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LOVE AT FIRST VOTE: GEN Z IS NO LONGER APOLITICAL — AND NEITHER DO THEY WANT THEIR PARTNERS TO BE

A new kind of dating currency is emerging for Gen Z in India: political awareness. The message is clear — being engaged in the political process is no longer just a good quality, it's a highly desirable trait

ENTERTAINMENT

ATLAS MOVIE REVIEW

Utterly irredeemable Jennifer Lopez action film marks a new low for Netflix tent-poles



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EXPRESS AUDIO

Porsche crash case, Calcutta HC on OBC certificates, and Thane blast

In 3 Things, we talk about the 17-year-old who while in a drunken state killed two people with his Porsche, Calcutta HC on West Bengal government issuing OBC certificates to 77 Muslim communities, and blast in Thane's chemical company

Nijjar

citizens/nationals are arrested. Responding to a questionnaire from The Indian Express, David Lee of IHIT's media relations team, said, "IHIT has notified the embassy of the arrest but it is up to the four individuals to determine/choose to speak to the consulate."

The IHIT declined to comment on how the four men entered Canada. "We can confirm that they are Indian nationals and were in Canada anywhere from three to five years," Lee said. On May 3, the IHIT arrested 22-year-old Karan Brar, 22-year-old Kamalpreet Singh, and 28-year-old Karanpreet Singh, all living in Edmonton. According to an IHIT statement, they have been charged with first degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder. Ten days later, a fourth Indian national, 22-year-old Amandeep Singh, was also arrested for his alleged role in the killing of Nijjar. Singh was already in custody for unrelated firearms charges out of Peel Regional Police. He was also charged with similar offences.

EXPLAINED The fallout, the strain

BILATERAL TIES have been under strain ever since Canadian PM Justin Trudeau said in Sept that Canada was "actively pursuing credible allegations" that Indian agents were potentially linked to the killing of Nijjar, a Canadian citizen. India has denied any government role in Nijjar's killing, and has rejected Trudeau's allegations as "absurd and motivated".

On Tuesday, three of the four appeared in person for the first time in a Canadian court with the judge ordering them to have no contact with several people in the community.

While Karan Brar, Kamalpreet Singh and Karanpreet Singh appeared in

person at the British Columbia Provincial Court in Surrey, Amandeep Singh appeared via video link. The IHIT said "they have been provided with legal counsel and have access to lawyers who are trained and educated to deal with matters such as homicide".

"Upon their arrest, the IHIT investigative team takes their rights to counsel very seriously... ensured they had contact with the correct kind of counsel," Lee said. While the charges have been laid, the trial date has not been set yet, the IHIT said. On being asked if it was imperative for the case file/chargesheet to be shared with the Indian authorities since they were all Indian citizens, the IHIT said, "We do not have to share any information with the Indian authorities. If they request it, it must be from our Department of Justice to their equivalent branch."

Nijjar, 45, was killed outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia on June 18, 2023. The Khalistan separatist was wanted in India on various terror charges.

FROM PAGE ONE

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SC declines to direct EC to upload Form 17C copies

an interim application filed by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), said the interim relief being sought was the same as the prayer for final relief in a pending 2019 petition by TMC leader Mahua Moitra, and that giving interim relief would amount to granting final relief. "Arguments on the interim application were heard. Prima facie, we are not inclined to grant any relief on the interim application at this stage in view of the similarity of prayer A of the interim application with prayer B of writ petition out of which the interim application arises. Grant of such a relief amounts to grant of final relief in the writ petition," the bench said in its order.

It directed that all pleas in this regard be listed before an appropriate bench after the court's summer recess.

Justice Datta said, "Everyone is for free and fair elections... We cannot interrupt something... We are also responsible citizens. Let us trust some authority. We will keep it pending and (it) will be heard along with the writ petition after the elections are over. In between elections, a hands-off attitude has to be there."

