Ref: IEPF/PRESSRELEASE/1617

April 26, 2024

The General Manager
Department of Corporate Services
BSE Limited
P. J. Towers, Dalal Street,
Mumbai – 400001.
Scrip Code: 524075

The Manager - Listing Department,
National Stock Exchange of India Limited
Exchange Plaza, Plot No. C-1, G Block,
Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East),
Mumbai – 400051.
Symbol: ALBERTDAVD

Dear Sir / Madam,

Sub: Disclosure under Regulation 30 – Publication of Notice in Newspapers for transfer of equity shares of the Company to the Investor Education and Protection Fund.

In terms of Regulation 30 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, please find attached Notice as published in Financial Express (English, All India) and Aajkal (Regional language) newspapers on April 26, 2024, regarding transfer of equity shares of the Company to the Investor Education and Protection Fund ("IEPF").

Please take the same on record.

Thanking you,
Yours faithfully,
For **Albert David Limited**

Abhishek Seth
Digitally signed by Abhishek Seth
Date: 2024.04.26 12:01:26 +05'30'

Abhishek Seth
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer

নাপিত-পুত্র কিঙ্করের হাতে দেবীর চক্ষুদান, সেদিন ছিল না হিন্দুত্ববাদের মার্চপাস্ট

অরূপ বসু

রামকিঙ্করের প্রতিভা ছিল স্বভাবজাত। পিতা চণ্ডীচরণ যতই তাঁকে জাত-পেশায় (ক্ষৌরকর্ম) দীক্ষা দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করুন না কেন, তাঁর মন পড়ে থাকে শিল্পকর্মের দিকে। তাই পড়তে বসে বইয়ের পাতায় বড় বড় অক্ষর চোখে ভেসে ওঠে। ভেসে ওঠে চকবাজারের দোকানের নতুন সাইনবোর্ড। —চুরুট মুখে সাহেবের পাশে লেখা রয়েছে— BURMA CIGAR। রামকিঙ্কর ছবি আঁকেন গণেশ ঠাকুরের।

রামকিঙ্করের স্বীকারোক্তি— তাঁর প্রথম শিল্পের ইশকুল বাড়ির পাশের কুমোরপাড়া। স্কুল থেকে পালিয়ে চলে যেতেন কুমোরপাড়ার অনন্ত জ্যাঠার কাছে। অনন্ত জ্যাঠা বংশসূত্রে ছুতোর হলেও, শহরে তাঁর খ্যাতি ছড়িয়ে ছিল মূর্তি গড়ার কারিগর হিসেবে। অনন্ত জ্যাঠা পরবর্তিকালে দেবী দুর্গার মূর্তি গড়ার দায়িত্বও অর্পণ করেছিলেন রামকিঙ্করকে। রামকিঙ্কর দেবীর চক্ষুদানের ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করে বলেন, 'জ্যাঠা উটিও আঁকা করতে চাই।' প্রবীণ শিল্পী খুশি হয়ে রামকিঙ্করের হাতে সেই দায়িত্বও তুলে দিয়ে বলেন, 'কিঙ্কর তু সাধক বটে।'

বাঁকুড়া, বাংলার সেই মাটি, যেখানে নাপিতের সন্তান দারিদ্র, অশিক্ষার আবহকে তুড়ি মেরে বিখ্যাত ভাস্কর হওয়ার পরিবেশ পায়। হিন্দুত্ববাদী সমাজ কিঙ্করকে সে-সুযোগ দিত?

ভাগ্যিস সমরেশ বসু 'দেখি নাই ফিরে' লেখার ও গবেষণার সময়ে কিঙ্করের জন্মভিটে যে যুগীপাড়ায় এসেছিলেন, সেখানে তখন হিন্দুত্ববাদ মার্চপাস্ট করেনি। এখন করছে। ২০১৯ সালের পর থেকে। ১৯৮০ সালে রামকিঙ্করের মৃত্যুর পর সমরেশ বসু বার বার বাঁকুড়ায় এসেছিলেন। তাঁর ঘরে দেখেছি পাড়া-ভিত্তিক মানচিত্র।

