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Manipur CM chairs meeting with MPS officers following commandos' strike



IMPHAL

Manipur Police commandos on Wednesday laid down their arms in protest against the abduction of Additional Superintendent Amit Kumar Moirangthem and demanded they be allowed to retaliate when attacked.

The police commandos of all the five valley districts put down their arms asking for action against Meitei radical group Arambai Tenggol and no hindrance from political executives when the forces act against the outfit, officials said.

They are protesting against Tuesday's incident during which a group of Meira Paibis (women's volunteer group) and cadres of Arambai Tenggol, a Meitei organisation, kidnapped the police officer and beat up other personnel guard-

ing him.

The officer was rescued within hours, and is currently hospitalised.

The Army had to be called in as fresh tension mounted in Manipur East on Tuesday and four columns of the Assam Rifles were deployed after the senior police officer was abducted.

Senior police officials were talking to their personnel assuring them that

strict action would be taken against the perpetrators.

"You can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them to only bite your neighbour."

This was stated by the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Pakistan in 2011 but today it holds good for Manipur where a section of the community was welcoming the return of these terror and radical groups," a senior security official said.

The region has witnessed escalating violence since May 3, with over 180 casualties reported after a "Tribal Solidarity March" in the hill districts protested the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

The Meiteis, constituting around 53 per cent of Manipur's population and residing predominantly in the Imphal Valley, contrast the tribals, including Nagas and Kukis, who make up 40 per cent and primarily inhabit the hill districts.

Former Miss India Tripura Rinky Chakma passes away at 28

AGARTALA

Rinky Chakma, the winner of Miss India Tripura 2017, has passed away at the age of 28 after battling cancer for the past two years.

Initially diagnosed with a malignant Phyllodes Tumor (breast cancer) in 2022, Rinky underwent surgery to combat the disease.

Despite her courageous fight, the cancer spread to her lungs and eventually to her brain, resulting in a brain tumour.

Despite undergoing chemotherapy, her health declined, as reported by Femina.

According to recent news, Rinky Chakma was in critical condition and was admitted to Max Hospital Saket on February 22.

She required ventilator support in the ICU due to the severe impairment of one of her lungs.

Last month, the former Miss India Tripura took to Instagram to seek financial assistance for her treatment.

In her heartfelt post, she shared her cancer journey and expressed her initial hesitance in sharing her health struggles on social media.

Rinky Chakma's victory in the Miss India Tripura pageant in 2017 brought her recognition and accolades.

As a Miss India finalist, she also won two sub-titles, Miss Congeniality and Beauty With a Purpose.

It's worth noting that in the same year, Manushi Chhillar won both the Miss World pageant and the Miss India World pageant.

WHO SAID WHAT

This was the guarantee of Congress which was fulfilled. Modi ji made two big promises to the farmers -- first, cost+50 per cent of MSP and second, to double the income of farmers by 2022. Both 'Modi's guarantees' turned out to be fake, and the condition of farmers became worse,"

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE
CONGRESS PRESIDENT



Northeast to Power The Growth Engine of New India with 'Made In Assam' Microchip": Sonowal



NEW DELHI

The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush, Sarbananda Sonowal expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the Union Cabinet decided to bestow one of the three semi-conductor units to Assam with an investment of ₹27,000 crores. Terming this as a wonderful opportunity for the people of Assam and

the Northeast, Sarbananda Sonowal said that this historic decision is a testament of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to the development and prosperity of Assam and the Northeast. The cabinet meeting, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, was also attended by Sarbananda Sonowal.

Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal said, "Under the dynamic leader-

ship of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the economic proposition of the Northeast and Assam has received a tremendous boost with multiple initiatives. To set up the critical Semiconductor plant in Morigaon in Assam is a giant leap for the region towards becoming Atmanirbhar and contributes strongly to setting the foundation of Viksit Bharat. Thanks to Modi ji's untiring effort, the Northeast is going to power the growth engine of new India with an indigenous 'Made In Assam' microchip. This is an extremely proud moment for the people of the state, but also a wonderful opportunity to become active patrons of India's growth story, thanks to the undiminished, unflinching and unputdownable focus, love and energy for the Northeast from Narendra

Modi ji."

The Semiconductor ATMP unit will be set up by Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test Pvt Ltd in Morigaon in Assam. The project cost is pegged at ₹27,000 crores with 48 million chips produced daily.

