

INDIA bloc opposes Bihar voter roll revision

PTI, PATNA: The opposition INDIA bloc in Bihar on Friday strongly opposed the Election Commission's (EC) proposed intensive revision of electoral rolls, calling it a "conspiracy" to help the BJP-led NDA in upcoming state assembly polls.

At a joint press conference here, addressed by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Congress' media and publicity department chief Pawan Khera and CPI(ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, among others, the opposition coalition said it would send a delegation to the EC and "further action will be taken if they fail to satisfy us".

Yadav said, "If the EC was so serious about holding this exercise, why did it not go ahead immediately after last year's Lok Sabha polls? Why did it wait till earlier this week?"



LoP in the Bihar Assembly and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav with Bihar Congress President Rajesh Ram, party leader Pawan Khera and CPI (ML) Liberation General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya addresses a press conference, in Patna

He added, "Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had recently rushed to Delhi, apparently to share with coalition partners fears about his JD(U)'s prospects in the Assembly polls. We suspect that the EC was subsequently instructed by the ruling coa-

lition to do something that could help it in elections".

He also said the exercise, as part of which voters will be required to furnish birth certificates of themselves as well as their parents, was "aimed at disenfranchising a large number of people,

especially those from deprived sections of society, like Dalits, Muslims and the backward classes".

"It is ridiculous that the EC, which had recently proposed linking voter ID cards to Aadhaar numbers of respective holders, is not acknowledging the latter as a proof of citizenship. It appears that those who are not able to furnish requisite documents would have their names deleted from the voters' list," Yadav said.

"It is not going to end there. At a later stage, such people could be deprived of the benefits of social welfare schemes. This is in line with the anti-people thinking of the BJP-RSS to which Dattatreya Hosbale gave expression by advocating deletion of the worlds socialist and secular from the preamble of the Constitution," the former Bihar Deputy CM alleged.

18 of family drown in flash floods northwest Pakistan, 12 bodies recovered

PTI, PESHAWAR: At least 18 members of a family, who were part of a tourist group, on Friday drowned in flash floods in the Swat River in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province,

rescue officials said. So far, 12 bodies have been recovered after the flash flood near the GE Qurban Hotel on the Swat Bypass caused devastating losses, they said.

The provincial government launched extensive rescue operations, involving 120 rescue workers at eight different locations across Swat.

Six bodies were recovered from the Swat Bypass near GE Qurban Hotel, three from Anglo Dheri, and three from the Swat Bypass Relax Hotel, officials said. The family that drowned was part of a tourist group visiting the region and was trapped in the rising waters caused by heavy rains upstream.

The Swat is a perennial river in the northern region of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Flash floods prompted by heavy rain in Swat district have engulfed several areas, leaving dozens stranded, officials said.

Bilal Faizi, spokesman for Rescue 1122, said 80 people were stranded in flash floods at various points along the Swat River, of whom 63 have been

rescued.

To prevent further incidents, all hotels, restaurants, and commercial activities near the Swat River have been closed.

The provincial government emphasised that, due to monsoon rains, a ban on recreational activities in rivers remains in effect throughout the province.

The local administration has launched extensive awareness campaigns via various media platforms, urging tourists and the public to stay away from water channels and adopt precautionary measures.

The provincial government appealed to the public and tourists to avoid entering river areas and to strictly follow the safety guidelines issued by the administration to prevent further tragedies.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government suspended three administrative officers in the wake of the untoward incident.

Thailand bans sale of cannabis without prescription

AP, BANGKOK: Thailand has started banning the sale of cannabis to those without a prescription, three years after becoming the first country in Asia to decriminalise the plant.

The new order, signed by Health Minister Somsak Thepsutin earlier this week, came into effect Thursday after it was published in the Royal Gazette. It bans shops from selling cannabis to customers without a prescription and reclassifies cannabis buds as a controlled herb.

Sellers that violate the new order could face a maximum one-year jail term and a 20,000-baht (USD 614) fine.

The Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, in charge of enforcing regulations related to cannabis, held an online meeting Friday with officials across the country to prepare them for the change.

Officials said during the meeting that shops that are currently licensed can continue to operate but they must get their products only from pharmaceutical-grade farms that are certified by the department, and must declare sources of their products to authorities every month. Those farms must also acquire a license for selling cannabis. The order says shops can only sell a limited amount of cannabis to those with a prescription, enough for personal use in 30 days.

They also said the department is setting up

clear guidelines for the prescription of cannabis and enforcement of the new regulations. They said they will give time for the shops to adjust, but did not say exactly how long that timeframe would be.