বহু বছর আগের কথা। বাঁকুড়ার দোলতলা অঞ্চলে এক দল কর্মকার বাতিল, ভাঙা, বেঁকা পিতলের বাসন এবং নানা ব্যবহারিক বস্তু গলিয়ে, সেই গলানো পেতল দিয়ে মোমঢালাই পদ্ধতিতে নানা রকম মূর্তি বানাত। ঠিক যেমনটা বানায় ছত্তিশগড়ের বস্তার অঞ্চলের আদিবাসী এবং অন্ধ্রের তেলেঙ্গানা অঞ্চলের শিল্পীরা। বাংলার বর্ধমানের দরিয়াপুর এবং বিষ্ণুপুরেও আছেন ডোকরা শিল্পীরা। কিন্তু কৌলীন্যের দিক থেকে বাঁকুড়ার ডোকরা স্বতন্ত্র।

বাংলায় ডোকরা শিল্পীদের মধ্যে মুসলিম কারিগর সাধারণত খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না। সেটা ট্র্যাডিশনাল ডোকরা কারিগর যাঁরা, তাঁদের মধ্যে। কিন্তু হাতে কাজ, পেটে ভাতের কথা ভেবে ট্র্যাডিশন ভেঙে অন্য বর্ণ, জাতের অনেকেই এখন এ কাজে আসছেন। কাজের পাশাপাশি শিল্পীর মর্যাদাও তো পাওয়া যায়! যেমন বাঁকুড়ার দক্ষ, নামী ডোকরা শিল্পী এখন হরেন্দ্রনাথ রানা এবং তাঁর পরিবার।

বাঁকুড়া শহরের বাইরে গন্ধেশ্বরীর সতীঘাট। বছরখানেক আগে নতুন সেতু বানিয়েছে রাজ্য সরকার। আগে একটি নীচু ঢালাই সেতু ছিল। তলায় মোটা মোটা পাইপ পাতা, আবর্জনায় জল যাওয়ার রাস্তা রুদ্ধ হয়ে এসেছিল অনেক দিন ধরেই। বর্ষায় হঠাৎ ফুলেফেঁপে ওঠে। দু'কূল ছাপিয়ে শহরের বহু ঘরবাড়ির ক্ষতি করে। একটা আস্ত বাড়ি নদীতে ভেঙে পড়ে। এখন অনেক উঁচু, দীর্ঘ ঢালাই সেতু। সতীঘাট পেরিয়ে ৬০ নম্বর জাতীয় সড়ক ধরে বেশ খানিকটা পথ পাড়ি দিলে হেভি মোড়। সেখান থেকেও মিনিট দশেক উজিয়ে গেলে চওড়া রাস্তার ধারে সুসজ্জিত তোরণ। তাতে লেখা: ডোকরা শিল্প গ্রাম। ৯৩টি ইউনিট। পঞ্চাশের কিছু বেশি শিল্পী-ঘর। ১৯৮০ সালে দোলতলা এবং আশপাশে ছড়িয়ে-থাকা শিল্পীদের এক জায়গায় বসত করার জন্য সরকারি প্রশ্রয়ে শিল্প গ্রাম গঠিত হয়। সরকারি জমিতে বসানো হয় বটে। কিন্তু পাট্টা বা পাকা কাগজ পায়নি ওরা। কয়েক বছর আগে শিল্পীদের নবান্নে ডেকে পাঠানো হয়। বৈঠকে ওরা মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর কাছে পাকা কাগজ চায়। মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ব্যবস্থা করে দেন। কিন্তু ভেস্ট ল্যান্ডের পরিমাণ কম হওয়ায় ৫০ শতক জমি ভাগ করে দেওয়া হয়। এক-একটি শিল্পী-ঘরের জন্য এক শতক জমি বরাদ্দ হয়। এক কাঠারও কম। শিল্পী রানার পরিবারে যেমন তিনটি ইউনিট। সবাই এক সঙ্গেই কাজ করছে।

আগে একটা সময় ডোকরা শিল্পীদের সুপরিচালিত সমবায় ছিল। মাঝে কয়েক বছর এলোমেলো হয়ে যায়। ২০১৫ সাল থেকে নতুন সংগঠন গড়ে উঠেছে। পাকা ঘরের বাইরে মোম, মাটি আর পিচ দিয়ে নানা মূর্তির গড়ন বা পুতুল তৈরি হচ্ছিল। এর ওপর মাটি দিয়ে ছাঁচ বানিয়ে আগুনের ওপর ধরা হয়। মাটি পুড়ে লাল হয়ে যায়। তলায় যে ছিদ্র করা থাকে, সেখান থেকে গলিত মোম, পিচ বেরিয়ে আসে। আর সেই ছিদ্রপথেই গলানো পেতল ভেতরে দিয়ে ঠান্ডা জলে চুবিয়ে রাখা হয়। তার পর ওপরের মাটির খাঁচা ভেঙে ভেতরে ডোকরা প্রাণ বের করে আনা হয়— দুর্গা, ষাঁড়, ঘোড়া, আরও কত রকম।