TSAT Semiconductor is developing indigenous advanced semiconductor packaging technologies including flip chip and ISIP (integrated system in package) technologies. The chips produced in this plant will cater to multiple industries like Automotive, Electric Vehicles, consumer electronics, telecom, mobile phones etc. The government will spend a total of ₹1,26,000 crores to set up three semiconductor units. The other two units will come up in Dholera & Sanand in Gujarat.

Manipur governor highlights progress in 'War on Drugs 2.0' during assembly address

IMPHAL

Manipur governor Anusuiya Uikei announced significant progress in the government's renewed efforts against drug trafficking, dubbed "War on Drugs 2.0", during her address in the Manipur assembly session on Wednesday (February 28).

In her 1 hour 17 minutes speech, the Manipur governor reported that the intensified campaign had resulted in the arrests of 333 individuals after registering 288 cases.

She detailed the seizure of substantial quantities of illicit substances, including 72.9 kg of Heroin, 147.1 kg of

Opium, 195.2 kg of Ganja, 111.3 kg of Brown Sugar, 155.3 kg of WY tablets, and 33.3 kg of Pseudoephedrine tablets, among others.

Under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985, a total of 288 cases were filed, leading to the apprehension of 333 suspects in 2023.

KRCTIMES

STAY-ENRICHED

OBITUARY | BASANTI KAR

END OF AN ERA SHE LOVED ALL, ALL LOVED HER

BISWADEEP
GUPTA

Everyone's beloved and highly respected Basanti Kar passed away for the heavenly abode on 18th February 2024. She was 97 and left behind a host of mourning relatives and friends. Popularly known as Basantidi to her numerous admirers, she was very dear to all for her charming and multi-faceted personality. She was an educationist and a literary personality, having started her teaching assignment at the Girls' Higher Secondary School, Shillongpatty, Silchar in the fifties and then moving over to Government Girls' Higher Secondary, Dharmanagar in 1967.

After her retirement, she moved over to Nabadarsha, Kolkata permanently and devoted herself to a host of literary, social, and spiritual activities till her last breath. "For me as her nephew, I was loved selflessly by her and everybody says that I was her concern all along till the last. For me painful as it is now as there is a huge vacuum in my life, I had a unique experience during the invitation to the Nabadarsho society. At each house, we went for the Shradh invitation we just could not come out without the resident narrating their experience of her treatment, particularly regarding food. No one could go back without some food. She always liked to treat people to her delicacies even at a later age she was unable to do it herself but under her agile supervision, the help had to go through a rigorous ritual. Strangely her assistants have cried more than us over her demise. All loved her as she loved all. As she was a very dominating lady all her brothers, sisters, and nephews were very afraid of her and never deviated from any command. Any wish of hers was a command for them. Looking back I sometimes think that they were afraid of her more than God. With me, it was a different game. I was never under her control and I would tell her, Mashi it is either 'my way or highway'.

She used to be irritated but would budge at last as my concerns were different. Sometimes I think I blackmailed her emotionally so that when everyone failed to reason with her, I was the last call. "She always talked about crossing 100 years and we all deeply believed she would. She was perfectly fine. For me she has gone on her wish, choosing her own time and date. For me, she has done 'Deho tyag'.

Let the thought remain for another day but a very dynamic lady we lost and it will take ages to know anyone like her, maybe not in my lifetime. "Basanti Kar will live in our hearts forever. We pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul. OM SHANTI.



INVEST IN NORTH EAST - THE NEXT UNICORN OF INDIA

G. KISHAN REDDY

Investment gurus across the world often agree on one point, the success of an investment decision is not contingent on whether you are beating about the market but on the ability to read the signs and know that a boom is imminent.

India's North East is that very imminent boom. Unparalleled natural potential, geo-strategic advantage, coupled with rapidly developing infrastructure, connectivity, and unflinching political will, India's North East would soon be catapulted as one of the leading destinations for the domestic and global investors.