Stating that the bench had not gone into the merits of the matter, he said, "It is an election spread over seven phases. Five phases are over. Tomorrow is the sixth... This particular compliance that you are insisting on would require not only manpower but also require the mandamus. It is not possible during this period."

The bench sought to know why the petitioner who moved the court in 2019 had not done anything to pursue the matter and ensure that it was heard in the last five years or before the start of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

"You filed this petition in 2019. For the last five years, leave aside the Covid period, what steps were taken to have this heard? And why did you not come up with this application prior to March 16? Why on 26th April when the process is on?" Justice Datta asked.

Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Moitra, said it was filed by a person with whom she had a relationship. "He was an advocate. She could not get the files back to move it."

Rejecting attempts to cast doubts on the role of the ECI, Justice Datta also pointed out that when a bench comprising him heard the plea for matching 100 per cent VVPAT slips with EVM votes, there was a controversy about figures being put out by the Voter Turnout app.

"I asked the ECI counsel, are you statutorily obliged to maintain this? He said no, only with the objective of maintaining fairness and transparency, we are doing this," he said.

The bench also questioned the petitioners on the similarity of the prayers in the interim application and the 2019 writ petition. "Prayer A in your application is the prayer B in your petition. That's the final relief you have prayed for in the writ petition. How can you claim an interim relief? Interim application is based on certain press notes pertaining to the 2024 elections. If subsequent events can be considered by the court to avoid multiplicity of proceedings, what is the procedure for that? Today, if a suit is filed and during the pendency of the suit, there are certain subsequent developments and the court feels that these developments should be taken into consideration for avoiding future litigation, what is the procedure

EXPLAINED The EC objection

OBJECTING TO the pleas for uploading Form 17C on its website, the EC has told the SC that "there is no legal mandate to provide the form to any person other than the candidate or his agent" and that "there is a consistent malafide campaign/design/effort to keep raising suspicion and doubt in every possible manner... by misleading assertions and baseless allegations regarding the conduct of elections by the Election Commission of India".

The bench continued with its questions. "When this is your final relief claimed in the writ petition, which is awaiting a decision, how can you expect an interim order on the same terms?" Justice Datta asked.

He said the court can grant such relief, but only in "very exceptional cases where the non-grant of an interim relief which is in the nature of final relief has the effect of rendering the proceedings infructuous".

Dave said the ADR came to the court now because the details of the voter turnout were published now. "Undisputedly, after the two phases, the Election Commission itself revised the percentage of voting. That is why we came. Not for any other reason," he said.

Justice Datta pointed out that the writ petition prayed for issuing an appropriate writ, order or direction to the Election Commission to provide the information in public domain for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and for all future elections.

"The Supreme Court is yet to decide on your petition and grant this relief. The matter is pending for decision. You want an interim order on the same terms. Under what law?" Justice Datta said.

Dave said that this being a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), the strict rules of procedure, pleadings, etc do not apply.

Justice Datta said, "We are not

strict on PILs if it involves a public cause. But over the years, the public interest litigation jurisdiction... of the matter that we entertain, that comes before us, how many PILs have private interest, publicity interest, paisa interest. So, therefore, it is for us to put a check on frivolous writ petitions from being filed."

"We don't say that on merits you don't have a good case. You may succeed in your 2019 petition. We are trying to say that given the framing of your petition, you may not have approached at the appropriate stage with a proper prayer," he said.

Dave said he understands the court's anguish.

At this, Justice Datta said, "It's not a question of anguish. Everyone is for a free and fair election. If you see the part of my judgment (on petitions seeking 100 per cent verification of VVPAT slips with the EVM votes), you will find whatever improvement is required, has to be done. And that was the point which came from the court itself. It was not pleaded."

The bench, while keeping the application and petition pending till after the elections, said it is concerned that there could be mischievous people taking advantage.

"We cannot interrupt something. To take it further, we can do it. We are also responsible citizens. Let us trust some authority," Justice Datta said.