আর এক গাছতলায় শিল্পী পরিবারের লোকজন আহারে ব্যস্ত। মুড়ি, চপ জল দিয়ে মেখে তৃপ্তি করে খাচ্ছে। আর একজন জলঢালা ভাত, সঙ্গে মাখা ছাতু। ভাতের সঙ্গে আলুভাজা মুখে দেয়, এখানে ছাতু মুখে দিচ্ছে।

বাঁকুড়া শহরের বড়বাজার হচ্ছে নতুনগঞ্জ— একশো বছরের পুরনো। পুরনো থামওয়ালা বাড়ি, গথিক ভঙ্গির বাড়ি। বাজারটা রানিগঞ্জ মোড় থেকে মাচানতলা অবধি। এর মধ্যে রানিগঞ্জ মোড় থেকে স্টেশন গঞ্জ পর্যন্ত নতুনগঞ্জ বাজার। বেশির ভাগ ব্যবসা মাড়োয়ারির দখলে। কয়েকটি দোকানে এখন গেরুয়া নিশানে হিংস্র হনুমানের ছবি। কিছু দিন আগে গরুপুজোর ব্যবস্থা দেখে বাঁকুড়ার মানুষ বিস্মিত। একটা মিনি ট্রাকের ওপর সুসজ্জিত গাভী দাঁড়িয়ে। দেবতাজ্ঞানে ভ্রাম্যমাণ পুজোর ব্যবস্থা। দু'দিকে চলমান মাড়োয়ারি রমণীর সারি।

বাজারের এক দিকে বাঁশের কঞ্চির ঝুড়ি, পুজোর ডালা, কাঁচা শালপাতা বিক্রি করছে কাজল ময়রা। পদবি বরাট। বিয়ের পর বেশি দিন শ্বশুরবাড়ির ঘর কপালে ছিল না।

এখানে বেশ কয়েকজন বিখ্যাত বাঙালির ছেলেবেলা, বড়বেলার কিছুটা কেটেছে— প্রবাসী-র সম্পাদক রামানন্দ চট্টোপাধ্যায়, ভারতের রদ্যাঁ রামকিঙ্কর বেইজ, একটু দূরে বেলিয়াতোড়ে যামিনী রায়ের বাড়ি এখন আর্কাইভ। জাতীয় সড়ক ধরে যামিনী রায়ের বাড়ির দিকে যেতে বেলিয়াতোড়ের জঙ্গল পড়ে।

মাচানতলা ছাড়িয়ে রেল লাইনের ওদিকে মুসলিম মহল্লা। গন্ধেশ্বরের তীরে নিম্নবর্গের মানুষ। এখান থেকে ক্ষৌরকার পরিবারে জন্মে এক স্বপ্ন-দেখা কিশোর কাঁড়ার পিছু পিছু ঘুরতে ঘুরতে বাসের গায়ে অপটু হাতের শিল্পীর তুলি টান দেখতে দেখতে, টুসু পুতুল গড়তে গড়তে কিঙ্কর রামকিঙ্কর হয়ে ওঠে।

সেই বাঁকুড়ায় লোকসভায় লড়ছেন অরূপ চক্রবর্তী (তৃণমূল), ডাঃ সুভাষ সরকার (বিজেপি), নীলাঞ্জন দাশগুপ্ত (সিপিএম)। প্রচারের দেওয়াল ধরে তাঁরা খুব ছুটছেন। এ মাটি সোনার মাটি। সেচের জল পেলেই সোনা ফলে। সেই টানে ইংরেজ এসেছিল বলেই সোনামুখী পর্যন্ত প্রাচীন আধুনিক শহর।

একদা-বিখ্যাত গণিতজ্ঞ শুভঙ্কর রায় এখানকার ছাত্র, মানুষ। তিনি সেকালে সোনামুখী অঞ্চলকে দামোদরের খালের জল দিয়ে কীভাবে সিক্ত করা যায়, তার রূপরেখা দিয়েছিলেন। সেটা আজও কার্যকর। লোকমুখে সেই সেচ-ব্যবস্থার নাম— শুভঙ্করে দাঁড়া। সেই সবুজ ফসলের টানে দলমার দামাল হাতিরা মেদিনীপুর, জয়পুর, দ্বারকেশ্বর টপকে সোনামুখী, বেলিয়াতোড়, বড়জোড়া, গঙ্গাজলঘাটি পর্যন্ত পৌঁছে যায়। গণেশ বলে হাতিদের পুজো করা যায়। যাদের শস্য, জীবন নষ্ট হচ্ছে, তাদের তো ভাবা উচিত এ তাদের সৌভাগ্য!