India's North East is a rapidly growing market and holds the potential to lead in sectors as diverse as Agriculture, and organic horticulture to IT/ITES/BPO sector, tourism or renewable energy, the list is enormous. Richness in natural resources, cultural heritage, strategic location, open up umpteen opportunities and make it a promising destination for investors. This magnificence of the region had for decades fallen into obscurity, owing to brazen neglect and disregard for the vast potential of North East India. The last 10 years however have proved to be defining moments and India's North East is set to rewrite its course ahead.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi turned the tables and massive infrastructure and connectivity boost is giving the region a remarkable makeover. From providing air connectivity for the first time to States like Arunachal Pradesh (from none in 2014 to having at least 4 airstrips and latest being the Donyi Polo Airport inaugurated in 2022) to providing rail connectivity to all the State capitals and converting all rail tracks into broad gauge and at the same time strengthening inland waterways, connectivity in N.E.R has risen on a monumental scale, and this indeed, is just the beginning. Several old rail links with Bangladesh have been revived, connectivity projects like Agartala-Akhaura rail link, Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project, India Myanmar Thailand Trilateral Highway have opened up opportunities for rejuvenating historical international trade links of North East India with South East Asia.

With assured peace and political stability, underpinning the grand vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister, North East Region now ticks all the boxes for a prospective investor.

A place known for its ethereal charm and enchanting cultural mosaic, North East Region is a traveler's paradise. Undoubtedly, the tourism sector is set to benefit immensely from the increased connectivity and peace reinstated. The region's diverse culture,



stunning landscapes, and rich biodiversity open numerous investment opportunities in the tourism sector such as promotion of village tourism, homestays, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, wellness tourism, luxury accommodation including boutique hotels, 5 Star hotels & Resorts. Moreover, a large pool of highly educated youths with a natural flair and soft skills for hospitality sector is a huge added advantage.

To showcase this tourism potential, 11 G20 meetings were held in all the 8 North Eastern States. This will not only bring forth the pure potential of the region to the global leaders and policymakers, but also catapult the destination as a well established MICE Tourism Destination, attracting domestic and international business travels in the coming days.

The region is home to a diverse range of natural resources, including oil, natural gas, coal, limestone, and vastness of forests. The region's abundant natural resources have the potential to drive significant investments in the energy, mining, and manufacturing sectors.

For instance, the renewable energy potential in North Eastern Region (NER) is approximately 1,28,962 MW, against the currently installed capacity of 4,834.58 MW.

Government has sanctioned several high value projects such as the 2,000 MW Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Project, 600 MW Kameng Hydroelectric Project. Several initiatives have been launched to boost the sector, such as Green Energy Corridors project which has been launched to facilitate the integration of renewable energy into the national grid, Viability Gap Funding by MNRE for increasing solar rooftop capacities by 2700 MW, and providing special incentives and subsidies to North Eastern States to develop their capacities.

Agriculture and Horticulture is yet another sector that gives North East an edge in the global market.

Blessed with rich biodiversity, conducive agro climatic conditions, forest wealth, fruits and vegetables, flowers, herbs and aromatic plants, the region

also has a strategic location for exports. It is time to harness the potential in organic farming and transform the region into a commercial hub. Even presently, some agri-products of North East are high value export items, such as Pineapple, Assam Lemon, Orange, Kiwi, Bamboo shoots, Ginger, Turmeric, cardamom, Chillies, Black and Red Rice, honey etc.

Investment opportunities in pack houses, cold storages, processing units, packaging industry etc. would not only help scale the sector but also open up several employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

An Agri-Task Force was set up to fully realise the agriculture potential of the region. The report recommendations are currently under implementation in collaboration with Agriculture Ministry and State Governments.

Similarly, the NER has several traditional industries, including handicrafts, textiles, and food processing.

These industries have significant potential for growth and scale-up, particularly with the help of modern technology and value addition. Besides the traditional sectors, the North eastern States can stand out in respect of service exports. Further, the region has a growing urban population, which is driving demand for services such as healthcare, education, sports, hospitality, and entertainment. BPO and Information technology is yet another promising sector. Skill development is also a priority to enhance the region's attractiveness as an investment destination.

Potential is oozing from every corner of North east India and it is time we tap into it and translate its natural gift into prosperity and growth for the people of the region. For the last two years, the DoNER ministry has been working with the State governments towards policy harmonization and building investor friendly ecosystems, including investor facilitation, integrated single window system, creating land banks etc.

Several investment roads shows and round table conferences have also been held in the past years to engage with prospective investors and showcase the potential and opportunities in the region.

As the North East region blossoms with a decade of unprecedented development, the seeds of prosperity have been sown, inviting investors with the promise of a vibrant tomorrow.

With diligent groundwork underway, we stand poised to welcome the tide of investment that will soon surge forth, in a land ripe with opportunity and promise.

