

National News

The CM who changed Delhi for good

Agency
New Delhi July 21,

"Whenever people talk of a developed and growing Delhi, Sheila's name will be remembered," said Sandeep Dikshit, a former MP and son of three-time chief minister Sheila Dikshit, who passed away on Saturday. During her 15-year tenure, Dikshit is credited for transforming Delhi, despite its complex matrix of governance, into a "world class city".

Former Delhi L-G Vijai Kapoor and bureaucrats, on Saturday, lauded Dikshit for being able to strike a balance between the Centre and the state despite Delhi's unique status.

Centre-state balance
Former L-G Kapoor said that carrying out infrastructure projects in Delhi has always been complex because of the multiple agencies involved. "But, Dikshit tactfully managed to get the work done. Delhi has a difficult matrix of governance. She worked harmoniously within it," he said.

Dikshit's former Cabinet colleagues say infrastructure was one of her key focus areas. The opening of Delhi's first Metro line — between Shahdara and Tis Hazari in

2002 — and the further expansion changed the way people commuted in the city. "For Delhi Metro, she directed all officers to pitch in every way possible — be it clearing land hurdles or shifting utility lines as per the DMRC's demand. The then Union railway minister Mamata Banerjee had opposed constructing the Barapullah flyover. Then culture minister Ambika Soni too had objected to the project saying that the view to Humayun's Tomb would be affected. But, Dikshit convinced them and found a way around," said Rakesh Mehta, former Delhi chief secretary.

AK Walia, the PWD minister in Dikshit's cabinet, said nearly 65 flyovers were built during their tenure. The flyovers at AIIMS, Dhauva Kuan, Outer Ring Road and Barapullah were all conceived during Dikshit's tenure.

CWG 2010
Then came the Commonwealth Games, 2010 for which Dikshit took lead in revamping Delhi, which included modernising IGI Airport.

According to PK Tripathi, former chief secretary, the idea of streetscaping was introduced by Dikshit during

the 2010 Games. Tripathi, who was also the then principal secretary, CWG, said Dikshit stood firm even as she faced criticism from all quarters. "Just days ahead of the Games, an under-construction foot overbridge in front of the then new Jawaharlal Nehru stadium collapsed. I remember calling Dikshit from the spot to break the news to her. All she said was there is no time to cry. 'Make it work', she said. It was then that I called in the Army to salvage the situation," he said. Later, the 2010 CWG was mired in financial irregularities that came to undermine Sheila Dikshit's final term.

Public transport
The daily public transport of roughly 32 lakh passengers in Delhi is still catered to by about 5,500 buses that were purchased by the Sheila Dikshit government, said Sunita Narian, member of the Supreme Court appointed Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for NCR (EPCA).

"I have no hesitation in saying that she is the best that Delhi got when it comes to public transport. Not a single bus has been added by the Delhi government

after her tenure. In fact, she was the one who introduced the cluster bus scheme," she said. Although shifting auto-rickshaws and buses to CNG was in accordance to the Supreme Court order, Dikshit stood by her decision despite stiff resistance. "She was concerned about the city's air quality. I remember she once called me at 7am asking about alternatives, after seeing an auto-rickshaw emanating thick smoke. A few days later, she approved the shift to CNG," Narain said. It was during her tenure that the Delhi government experimented with BRT.

Power Privatisation
As the erstwhile Delhi Vidut Board became one of the biggest loss making electricity boards in the country, Dikshit spearheaded the move to privatise the electricity sector in Delhi.

"DVB's losses were mostly due to poor distribution of power. Before privatisation the distribution losses in Delhi were over 50%, which now has come down to 15%. Dikshit channelled funds saved from the electricity sector to build more than a dozen hospitals," said Tripathi.

9 Indians stranded in UAE after accepting fake job offers through WhatsApp

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Nine Indians have been stranded in the UAE after accepting fake job offers through social media, according to a media report on Sunday. The men from Kerala, who are currently stranded in Al Ain and Ajman, claim they met the agent named Shafeeq on WhatsApp and paid up to Rs 70,000 for visit visas to the UAE, Khaleej Times reported.