১৯৬০ সালের আগে বাঁকুড়ায় আরএসএস-এর কোনও অস্তিত্ব ছিল না। ২০০০ সালের আগে বলার মতো কিছুই ছিল না। এখন ওরা বলে, আদিবাসীরাই আসল হিন্দু। যেমন বলে জৈন প্রথম তীর্থঙ্কর ঋষভনাথ আদি দেব মহাদেব, বিষ্ণুর অবতার গৌতম বুদ্ধ।

বাঁকুড়ায় গন্ধেশ্বরী পাড়ে রক্ষিতাদের জন্য ভাদু ঠাকুরের মূর্তি গড়ে কিশোর কিঙ্কর পয়সা পেত! আর দেখত, গোপাল জিউর মন্দিরে প্রবেশ করার অপরাধে পাঠক ঠাকুর গালাগাল দিয়ে ক্ষান্ত হয়নি, লাঠির আঘাতে রক্তাক্ত করছে। কিঙ্করের মা রুষ্ট হয়ে বলেন, মানি বটে, দোষ হইচে, ত উরকম পিটাই করব্যাক। উয়ারা বড় দুঃখী। মেয়ে মানুষ না হল্যে বুঝতে লারব্যাক।

হিন্দুত্ববাদীরা এটুকু প্রতিবাদও কি পছন্দ করেন? গার্গীকেও শুনতে হয়েছিল, নারীর এত তেজ, এত জ্ঞান ভাল নয়, মুণ্ড খসে যাবে।

আশঙ্কা অন্য জায়গায়। এক ডোকরা শিল্পী জিজ্ঞেস করেছিল, কত জায়গায় ঘুরছেন! কী বুঝছেন? এখানে কিন্তু আমরা ভোট দিতে পারি। যে-সব রাজ্যে বিজেপি, কেমন চলছে? এরা কি ইলেক্টোরাল বন্ড, বিলকিস বানো— জানে?

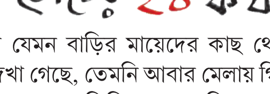
খানাকুলের এক দোকানে চপ ভাজছেন আরামবাগের তৃণমূল প্রার্থী মিতালি বাগ। ছবি: প্রতিবেদক

খানাকুলে প্রচারে গিয়ে চপ ভাজলেন মিতালি

তুফান মণ্ডল

আরামবাগ, ২৫ এপ্রিল

খানাকুলের হানুয়া এলাকায় একটি তেলেভাজার দোকানে ঢুকে বেগুনি ও চপ ভাজলেন তৃণমূল প্রার্থী মিতালি বাগ। তাঁর এই কাজ দেখে এলাকার মানুষ অভিভূত হয়ে যান। তাঁর এই স্বতঃস্ফূর্ততা এবং জনগণের সঙ্গে মিশে যাওয়ার ক্ষমতা অন্য প্রার্থীদের অনেকটাই পিছনে ফেলে দিয়েছে। প্রচারে বেরিয়ে মিতালি বাগ বেশিরভাগ সময়েই একেবারে পরিবারের সঙ্গে মিশে যাচ্ছেন। বাড়ির অন্দরমহলে ঢুকে যাচ্ছেন। রান্নাঘরে ঢুকে শুরু করে মহিলা মহল— সব জায়গাতেই তাঁর অবাধ বিচরণ। শুধু তাই নয়, তাঁদের সঙ্গে গল্পে-কথায় মেতে উঠছেন। যেন একেবারে নিজেদের ঘরের মেয়ে। কখনও গান গাইছেন, কখনও নাচ, আবার কখনও বা ধামসা বাজাচ্ছেন।