(The Author is Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region, Govt. of India)

Meghalaya police launches probe into HNLC extortion, GNLA regrouping

SHILLONG

Meghalaya police have launched a cyber-investigation into allegations of extortion perpetrated by the Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) via WhatsApp.

Concurrently, a senior police official has been deployed in Garo Hills in Meghalaya to address concerns surrounding the purported resurgence of the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA).

This was informed by Meghalaya director general of police (DGP) LR Bishnoi.

Meghalaya DGP LR Bishnoi, in response to media reports, stated to a Shillong-based news website on Thursday (February 29) that the cyber wing is actively examining claims of extortion notes circulating through WhatsApp among numerous residents in the state.

"The cyber wing has been tasked with investigating



the matter. We strongly urge the public to promptly report any such demands to the police," Meghalaya DGP LR Bishnoi stated.

Local media reports indicate that some individuals have complied with demands communicated via the instant messaging service app.

In January, citing the government's alleged failure to address their core demands, the proscribed outfit with-

drew from the tripartite peace talks with the Centre and Meghalaya government.

The HNLC's withdrawal from the peace negotiations raised concerns about the prospects of reconciliation, prompting requests from both the government and the opposition to revive peace talks.

Regarding the resurgence of the GNLA, Meghalaya DGP LR Bishnoi mentioned that the Meghalaya

Inspector General (IG) for Law and Order is stationed in Garo Hills to assess the situation and engage with local stakeholders.

"Though statements are circulating on social media, verification is essential, and we are actively investigating the matter," asserted the Meghalaya DGP, seeking public cooperation.

Earlier on February 23, Meghalaya deputy chief minister Prestone Tynsong affirmed the state's commitment to preventing the reformation of the militant GNLA.

"The police are vigilant, and they will thwart any attempt at regrouping. We are prepared to counter such activities," Meghalaya deputy chief minister Tynsong assured.

Authorities in Meghalaya have launched an investigation following the circulation of a press release on social media regarding the alleged resurgence of the GNLA.

Concern over KAAC's holdup in eviction procedure

SUSHANTA ROY

DIPHU : Youth leader Litsong Rongphar and other youth activists have expressed concern over delay in carrying out eviction procedures in Village Grazing Reserves and Professional Grazing Reserves of Karbi Anglong West Karbi Anglong district by Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council authority. "Litsong Rongphar mentioned that Chief Minister of Assam and Hill Areas Development Minister has pledged their support in this issue but the holdup of the council authority is perturbing. He addressed the media at Arboretum Craft Centre of Diphu on February 26.

Expressing his apprehension over the council's sincerity in this issue he informed that the families to be evicted have not received any notice yet. Cautioning the authority he said that stillness of the agitate groups does not denote the conclusion of the protest, and if they are compelled to start again the council authority be responsible for any unpleasant occurrence.

Meanwhile the regional political party Autonomous State Demand Committee, Karbi Students Association and its other wings held a joint demonstration demanding immediate implementation of article 244(A) of the Indian constitution for formation of an autonomous state encompassing Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao autonomous district on Monday.

The Autonomous State Demand Committee and its allies have demanded non implementation of CAA and Uniform Civil Code in Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao autonomous region of Assam.

Arunachal Pradesh govt hosts inaugural state folk music & dance fest

ITANAGAR

The Arunachal Pradesh government marked a significant cultural milestone with the inauguration of the first-ever State Folk Music and Dance Festival on Wednesday (February 28) in Namsai.

The event underscores the Arunachal Pradesh government's ongoing commitment to preserving and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the state.

The festival provides

a captivating platform for local artists and performers of indigenous folk songs and dances to exhibit their talents while showcasing the diverse cultural treasures of the region.

In his address at the festival, Arunachal Pradesh deputy chief minister Chowna Mein emphasized the festival's role as a catalyst for safeguarding and promoting indigenous knowledge.

He highlighted its significant contribution to preserv-

ing the state's unique cultural heritage on a global scale.

With Arunachal Pradesh being home to 26 major tribes and over 100 sub-tribes, each with its own distinctive folk songs, lores, and dances, the festival serves as a testament to the rich tapestry of intangible cultural heritage passed down through generations.

Recognizing the pivotal role of arts and cultural industries in economic development and national

identity, Mein urged individual artists to actively engage in preserving Arunachal Pradesh's cultural legacy.

He stressed that their involvement would not only attract tourists but also create livelihood opportunities in the cultural and entertainment sector of the state.