Appearing for the ECI, Senior Advocate Maninder Singh contended the NGO had suppressed the fact the issue of Form 17C was settled by the Supreme Court in its judgment on the EVM-VVPAT matter. He said the application was "only founded on suspicion and apprehension" and urged the court to dismiss it.

Justice Datta said, "We are not

MSU students protest over fears of reduced quota for locals, varsity says no decision yet

ADITIRAJA VADODARA, MAY 24

EVEN AS protests by students of Maharaja Sayajirao University (MSU) in Vadodra have intensified against the possibility of the 70 per cent quota for local students shrinking to 50 per cent due to the implementation of the Gujarat Common Admission Services (GCAS) platform, the MSU management maintained that it has "taken no decision" on the quota, as the "ball is in the

court of the government". On Friday, members of All Gujarat Students' Union (AGSU) protested at the MSU head office, handing over a representation seeking an increase in the quota for local students from Vadodra from 70 per cent to 90 per cent, vehemently opposing the "rumoured decision" to reduce the quota to 50 per cent.

Pankaj Jaiswal of AGSU said, "The university can have a quota of 90 per cent for local students and 10 per cent for outsiders but if it is thinking of giving 50 per

cent quota to outsiders, it will result in a major protest."

Officer on Special Duty and PRO Professor Hitesh Ravaiya said, "No decision has been taken by MSU in the matter of quota so far. If any decision is taken, it will be informed publicly." On May 15, the state education department had started registration for college admissions through the GCAS portal. University officials said the MSU management is "awaiting directions" from the state government on its locus standi in deciding the quota.

Table with 6 columns: S.No., Name of Borrower(s)/Co-Borrowers/Guarantors, Details of the Secured asset(s), Amount Outstanding, Reserve Price/Earnest Money Deposit, Date and Time of Property Inspection, Date & Time of Auction.

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The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link - https://BestAuctionDeal.com) of our auction agency GlobeTech. The Mortgages/notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till June 27, 2024 before 5:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

Chhattisgarh

'Muslim' egg growing bigger and pushing the others out of the nest. This post received 1,040 likes.

All three posts were pulled down Friday after the Election Commission verbally reached out to the BJP, and also contacted Instagram's parent company Meta.

"We have taken down the three objectionable posts from the BJP Instagram handle and a stern warning has been given to them not to upload such posts in future," Chief Electoral Officer Kangale said.

The BJP said there was nothing objectionable in the posts and that they were just targeting the Congress's manifesto. "We did not receive any notice from the Election Commission, but we removed it as we are following the election guidelines. There was nothing religious about it... The posts were related to the Congress narrative of inheritance tax and taking away reservation and giving it to Muslims," Somesh Pandey, from the social media cell of the BJP in Chhattisgarh, said.

The Congress said legal action should be initiated against the BJP for the posts. Sushil Anand Shukla, in charge of the Congress's communication cell in Chhattisgarh, said, "It is an extremely serious issue where BJP is conspiring to disrupt communal harmony of India and defame Congress party. They have made it a habit of violating the code of conduct and BJP's social media handles have posted dozens of such posts. Their handle must be suspended. Just letting the BJP off with a warning is not enough. The Election Commission should take legal action against the BJP."

The night before: L-G, AAP accuse each other of moves to trouble voters

unconstitutional. And I hope the Election Commission will take cognizance of this, and stop any such attempt."

Replying to this, Kejriwal, in a post on X at 10.18 pm, said, "This is shocking. EC should ensure smooth voting in Delhi."

Following these posts, the Lt Governor's office, in a statement issued shortly before 11 pm, said that the AAP had drawn up plans to trouble voters on Saturday and blame it on the Centre.

"Information has been received that on the orders of Arvind Kejriwal, who is out on interim bail till June 1, power

and water minister Atishi Marlena has instructed the power companies and Delhi Jal Board to deliberately cut power supply and stop water supply tonight (May 24) and throughout the day tomorrow (May 25) so that the people of Delhi are troubled," the Lt Governor's office stated.

"The LG has directed that these orders of Kejriwal should not be followed. Information has also been received that Kejriwal is doing this so that he can habitually confuse and cheat the people of Delhi by blaming the Central government," it stated.