Chokwan "Kitty" Chopaka, a cannabis advocate who used to own a dispensary in Bangkok, said there is still a lot confusion about the new rules, with some officials themselves apparently unsure what to do.

"Owners are freak-

ing out, a lot of them are scared," she said.

The move to decriminalize in 2022 had boosted Thailand's tourism and farming industries, and spawned thousands of shops.

But the country has faced public backlash over allegations that a lack of regulation made the drug available to children and caused addiction.

Treetchada Srithada, spokesperson for the Health Ministry, said in a statement Thursday that cannabis use in Thailand would become "fully for medical purposes."

She said shops that violate the order will be closed and the ministry will also tighten requirements for approval of a new license in the future. She said there are currently about 18,000 shops that hold a license to sell cannabis.

Chokwan argued that the rules were already in place, but what was lacking was the enforcement. She also said the abrupt change was politically motivated.

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LAND GRAB KINGPIN'S FINGERPRINT ON MULTIPLE ATTACHED PROPERTIES

Among the 92 properties linked to Sohail, eight in Anjuna and one in Mapusa are designated Custodian of Enemy Properties. Together, these assets are valued at approximately Rs 12.5 crore and cover a total area of 223,155 sqm. ED records show that six of the Anjuna mutations and the one in Mapusa have been declared invalid.

"During interrogation, the accused (Sohail) admitted that some mutations of the properties were blocked by the North Goa Collector. He has claimed so in many other cases, but on checking, many of his claims were found to be false," the ED source added.

Meanwhile, victims and whistle-blowers have raised concerns over the pace of investigations. Advocate Cristina Dias, who helped uncover the scandal, criticised the Special Investigation Team (SIT) for its prolonged silence. "It has been over a year since we last heard from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) regarding our complaints in the land grab cases. There has been no progress update, no communication, and no transparency in their handling of these cases. Their silence has left the victims in uncertainty and frustration," said Dias.

Dias and her group had flagged 198 cases of land grabbing across 11 villages in North Goa. Anjuna reported the highest number with 75 cases, followed by Assagao with 49, Badem (28), Parra (18), Calangute (12), Revora (6), Arpora (4), and one each in Nerul, Mapusa, and Reis Magos.

"Despite the registration of multiple FIRs, the SIT has not filed chargesheets except in five complaints. There is nothing on record to show that any significant action has been taken pursuant to our complaints. This inaction continues even though the complaints involve serious allegations of fraudulent insertion of documents in the Sub-Registrar's Office and the Archives department," alleged Dias.

When asked to comment, SIT Superintendent of Police Rahul Gupta said, "I need to check the type of complaints as it is not proper for me to comment offhand without knowing the details."

Sohail's bail plea is reportedly being contested by the Crime Branch. "If he gets bail, the ED has a chance to nab him and bail under the ED is far more difficult. There are people who have been arrested by the ED in land grabbing cases and are in jail for months without bail," a senior Goa Police source confirmed.

Documents accessed in the investigation reveal that 12 property mutations connected to the scandal have been completed, five have been dismissed, and eight have been identified as having invalid mutation numbers.

Dias also noted the government's inaction on establishing a special court to address land grabbing cases – a key recommendation of the Justice Jadhav Commission. "The government had promised to establish a special court dedicated to land grabbing cases, which was also recommended by the one-man commission of Justice Jadhav. However, nothing has happened. We do acknowledge and express our appreciation to the Enforcement Directorate for their proactive engagement and investigation, especially in cases where the SIT remained inactive," she concluded.

RAJ, UDDHAV REUNITE OVER LANGUAGE

He said Uddhav immediately consented to be part of the protest but raised concerns that Ashadhi Ekadashi, which is celebrated across the state with much fanfare, falls on July 6, and it would be inconvenient for everyone.

Raut said the Sena (UBT) chief suggested a joint protest by both parties on July 5, and Raj also consented to it.

"A joint protest of MNS and Sena (UBT) will take place on July 5. There is only an issue of the timing because the time suggested by Raj Thackeray is 10 am, and it would be inconvenient for people," he said, adding that the parties will discuss the timings.

There has been a buzz about a possible rapprochement between the Thackeray cousins, and the language issue may prove to be the platform they need to put up a united front.

The Rajya Sabha MP said that the two cousins feel there should be a fight similar to the one put up during the Samyukt Maharashtra movement for the formation of the state in 1960, and the Thackerays should lead it.

"Similar attacks are now taking place to break Mumbai and drive the Marathi mannos out of Maharashtra," Raut said.