Mein also lauded the leaders of various Traditional Authorities for their efforts in preserving cultural values and heritage in Arunachal Pradesh.

INDI alliance is 'headless alliance': Assam deputy speaker Numal Mominzoo

GUWAHATI

Hitting out at the Congress and INDI alliance, Deputy Speaker of Assam Legislative Assembly, Dr Numal Momin, called the INDIA bloc a "headless alliance."

"INDI alliance is a headless alliance. There is no unity among the political parties who made this INDI alliance. Somebody wants to become Prime Minister from the INDI alliance and some other partners they named some other people. So that's why the great leader like Nitish Kumar left INDI alliance. When the time will come for election and declaration of tickets, every coalition partner of INDI alliance will fight each other and the INDI alliance will be broken," Dr Momin told ANI on Wednesday.

"These are the parties without

ideology, without any vision, they are not in favour of working for the poor. Only they can say that Garibi Hatao, Desh Bachao and they (Congress) ruled for 65 years, but they could not able to Garibi Hatao," he said.

Assam deputy speaker further said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is busy with Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, but party leader of the grand old party of the states have started 'Congress Todo Yatra.'

He also said that after Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, one thing it is very prominent that he made Bharat Jodo Yatra, but the states started Congress Todo Yatra.

"Whole Congress leaders have started leaving Congress and they are having faith on our dynamic leadership of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi. So many people are coming from Congress to BJP only because of dynamic leadership of PM Modi. In Assam also so many Congress leaders joined to BJP. Still today, Ex-MLAs are coming and meeting our leadership and expressed their faith of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma. Many more Congress leaders will come to BJP," Numal Momin told .

Earlier this month, Congress MLA Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha extended his support to the Assam government along with another Congress MLA Basanta Das, resigned from the post of Working President of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect.

He further said that, "this is

the classical example of Congress Todo, because it was a dream of Mahatma Gandhi." "In 1947 when the country got independent, at that time Mahatma Gandhi proposed that, we got independent this Congress is no more required, this political party will be disbanded and we want election so that a new political party should form. Now the grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru is fulfilling the dream of Mahatma Gandhi."

Momin said. He also said that, the poverty was there, but when Modi came into power in 2014 and he tried for the antyodaya, raising the poor people to the streamline, helping people.

"Houses have been given to the poor people. 80 crore people of the nation are now getting free rice.

TMC strongman Shajahan arrested, sent to 10-day police custody by court

BASIRHAT (WB)

Absconding TMC strongman Shajahan Sheikh, the main accused of sexual abuse and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali, was arrested in the early hours of Thursday after being on the run for 55 days that witnessed violent protests led by local women and a fierce political slugfest.

Additional Director-General of Police (South Bengal) Supratim Sarkar said Sheikh was arrested from a house in Bamanpukur in Minakhan police station area, around 30 km away from the island of Sandeshkhali on the outskirts of Sunderbans, in North 24 Parganas district.

Sheikh was hiding in the house along with a few associates, police said. After the arrest, he was taken to the Basirhat court, which sent him

to 10 days in police custody. Sheikh, who has been at the centre of a massive political firestorm, came out of the lock-up around 10.40 am dressed in white kurta-pajama, and walked to the courtroom with policemen behind him. He also made a gesture with his hand at the media contingent waiting there. After the hearing, which lasted for barely two minutes, he returned to the lock-up. Later, police whisked him away to an undisclosed destination.

Sheikh was taken into custody within 24 hours of the Calcutta High Court stating that the CBI, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) or the West Bengal Police can arrest him.

Governor CV Ananda Bose, who had on Monday night given a 72-hour "deadline" to the state government for Sheikh's arrest, said, "There is always light at the end of the tunnel.

I welcome it." "This is the beginning of an end. We have to put an end to the cycle of violence in Bengal. In parts of Bengal, the goons are ruling the roost. This must end and the gangsters should be put behind bars," he said.