এর আগে প্রচারে বেরিয়ে তাঁকে যেমন বাড়ির মায়েদের কাছ থেকে গুগলির তরকারি চেয়ে নিতে দেখা গেছে, তেমনি আবার মেলায় গিয়ে তিনি সকলকে নিয়ে ফুচকাও খাচ্ছেন। কখনও তিনি চাষের জমিতে নেমে চাষিদের সঙ্গে আলু তুলতে লেগে যাচ্ছেন, বাদাম গাছের পরিচর্যা করছেন, ধান কাটছেন, আবার কখনও বা জমিতে সার ছড়াচ্ছেন। কোনও কিছুতেই তিনি যে কম যান না তা দেখাচ্ছেন। সাধারণ মানুষও তাঁর এই কাজকে বেশ ভালভাবে উপভোগ করছেন। একজন সাধারণ চাষির ঘরের মেয়ে হওয়া সত্ত্বেও সাধারণ মানুষের প্রতিনিধি হিসেবে তিনি যে সত্যিকারের লড়াই করার ক্ষমতা রাখেন, তা যেন এখনই হাতে হাতে প্রমাণ দিচ্ছেন। তাঁর প্রচারের এই কৌশল তাঁকে একেবারে আপন করে নিচ্ছে। এদিন খানাকুলে তাঁর প্রচারে মানুষের সমাগমই আর একবার প্রমাণ মিলল। এদিন তাঁর সঙ্গে ছিলেন তৃণমূলের আরামবাগ সাংগঠনিক জেলা চেয়ারম্যান স্বপন নন্দী, ব্লক তৃণমূল সভাপতি রমেন প্রামাণিক-সহ বিভিন্ন স্তরের নেতা-কর্মীরা।

আহত পুলিশ: খাতড়ার মিরগিপাহাড়ির জঙ্গলে আচমকা আগুন লেগে আতঙ্ক সৃষ্টি হয়। খাতড়া মহকুমা পুলিশ অফিসার অভিষেক যাদবের নেতৃত্বে আইসি-সহ পুলিশের একটি বড়সড় দল সেখানে দ্রুত ছুটে আসে। দমকলের দুটি ইঞ্জিন ঘটনাস্থলে যায়। দমকলকর্মীদের সঙ্গে পুলিশ এবং স্থানীয় মানুষও আগুন নেভাতে হাত লাগান। জঙ্গল লাগোয়া একটি বস্তিতেও আগুন ছড়িয়ে পড়ার আশঙ্কা তৈরি হয়।

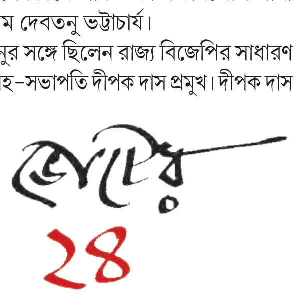
বীরভূমে বিজেপির দুই প্রার্থীর মনোনয়ন

অনুপম বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

সিউড়ি, ২৫ এপ্রিল

বীরভূম লোকসভা কেন্দ্রে বিজেপির পক্ষ থেকে মনোনয়ন দিলেন ২ জন প্রার্থী। গত মঙ্গলবার প্রার্থী হিসেবে মনোনয়ন জমা দেন প্রাক্তন পুলিশ আধিকারিক দেবাশিস ধর। দেবাশিস ধরের নামেই দেওয়াল লিখন ও পোস্টার, ফেস্টুনে প্রচার চলছে। কিন্তু বৃহস্পতিবার মনোনয়ন পেশ করার শেষ দিনে আরও একজন বিজেপি প্রার্থী মনোনয়ন পেশ করেন। দ্বিতীয় প্রার্থীর নাম দেবতনু ভট্টাচার্য।

এদিন মনোনয়ন পেশের সময় দেবতনুর সঙ্গে ছিলেন রাজ্য বিজেপির সাধারণ সম্পাদক জগন্নাথ চ্যাটার্জি, জেলা বিজেপির সহ-সভাপতি দীপক দাস প্রমুখ। দীপক দাস বলেন, 'কৌশলগত কারণে বীরভূম কেন্দ্রে দলের পক্ষ থেকে অতিরিক্ত একজন প্রার্থী এদিন মনোনয়ন পেশ করেছেন।' দেবতনু ভট্টাচার্য আসানসোলের বাসিন্দা। তিনি বিজেপির দক্ষিণ রাঢ় বাংলার ইন-চার্জ। প্রসঙ্গত, বিজেপির পক্ষ থেকে মনোনয়ন পেশ করা প্রথম প্রার্থী দেবাশিস ধরের বিরুদ্ধে শীতলকুচি কাণ্ডে অভিযোগ রয়েছে। সম্প্রতি চাকরি থেকে ইস্তফা দিয়ে তিনি বিজেপির প্রার্থী হয়েছেন। কিন্তু রাজ্য সরকার এখনও তাঁকে ক্লিয়ারেন্স দেয়নি। তাই দেবাশিসের মনোনয়ন বাতিলের আশঙ্কা থেকেই আরও একজন প্রার্থীকে মনোনয়ন পেশ করানো হয় বলে মনে করছে জেলার রাজনৈতিক মহল।