He said other political parties will also be invited to take part in the protest.

MNS Mumbai president Sandeep Deshpande said, "As a Marathi mannos, I am happy for the way Raj saheb took the lead for Marathi mannos, and it was reciprocated by Uddhav saheb."

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has made it clear that Hindi is optional while Marathi is compulsory. The row erupted after the state government last week issued an amended order stating Hindi will "generally" be taught as the third language to students in Marathi and English medium schools from Classes 1 to 5.

According to the order, if 20 students per grade in a school wish to study any other Indian language, they can opt out of Hindi. If such a demand arises, either a teacher will be appointed, or the language will be taught online.

School Education Minister Dada Bhuse has said that there will be no books for Classes 1 and 2.

The medium of instruction will be oral, and students of these two grades will be taught songs and shown pictures.

LAW STUDENT GANG-RAPED ON KOLKATA CAMPUS

Taking suo motu cognizance of the incident that occurred on the evening of June 25, the National Women's Commission asked the Kolkata Police to file a detailed action taken report within three days.

The crime at the South Calcutta Law College brought back the horrific memories of the rape and murder of an intern inside RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in August last year which created a major political dust-up across the state.

The prime accused in the recent incident is a former student of the institute and a practising criminal lawyer at Alipore Police and Sessions Court, college sources said. The two other accused are students of the college and senior to the victim.

College authorities stated that the main accused was also engaged as a temporary non-teaching staff at the institution for a renewable contractual period of 45 days as per a governing body resolution.

Social media profiles of the prime accused claim that he is a former president of the college's Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad unit and organisational secretary of south Kolkata wing of the TMC's student body.

Photographs available in public domain also showed him with several leaders of the state's ruling party.

The TMC, though, denied having any connection with the accused now and sought "severe punishment" if he is found guilty.

Police said that the victim was tortured for over three

hours inside a guard's room next to the students' union office after class hours on Wednesday.

Initial investigations revealed that the victim had reached the college in the afternoon to fill up exam forms and was asked by the suspects, who exercised considerable sway over students, to stay back.

"According to the complaint she filed at the Kasba police station on Thursday, she was first assaulted by the trio after she turned down a marriage proposal from the main accused citing an existing relationship. She was then dragged inside the security person's room and raped by the prime accused while the two aides assisted him in the act and stood guard," the officer said.

The torture, the victim alleged, started around 7.30 pm and went on till well past 10.30.

The miscreants shut the main door of the college and made the security guard sit outside his room, the victim alleged.

Forensic experts collected evidence from the scenes of crime, which had been previously sealed.

According to a police source, the victim has alleged that she was filmed while being gang-raped.

"She alleged that the accused threatened to release the footage on internet if she talked. They also threatened to harm her boyfriend and implicate her parents in false cases," he said.

The mobile phones of the accused have been seized and sent for forensic tests.

"We are trying to find out whether the footage was forwarded to other numbers," the officer said.

Police later confirmed that the medical test results corroborated the victim's allegation that she was raped.

"There is evidence of forceful penetration, bite marks and nail scratches on her body," an officer told PTI.

To a question, he said that the prime accused raped her while the other two stood guard.

"According to a Supreme Court judgement, all persons in a group involved in cases of gang rape must be held liable, even if all of them did not commit the act of rape. In this case, two other persons helped in the rape. So this is a case of gang rape, and they are also accused in the case," Chief Police Prosecutor Sourin Ghosal said.

Clashes broke out between police and SFI-DIFY supporters on Friday afternoon after the force tried to disperse them from agitating before the Kasba police station.

Multiple agitators were injured in the scuffle and an unknown number of demonstrators were detained.

Workers of the BJP, Congress and AIDSO also held protests before the Kasba PS before they were forcefully removed.

Both BJP and the Congress announced agitation programmes on Saturday, with the Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari threatening to take protests "to the farthest possible extent in the days to come".

CM PRAMOD SAWANT TO HEAD KALA ACADEMY

Meanwhile, the civil society group Kala Rakhonn Maand has stepped up its campaign demanding accountability for the deteriorating condition of the Kala Academy. On Friday, the group staged a protest outside the PWD head office at Altinho, Panjim, calling for an immediate structural audit of the recently completed renovation work at the iconic state-run art and culture complex.

SCRUTINY OVER ILLEGAL CRUSHER FINALLY SPURS PANCHAYAT INTO ACTION

However, the crusher owner reportedly defied the directive, resuming work until monsoon rains flooded both the plant and the adjacent main road, intensifying residents' concerns.