Later, in a post on X at 12.27 am Saturday, the Lt Governor called Atishi's statement unwarranted and false. "You have made it a habit, Kejriwal sahab, to keep crying irrespective of the situation you may be in. I have taken a stern view of this unwarranted & false statement on the eve of election against a constitutional authority by a Minister, endorsed by you," Saxena wrote.

Earlier, in a press release issued around 6.30 pm, the Delhi Jal Board said that the water utility was poised to fulfil the needs of all residents.

There has been a tussle be-

tween the AAP government and the Lt Governor's office over water supply in the city.

In April, Atishi wrote to the Lt Governor, seeking the suspension of the DJB CEO after a woman was killed in East Delhi, allegedly by her neighbour during an altercation over water filling.

In response, Saxena wrote an open letter to Kejriwal - the CM was in jail following his arrest in the Delhi excise policy case - describing the murder as the government's failure and slamming Atishi for using the incident for "narrow political goals".

Killers set up woman to lure Bangladesh MP, butcher cut body: Probe

Bengal CID arrested Jihad Hawaldar, a 24-year-old described as an illegal immigrant who worked as a butcher in Mumbai.

The police said Akhtaruzzaman had hired Hawaldar and brought him to Kolkata two months ago. Confirming Hawaldar's arrest, a CID officer said, "He is the butcher specially brought from Mumbai by the other accused. He is an illegal immigrant living in Mumbai."

CID officers claimed that Hawaldar, a resident of Barakpur under Digholia police station in Bangladesh, has confessed that on the orders of Akhtaruzzaman, he and three other Bangladeshi nationals smothered the MP to death in the flat. Initial investigation reveals that he skinned the body, minced the flesh to destroy the identity and put the pieces in polythene packs. He also cut the bones into small pieces and packed them separately.

"They took the packets out of the flat, used various modes of transport and dumped them within Kolkata limits," said a senior officer.

Hawaldar was produced in a Barasat court Friday. Although the CID sought his longer custody to recover the MP's body and to track other possible accomplices, the court granted 12-day custody.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police also produced the three suspects arrested there in the Mahanagar sessions judge court on Friday. "Simul Bhuiyan alias Amanullah, Silasti Rehman and Tanvir Bhuiyan were remanded in police custody for eight days. Their interrogation will reveal more details. So far it is suspected that the murder conspiracy was hatched by Akhtaruzzaman alias Shahin, an old friend and business partner of the victim," Md Abdus Sattar Dulal, Additional Public Prosecutor, told The Indian Express over

phone. "Akhtaruzzaman conspired and employed the other accused persons to commit the crime. It is suspected that the woman was set up to lure the victim to the flat. Akhtaruzzaman is absconding," said Dulal.

It is learnt that Silasti is a resident of Tangail, while the other two accused are from Khulna. She is also believed to be close to Akhtaruzzaman, the police said, adding that she returned to Bangladesh with Amanullah on May 15. She had been introduced by Akhtaruzzaman to the MP earlier, like the other suspects, except Hawaldar.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police sources said MP Azim and Akhtaruzzaman were believed to be business partners in gold. It is suspected that they fell out over money involved in the business.

The MP came to Kolkata on May 12 through Gede border in Nadia district around

2.40 pm and first went to Mondolpara lane in Baranagar to meet his friend Gopal Biswas, a gold trader.

On May 13, he left Biswas's house and met Amanullah - a murder convict who had served 20 years in a Bangladesh jail. Amanullah took the MP to the New Town apartment, where the other accused were waiting, police sources said.

In the afternoon, the MP was murdered. According to the CID, the MP was washing his face near a washbasin when the suspects used chloroform to make him unconscious. They then smothered him to death.

His body was then chopped, put in small packets and packed in a briefcase and a trolley bag. The suspects then went to Krishnamati, 20 km from the flat, and dumped the packets.

The police has procured the CCTV footage of the apartment.