বীরভূম কেন্দ্রে বিজেপির ২ জন প্রার্থীর মনোনয়ন পেশ প্রসঙ্গে জেলা তৃণমূল কংগ্রেসের মুখপাত্র তথা সহ-সভাপতি মলয় মুখার্জি বলেন, 'আমরা প্রথম দিন থেকেই বলে আসছি, যে লোকটির হাতে শীতলকুচির রক্ত লেগে আছে, যার বিরুদ্ধে দু-দুটি ডিপার্টমেন্টাল প্রসিডিং চলছে, যে এখনও কিনা ভিজিলেন্সের ছাড়পত্র পায়নি, আইনকে বৃদ্ধাঙ্গুষ্ঠ দেখিয়ে তার মনোনয়ন পেশ করানো হয়েছে। যে-কোনও সময় তার মনোনয়নের বৈধতা বাতিল হয়ে যাবে, এই আশঙ্কা থেকেই বিজেপি এদিন তড়িঘড়ি আরও একজন প্রার্থী দাঁড় করিয়েছে।'

দুর্ঘটনায় শিশুর মৃত্যু, আহত মা

যজ্ঞেশ্বর জানা

নন্দীগ্রাম, ২৫ এপ্রিল

মায়ের সাইকেলে চেপে স্কুল থেকে ফেরার পথে ট্রাকের ধাক্কায় মৃত্যু হল ৫ বছরের এক শিশুর। বৃহস্পতিবার সকালে দুর্ঘটনাটি ঘটেছে নন্দীগ্রাম ২ ব্লকের বিরুলিয়াতে। মৃত ছাত্রের নাম স্বর্ণদ্বীপ বেরা। স্থানীয় রেয়াপাড়া তল্লা সড়কের ওপর ঘটে দুর্ঘটনাটি। সাইকেলে ধাক্কা মারে একটি লরি। পিছনে বসে থাকা স্বর্ণদ্বীপ ছিটকে রাস্তার ওপর গিয়ে পড়ে। সাইকেল থেকে তার মাও পড়ে যান। স্থানীয়রা উদ্ধার করে নন্দীগ্রাম রেয়াপাড়া হাসপাতালে নিয়ে যায় আহত মা ও ছেলেকে। সেখানে স্বর্ণদ্বীপকে চিকিৎসকরা মৃত বলে ঘোষণা করেন। হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসাধীন তার মা। ঘটনার পর উত্তেজিত জনতা ঘিরে ফেলেন ঘাতক ট্রাকটিকে। কিন্তু পালিয়ে যায় ট্রাকের চালক ও খালাসি। তারা দু'জনেই পলাতক বলে জানিয়েছে পুলিশ। পুলিশ চালক এবং খালাসির খোঁজ করছে। এই ঘটনার পর এলাকায় শোকের ছায়া নেমে এসেছে।

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Parent Unilever has already split its beauty and personal care (BPC) business around two years ago, while the split within HUL's BPC portfolio, its largest segment in FY24 at ₹22,165 crore or 37% of its topline, will be effective this fiscal (FY25). Analysts estimate HUL's beauty business to be around 54-55% (or ₹12,000 crore) of HUL's overall BPC portfolio. In the March 2024 quarter, for instance, while personal care saw a 10% decline in underlying sales growth, the beauty segment witnessed a 4% growth, HUL said, pointing to the need to carve out beauty from the larger personal care.