The incident comes months after the Consulate General of India in Dubai asked job seekers to stay away from fraudulent job advertisements luring Indians to the UAE. The Consulate said "job seekers should not fall prey to such bogus job offers and in case of any doubt, may seek clarification from the Consulate." Fazil, one of the victims from Malappuram district in Kerala, said that he received the job offer on WhatsApp. "A WhatsApp message that promised jobs in the UAE within 15 days was being widely shared in Kerala, and I also received the forwarded message. I really thought it was genuine as many people were showing interest,"

he was quoted as saying in the report.

Fazil said that he had a conversation with the agent who convinced him of a job in a supermarket in Al Ain.

"He told me I will get Dh1,200 (Rs 22,496) as monthly salary and free food and accommodation. I was going through tough times, and thought it would be a good start for me," said Fazil, who is a qualified technician.

Fazil said he mortgaged his mother's gold ornaments to cough up the money and cannot return home without a job. Mohammed Rafeeq, 30, another victim from Kozhikode in Kerala, said he borrowed Rs 70,000 from friends and family for the job. "Nine people including myself managed to pay up. And the agent formed a separate WhatsApp group for nine of us and we were communicating with each other," he said, adding the agent told them that they would be travelling together to the UAE.

But as soon as they landed in Abu Dhabi on July 15, the men said they realised they got duped.

Rafeeq said a local agent named Shameer met them at the airport and split the men into two

groups. "Four people were sent to Ajman and five of us were taken to Al Ain. When asked about our jobs, he said the supermarket official is in jail and hence they will have to find new jobs for us. We immediately knew we were in trouble," Rafeeq was quoted as saying by the paper. Indian embassy in Abu Dhabi has stepped in and have offered to assist in sending the men home.

Rafeeq said he and his friends are surviving on the allowance given by the embassy.

"We have repeatedly highlighted the need for ECR passport holders to not come to UAE on visit visa for employment purpose," Ambassador Navdeep Singh Suri told the paper. Smita Pant, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy said they have started pushing for legal action against unscrupulous agents in India. "We have reported about 40 such cases to Indian authorities and police investigations are on. That is important to deter these illegal agents from duping more people," the official said.

Pant said the embassy is encouraging victims to file a police case against the agents.

Mamata Banerjee likely to bat for ballot papers at Kolkata mega rally today

Agency
New Delhi July 21,

Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee has demanded return of ballot papers in place of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and said electoral reforms are required in the country to save democracy and stop the use of black money during polls. Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar has expressed grief over the demise of former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. Mr Javadekar said, she was a prominent leader of Congress and respected by all the parties.

But they have now stopped using them.... So why cannot we bring the ballot papers back?" she said. During Sunday's rally, she is expected to highlight issues like EVMs and electoral reforms. "Since 1995, I have been demanding electoral reforms. If we want to stop use of black money in elections, save democracy and let political parties maintain transparency, you must go for electoral reforms," Banerjee told reporters here on Saturday. State funding is necessary in

such reforms, she said alleging that political parties use black money during polls. The TMC chief had earlier claimed that several crores of rupees were spent during the recently-held Lok Sabha elections. "Some are saying it amounts to thousands of crores. I want to know, where did all this money come from? Every party cannot spend so much money. This is corruption. Money was sent to different fake bank accounts. Money was transferred even using RTGS," she said.

Former Delhi CM Sheila Dikshit passes away at 81, last rites today

Agency
New Delhi July 21,

Last rites of Veteran Congress leader and former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit will be performed this afternoon at the Nigam Bodh Ghat. She will be accorded a state funeral. 81-year old Dikshit passed away yesterday at a private hospital in the national capital after suffering cardiac arrest. Three-time Delhi Chief Minister is credited for giving the national capital its modern look.

Dikshit served as the Chief Minister of Delhi from 1998 to 2013. She was the second woman chief minister of Delhi. She also represented the Kannauj Parliamentary Constituency in Uttar Pradesh. She was also Union Minister. Dikshit also served as the Governor of Kerala briefly.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the demise of former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit.

In his message, President Kovind said, Sheila Dikshit will be remembered for the momentous transformation of the national capital during her term in office. Mr Naidu said, she was a good administrator. Prime Minister Modi said, Sheila Dikshit made a noteworthy contribution to Delhi's development.