In a controversial move, the Panchayat later issued a provisional renewal, ostensibly to allow the collection of documents. During this period, the crusher operator began digging trenches along the roadside and allegedly felled more trees without authorisation. Alert villagers contacted the police and forest department, who intervened to halt the activity.

Naik clarified the Panchayat's position: "The second provisional renewal was only to facilitate document collection. But due to water-logging, the process failed. The trenches and tree-cutting incidents will be looked into by the PWD and Forest Department." She also confirmed that notices have been issued to other crusher operators in the area, instructing them to submit their legal documents for scrutiny.

Activist Swapnil Bhandari, who originally filed the complaint, said: "The Panchayat had issued a stay earlier, yet gave renewal again. The crusher owner seems to have dropped the setup, but we are watching. If the plant is not removed, we will resume our protest and legal process."

ACB MOVES HC IN MADKAIKAR FIR ROW

Tivrekar reportedly told the ACB there was a misunderstanding between him and Madkaikar regarding the Rs 20 lakh figure, which he initially believed was to be paid as a bribe to a Minister, but later realised it was a legitimate government fee. Madkaikar also clarified that no bribe was demanded or paid, and that his remarks to the media were based on a misunderstanding.

The ACB has argued that the Sessions Court lacked jurisdiction to pass such an order. It contended that the Special Judge, appointed under Section 3 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, is deemed a Magistrate only for limited purposes — specifically under Sections 326 and 475 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (now corresponding to Sections 365 and 521 of the BNSS, 2023). As such, the ACB maintained that the Special Court has no authority to entertain applications under Section 175 of the BNSS or to direct investigating agencies to register an FIR.

The ACB has requested the High Court to quash and set aside the Sessions Court order. The matter has been listed for hearing on July 1.

MONTH'S MIND
In Loving Memory of My Uncle
Severino Florencio Fernandes
-- Chandor - Goa --
who rests in Heaven You are deeply missed every day. We remember you for your love of writing books, your kind and generous heart, and the wisdom you shared. Your legacy we will follow!

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." – John 16:33

HEAVEN NEEDED AN ANGEL GOD PICKED MY UNCLE

Fondly remembered by niece: **MELANIE MASCARENHAS**

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to the Doctors, Nurses, Priests and Well-wishers who surrounded my Uncle with love during his final days. Thank-you for joining my Uncle in his final journey.

Om Jai Advig & Funeral Service, Margao 9823022194

With profound grief we inform the sad demise of our Beloved father

Born: 08/09/1941 **Died:** 27/06/2025

VINAYAK RAMNATH NAIK
(Dona Paula, Tiswadi – Goa)

Beloved husband of late **Mrs. Anupama V. Naik**;
Loving father/ father-in-law of
Mr. Ashwin V. Naik/Tejaswini A. Naik;
Mrs. Veena A. Dhuri/ Mr. Ashok Dhuri and
Mrs. Vaidehee P. Banavalikar/ Mr. Pravin Banavalikar.

Funeral procession will leave from his residence **TODAY** on **28/06/2025** to **St. Inez crematorium/ Smashan Bhoomi** at **12:00 noon**

No condolence visits please

ART TRICKS 8390897800

REST IN PEACE

MARIA ARCANJA DIAS NETO
(Bondir, St. Cruz Barreto Fast Food)

Wife of late **Minguel Francis Barreto**.
Mother/Mother-in-law of **Marcus/late Vera, Piedade/Joseph, Augusta/late Anthony, late Justin/Filomena, Rosy/Teodoro, Jose/Conceicao, Perpeta/Agnel, Jasmina/late Martis, Celine/Agnel, Felix/Camcy.**

Passed away peacefully on **27/06/2025**

FUNERAL DATE WILL BE ANNOUNCED LATER

ART TRICKS 8390897800

RETURNED TO THE LORD

OSCAR GANDHI DA COSTA
-- Margao - Goa --

Son of late **Dr. Gambeta Da Costa** and late **Flavia Menezes**.
Loving brother / brother-in-law of late **Evelina / late Albano Noronha, late Peregrino / late Estela Da Costa, Yvonne / late Victor Gonsalves, late Lizette Da Costa.**

Passed away peacefully.

Funeral cortege will leave his residence at **10.30 a.m.** on **Saturday, 28th June 2025** to **Our Lady of Grace Church, Margao**, for Eucharistic Celebration, followed by burial at **Margao Cemetery.**

Relations and friends kindly accept this as the only intimation.

Om Jai Advig & Funeral Service, Margao 9823022194