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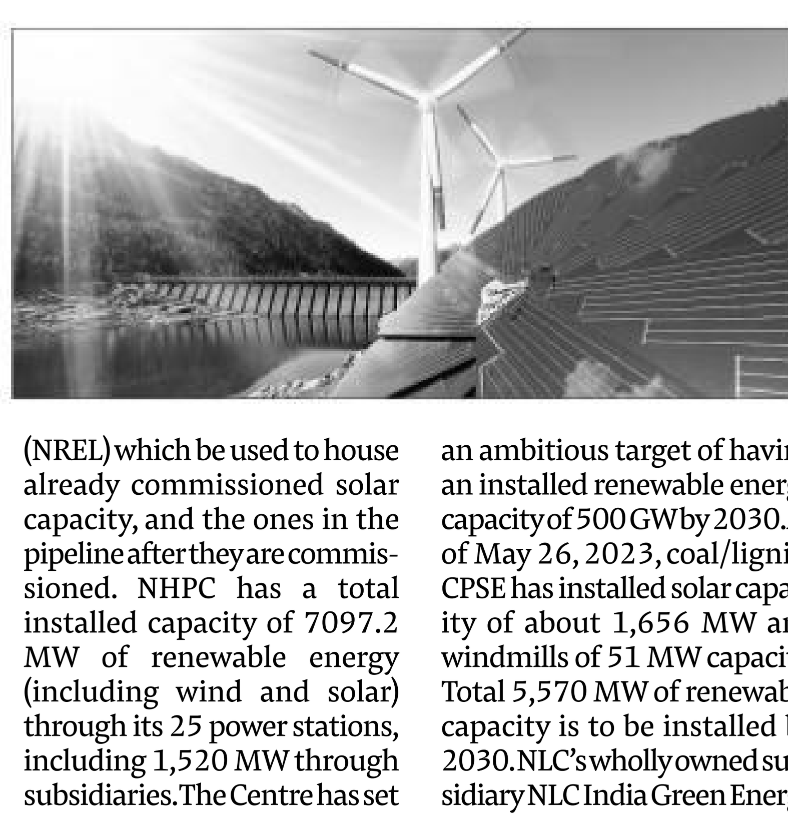

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"All the energy companies which are in brown and also those which are green already, even they are doing further green and into other green areas from wind to solar to hydrogen," the official said.

NHPC, India's leading hydropower company, has set up a wholly owned subsidiary NHPC Renewable Energy (NREL) which be used to house already commissioned solar capacity, and the ones in the pipeline after they are commissioned. NHPC has a total installed capacity of 7097.2 MW of renewable energy (including wind and solar) through its 25 power stations, including 1,520 MW through subsidiaries. The Centre has set an ambitious target of having an installed renewable energy capacity of 500 GW by 2030. As of May 26, 2023, coal/lignite CPSE has installed solar capacity of about 1,656 MW and windmills of 51 MW capacity. Total 5,570 MW of renewable capacity is to be installed by 2030. NLC's wholly owned subsidiary NLC India Green Energy (NIGEL) has signed the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam (GUVNL) for the proposed 600 MW Solar Power Project at Khavda Solar Park, Gujarat.

CIL has incorporated two new subsidiaries i.e. CIL Navi Karniya Urja for the development of non-conventional/clean & renewable energy and CIL Solar PV for the development of the solar photovoltaic module.

India's top oil explorer ONGC has set up a subsidiary ONGC Green recently engaged in businesses related to green hydrogen, hydrogen blending, renewable energy including solar, wind and hybrid, biofuels and bio-gas business and liquefied natural gas.

HUL turns focus on 6 key categories to spur growth

THE COMPANY WILL also set up a beauty council with key opinion leaders from the fashion and beauty industry, using platforms such as the Lakme Fashion Week to stamp its authority in the segment, Jawa said.

"We've identified six demand spaces or multi-year bets, which we will believe will grow disproportionately over time. We have already a ₹2,000-crore portfolio across these six bets, growing in strong double-digits. We will continue to invest to scale them up for the future, especially in e-commerce where sales growth has been over 50%," Jawa said during the investor call.

The focused approach to beauty comes as the company commits itself to contemporising the beauty business, which was recently split from personal care, amid growing competition from new-age rivals and direct-to-consumer brands such as Mamaearth, Sugar Cosmetics and Wow Skin Science as well as pure-play beauty companies such as Nykaa, L'Oreal and Nivea.

A 2023 report by consultancy firm Redseer noted that the Indian beauty market, which is $19 billion in terms of size, will touch $30 billion by 2027, accounting for about 5% of the global market and among the fastest-growing in the world. Growth will be driven by increased awareness of grooming needs, innovative solutions provided by new players and willingness to pay for these products and solutions.

Parent Unilever has already split its beauty and personal care (BPC) business around two years ago, while the split within HUL's BPC portfolio, its largest segment in FY24 at ₹22,165 crore or 37% of its topline, will be effective this fiscal (FY25). Analysts estimate HUL's beauty business to be around 54-55% (or ₹12,000 crore) of HUL's overall BPC portfolio. In the March 2024 quarter, for instance, while personal care saw a 10% decline in underlying sales growth, the beauty segment witnessed a 4% growth, HUL said, pointing to the need to carve out beauty from the larger personal care.