BJP President Amit Shah offered condolences to Sheila Dikshit's family and her supporters. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said he was devastated to hear about the passing away of Sheila Dikshit. He described her as a beloved

daughter of the Party. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, people of Delhi will always remember Sheila Dikshit contribution to the development during her tenure as Chief Minister of Delhi. He termed Dikshit as a dedicated congress leader of the masses. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, it is a huge loss for Delhi and her contribution will always be remembered.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed deep sorrow on the demise of senior Congress leader and Delhi's former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. He said that Mrs Dikshit had a close relation to Uttar Pradesh and she had an important role in the development of Delhi. BJP State President

Swatantra Dev Singh including others have also consoled the sad demise of the leader. Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar has expressed grief over the demise of former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. Mr Javadekar said, she was a prominent leader of Congress and respected by all the parties.

Sport News

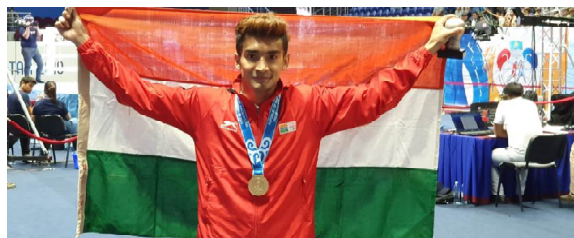
Shiva Thapa wins gold as India finish with 4 medals at President's Cup

By Correspondent
New Delhi, July 21,

Four-time Asian Championships medalist Shiva Thapa captured the 63kg gold while Parveen won the 60kg silver as Indian boxers finished their campaign on a high with 1 gold, 1 silver and two bronze medals at the VII Republic of Kazakhstan President's Cup 2019 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on Saturday. This was India's first ever gold medal at this tournament since its inception in 2006.

Thapa's opponent, two-time Asian Confederation Boxing Championships silver medalist Zakir Safullin of Kazakhstan, could not enter the ring for the summit clash after suffering a forehead injury in the semi-finals. Thapa was thus given a walkover to the gold that he added to the yellow metal he grabbed from the India Open earlier this year.

19-year-old Parveen was a sensation at this tournament. Having clinched the bronze at the India Open and at the Cologne Boxing World Cup, the young talent made rapid strides to shock Women's World



Championships bronze medalist Karina Ibragimova 3-2 in the semi-finals. In the final, however, she came up short against Kazakhstan's Nations

Cup gold medalist Rimma Volosenko 0-5 to settle for the silver. In 69kg, Duryodhan Singh Negi lost 1-4 to Kazakhstan's

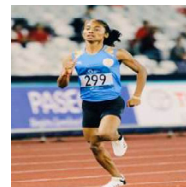
Shayken Talgat in the semi-finals while Saweety Bora too endured the same fate in 75kg against Russia's Elena Gapeshina to get the bronze.

Hima Das wins gold in 400m race, 5th in a month

Agency
New Delhi July 21,

Indian sprinter Hima Das won a gold medal in the 400-meter race with a season-best time of 52.09 seconds at Nove Mesto in the Czech Republic today. It was Hima's fifth gold medal since July 2 when she ran her first competitive race in

Europe. Hima has already won gold in 200 meters race at the Poznan Athletics Grand Prix and Kutno Athletics Meet in Poland earlier this month. She won her third 200 meters gold at the Kladno Athletics Meet and fourth gold at the Tabor Athletics Meet in the Czech Republic.



International National News

Pakistan: 3 killed, 7 injured in suicide blast in public hospital

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Three persons were killed and seven others injured after a suicide blast hit the main gate of a public hospital in Pakistan's Dera Ismail Khan district on Sunday morning, police said.

A suicide bomber attacked the people, including patients and employees, who were entering the trauma centre of the hospital, police said. Following the blast, rescue teams shifted the bodies and wounded to the emergency section of the hospital.

A hospital official said that the death toll might further rise as



three of the injured are in critical condition. No group claimed the attack yet. In another incident on Sunday morning, some unknown gunmen opened fire at a police check post in the district killing two police personnel.

Twitterati claim JeM chief Masood Azhar among 10 injured in Pakistan blast, no confirmed reports. Oil tanker attacks: Blasts from the past | India Today Insight IAF's 21-minute airstrike in Pakistan: What next in the war on terror?