The Trinamool Congress said the arrest was possible as the court cleared the decks, while the BJP dubbed it as "scripted". "Due to a legal tangle, he couldn't be arrested initially. However, after the court clarified that there was no stay on his arrest, the West Bengal Police did its job. The opposition had earlier exploited the embargo on his arrest," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh told. "We had said he would be arrested in seven days as we were confident of the ability of the state police," he added. The opposition BJP claimed the state police were forced to arrest Sheikh

because of its agitations. "It was the TMC and the state police which were shielding the culprit. He has been arrested now as a part of a well-scripted story. The state administration was forced to arrest him because of the continuous agitation led by us," BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar said. Police said Sheikh was arrested in the two cases lodged at the Nazat police station in connection with an assault on Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers on January 5 during a raid at his house in a ration scam case. He was booked under IPC sections 147 (guilty of rioting), 148 (guilty of rioting being armed with a deadly weapon), 149 (unlawful assembly), 307 (attempt to murder), 333 (whoever voluntarily causes grievous hurt to any person being a public servant) and 392 (robbery), they said.

People infused with fresh energy by Modi guarantee: Yogi

LUCKNOW

Day after the ruling BJP won 8 of the 10 Rajya Sabha seats in the state, in a major shot in the arm for the NDA ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said 'Modi guarantee' has infused the people with fresh energy and zeal.

Weighing in on the BJP scoring "100% in the Rajya Sabha elections", CM Adityanath invoked the opening of the Ram Mandir in Ayidhya on December 22, last year, saying that the grand 'Pran Pratishtha' of Ram Lalla was a 'historic' event.

"The devotees from all across the world are coming to have darshan (sighting) of Ram Lalla," he added.

Saying the BJP will continue to be in the service of the people if elected for a third straight term at the Centre, CM Adityanath said, "People are paramount in a democracy. We consider the people are our Janardan (God) and are committed to their service and welfare."

He said an aspect that makes the BJP stand out among all other parties in the country is that it takes the suggestions and advice of the people to heart.

"We are the biggest party in the world. The BJP has several wings, cells, and a system in place. But what makes us stand out from others is that we take the suggestions and advice of the people to heart," the CM added. Affirming that the prevailing political headwinds and public pulse were favourable for the return of the BJP-led NDA for a third straight term at the helm, he added, "We have made great strides on all fronts over the last 10 years under the leadership of PM Modi. Nobody stands a chance against us."

More than 16 lakh cases of duplication of voters in West Bengal, claims Suvendu

KOLKATA

West Bengal Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari submitted a list of 16,91,132 cases from all the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state, where documents of voters showed discrepancies and evidence of double entry, to the CEO of the District Election Commission.

"We are submitting the documents and facts of false voters to the District Election Commission CEO from 42 Lok Sabha constituencies. This sums up to 16,91,132 voters. This has resulted primarily due to double entry cases," Adhikari said as he presented the elaborate list along with all the facts to the CEO.

The Leader of Opposition was part of a six-member Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) delegation who had come to the District Election Commission in Kolkata on Wednesday.

Speaking about the reason behind this duplicacy in names of the voters, Adhikari said that this would enable

one voter to vote twice in different constituencies. "The reason for this is to enable a voter to vote in one booth in the morning, apply chemical and remove the indelible ink and vote again. It can also work even if the ink is not removed because the likes of Shahjahan are present in the Trinamool Congress everywhere," Adhikari said.

The Leader of Opposition said that the BJP has been able to catch hold of this theft of votes by the Trinamool Congress and added that even if voting is held in different phases this duplication of votes is still rampant.

"We want the election to be held in 42 phases for 42 constituencies. But we have seen that even if voting is held in different phases, if someone for example votes in Jhargham, the same voter comes to Tamluk and votes in some other phase. This mechanism has been set up by Mamata Banerjee. We have caught this theft," the senior BJP leader said.

Adhikari said that protesters in

Sandeshkhali have claimed that they have not voted since the time Mamata Banerjee came to power.

"In West Bengal, there is not democracy left. In the Panchayat elections, one crore people were not allowed to vote. In Sandeshkhali everyone is saying that they have not voted since Mamata Banerjee came to power," he said.

Giving details of the number of cases of duplicate voters, Adhikari said, "In the document which we have submitted, there are 16,79,645 cases in which the name, father's name and the age of the voters are same; 11,487 cases in which EPIC is same." decisive mandate of 134 seats in the 224-member Assembly.

Five candidates were in the fray for the four seats in the elections, which were marred by cross-voting. The BJP suffered a setback when one of its MLAs — S T Somashekar — voted for Maken, the other — Shivaram Hebbar — abstained.

MHA bans both factions of Muslim Conference J-K for 5 years

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Wednesday declared the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Sumji faction) and Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Bhat faction) as unlawful associations for the next five years.

