South Transport Corridor. The trains set off from the Kemerovo region. They followed along the eastern branch of the INSTC through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas,' Russian Railways said on Monday in its Telegram channel. The coal will be shipped by sea along the final part of the route from Iran's port of Bandar Abbas to the Indian port of Mumbai, according to the statement. India has been ramping up purchases of both coking and thermal coal from Russia since Moscow redirected exports from EU countries and offered substantial discounts to Asian buyers. Despite its efforts to expand renewable energy projects, India continues to rely heavily on coal as its primary source of power generation. Consulting firm Yakov and Partners (formerly McKinsey Russia) has projected that India will surpass China as the top buyer of Russian coal within the next decade. The delivery



time for goods from Russia to India via the INSTC is around 23 days, which is much faster than shipping via the Suez Canal, which typically takes up to 45 days, according to Russian Railways. Moscow is seeking to both ensure interconnectivity throughout the INSTC and launch regular freight shipping lines, President Vladimir Putin has said. The volume of goods shipped via the INSTC is expected to almost triple over the next seven years. The Russian leader has suggested establishing a logistics hub for the corridor on the African coast.