"Our focus is to enhance desirability of products using superior technology, premium packaging solutions and formats. To continue to innovate with speed, we will invest and expand our footprint of nano factories and supply chain for the beauty business," Jawa said, adding that the company was strengthening its beauty partnerships with e-commerce and modern trade channels.

DTH players seek pricing freedom from regulator

"GIVEN THE FACT that the broadcasting industry is extremely competitive as is borne out by Trai's own data, with the revenues of the sector already on the decline and lack of evidence of market failure, it may be prudent to follow forbearance and permit market forces to prevail and follow same light touch regulatory approach," Bharti Airtel said in its representation to Trai.

Currently tariffs are governed by the New Tariff Order 3.0. According to industry executives, in the last five years since the implementation of NTO, nobody in the value chain—broadcasters, distributors, consumers and advertisers—has benefited. In fact, the NTO has led to higher tariffs for consumers.

As per the current pricing regime, the price cap on individual channels within a bouquet is fixed at ₹19. Apart from the bouquet price, consumers need to pay a monthly charge of ₹130 or ₹160 as network capacity fee (NCF) to the operators. While the levy of NCF leads consumers to pay a higher monthly bill, the obligation to carry free-to-air channels creates capacity constraint for DTH operators. For example, if the pay-TV content costs ₹200 to a consumer, with the NCF, it increases to around ₹400.

"Moreover, different platforms have different cost structures and hence a blanket regulation despite the different business models, does not work," Tata Play told Trai.

While batting for forbearance, other operators have also urged the regulator to not allow Prasar Bharti-owned DD Free Dish to carry private channels.

This is because Prasar Bharti does not charge any monthly or annual subscription fee from viewers for DD Free Dish service, so it distorts the level playing field.

According to a report by Ficci and EY, the number of pay-TV households was 118 million in 2023. The same is expected to decline to 83 million by 2030. The number of connected TV homes, however, is expected to reach 100 million by 2030 from 35 million in 2023.

FirstCry withdraws $500-mn listing plan

HOWEVER, IN RECENT weeks, Sebi told the company it had not complied with regulations that mandate an IPO-bound company must share all key business metrics in the last three years in its papers that it has shared with prospective investors, the three sources said.

FirstCry and Sebi did not return requests for comment.

Sebi introduced this rule in 2022, hightening scrutiny of companies looking to list, after widespread criticism on the seemingly lax oversight over large loss-making companies which have commanded lofty valuations.

FirstCry's key performance indicators, or KPIs include its average order value, annual transacting customers and number of orders, its papers show.

FirstCry will now withdraw its IPO papers, make changes and refile them as early as next week, two of the sources said.

For the year ended March 31, 2023, its losses jumped six times to $57.6 million, while its total income more than doubled to $684 million, its draft papers show. —REUTERS

'Monsoon to cool inflation, growth resilient'

THE INDIA METEOROLOGICAL Department in its first forecast has predicted 'above normal' monsoon rainfall at 106% of benchmark - long period average - during June-September this year, after 'below normal' and patchy rains last year. It stated there is a 90% chance of the rains being in the "normal-to-excess" range.

Considering factors such as geopolitical conflicts, potential adverse domestic weather shocks and the prediction of an above-normal monsoon this year by the IMD, the RBI has projected CPI inflation for 2024-25 at 4.5% compared with 5.4% in 2023-24.

The latest finance ministry report on the economy noted that India's trade deficit was likely to decline in the coming years as the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, which aims at boosting manufacturing, further deepens and extends to other sectors. India's overall deficit in merchandise trade stood at $240 billion in 2023-24 as against $265 billion a year ago.

India's merchandise exports contracted 3.1% on year in 2023-24 and imports 5.3%, even though the later months of the year saw a pick-up in the two-way shipments. The contraction in goods trade with other countries came after two successive years of positive growth on the low base created by the pandemic-induced slump in FY20-21.

This meant India's foreign performance in the last year was in line with the global trend – as per the World Trade Organisation (WTO), global demand for traded goods shrank 1.2% in 2023.

India continues to be the fastest-growing major economy with positive assessments of the growth outlook for the current financial year. The IMF, in its April 2024 outlook has revised upwards its estimate of India's real GDP growth for 2023-24 to 7.8% from 6.7% in its January 2024 update.