The move comes after the MHA found that these outfits have been engaging in activities against the sovereignty and integrity of the nation.

The MHA made the declaration through two separate notifications, banning the two outfits with im-

mediate effect by exercising the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (3) of section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967. As per the notification, the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Sumji faction), chaired by Ghulam Nabi Sumji, is known for its anti-India and pro-Pakistan propaganda.

It also mentioned that the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Bhat faction), or MCJK-S, chaired by Abdul Ghani Bhat, has been indulging in unlawful activities that are prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty, and security of the country.



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Walmart launches Center for Tech Excellence at IIT Madras

Walmart Global Tech (WGT) has partnered with Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) to establish the Walmart Center for Tech Excellence dedicated to empowering Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the manufacturing and retail sectors. The center will work towards developing cutting-edge solutions that will help MSMEs adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) along with digitization to drive operational efficiency and profitability.

This partnership is another step ahead in Walmart's commitment to equip local entrepreneurs with tools to augment their businesses and promote sustained growth for the Indian MSME sector. The center will work towards building an open-sourced, domain-agnostic platform that will develop engineering analytics solutions, making them widely accessible. Additionally, the center will build a repository of case studies to accelerate AI adoption in the manufacturing and retail industries. These case studies will also be leveraged to deliver skilling programs focused on the basics of AI and its application in the sectors.

Walmart Center for Tech Excellence was launched at an inaugural event in the presence of Suresh Kumar, Global Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and Chief Development Officer (CDO), Walmart Inc., Balu Chaturvedula,



SVP & Country Head, Walmart Global Tech and Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, Prof. Raghunathan Rengaswamy, Dean (Global Engagement), IIT Madras and Prof. Mahesh Panchagnula, Dean (Alumni and Corporate Relations), IIT Madras. Key leaders from Walmart and senior faculty members of IITM were also present at the event. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Suresh Kumar, Global CTO and CDO, Walmart Inc. said, "As a people-led, tech-powered organization, we believe in using technology to serve people and not the other way round. The Walmart Center for Tech Excellence reiterates our commitment to communities and purpose to help people live better. As an IITM alumnus, I am especially proud of our ongoing

partnership. I'm both excited and confident about the potential of our center to drive innovation in AI and make a positive impact in the MSME community in India."

Addressing the launch event, Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras said, "The growth of MSMEs is very crucial for economic prosperity. IIT Madras has initiated many projects in this direction including the one that helps MSMEs in reducing energy consumption. The research carried out through the Walmart Center will be of immense value to the MSMEs."

Sharing his thoughts at the inauguration, Balu Chaturvedula, SVP & Country Head, Walmart Global Tech said, "Walmart has a long history of improving the communities that we serve. Today, this value extends from the physical to the digital worlds. We believe in building long-lasting relationships with the academia to help our communities thrive and live better. Our collaboration with IIT Madras is a testament to this commitment. It's a proud moment to witness the launch of the Walmart Center for

Tech Excellence and its vision to deliver value through technology for the MSME community in India."

Outlining the vision of the Center, its Principal Investigator, Prof. Raghunathan Rengaswamy, Dean (Global Engagement), IIT Madras said, "Through this Center, we hope to support MSMEs with cutting-edge technologies in AI and IoT, provide a domain-agnostic solution platform for AI/ML implementations and upskill the manpower to be able to leverage these technologies to be globally competitive." Speaking about the partnership with Walmart Global Tech, Prof. Mahesh Panchagnula, Dean (Alumni and Corporate Relations), IIT Madras said, "With Artificial Intelligence impacting every walk of life, there is an urgent need to improve and empower MSME processes and operations through AI. The Walmart Center for Tech Excellence is perfectly positioned to democratize access to AI. We are grateful to Mr. Suresh Kumar, Global CTO and CDO, Walmart Inc. and a Distinguished Alumnus of IIT Madras for gracing the occasion of this launch."

Om Shanti



Lt. Basanti Kar
(19 Feb 1928 ~ 18 Feb 2024)

SHRADHA CEREMONY
01 MARCH 2024 (FRIDAY)
MACH SPORHO
05 MARCH 2024 (TUESDAY)

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*Your presence and prayers solicited
for the departed soul*

Smt. Simantasri Gupta (Sister)
& family members

G-13, Nabadarsho Housing Co-operative
Society, P.O. Nilachal, Kolkata, WB.
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