

Tamil Nadu: Madras High Court trashes activist's plea for President's rule in state

Agency
Chennai Aug 19,

Rejecting activist "Traffic" Ramaswamy's plea seeking President's rule in Tamil Nadu, the Madras High Court observed there are no serious instances of any unwarranted situation to impose emergency, much less a state emergency.

"On perusal of the petition, we feel that it has been filed only for publicity, not for anything else," the First Bench comprising the then Acting Chief Justice Hlulivadi G Ramesh and Justice S S Sundar said.

The judges said, "We are not agreeing with the contention of the petitioner that a law and order situation has arisen from imposing emergency."

Ramaswamy submitted that he wanted the court to direct Rashtrapati Bhavan to consider his July 18 representation to the Tamil Nadu Governor to recommend to the President Ram Nath Kovind to invoke section 356 (1) (a) of the Constitution and to take charge of the home department of Tamil Nadu, including the state intelligence machinery.

According to the petitioner, the groundwater in Tuticorin district has been polluted due to Sterlite and the subsequent violence resulted in the death of 13 people.

This apart, there were 'gross violations' in hoisting digital and flex banners, in acquisition of land for constructing the eight-lane highway to Salem from Chennai, crime against children and allegations against police officials, the petitioner said and wanted the Governor to recommend President's rule in the state.

Days after dismissal by Biplab, Tripura minister backs NRC

Agency
Tripura Aug 19,

Tripura Tribal Welfare Minister Mevar Kumar Jamatia Saturday reiterated support for revision of the National Register of Citizens in Tripura, and said that he was hopeful that his party, the IPFT, would make the demand soon. Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb had recently rubbished the need for NRC revision in Tripura, saying there was no such public demand.

Speaking to reporters at Prajna Bhavan here, Jamatia, who is also general secretary of ruling ally Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT), reiterated support for NRC revision, saying he hoped his party would make the demand soon. IPFT, which formed the state government with the BJP after

the February 18 Assembly elections, had earlier demanded NRC revision in Tripura citing identity crisis of indigenous communities. "We were always demanding NRC in our state... other states are demanding NRC revision and hopefully our party will also demand NRC (revision) in Tripura," Jamatia said. He added that talks on revising it were going on at the central level. "I have seen a lot of statements given by our Prime Minister, even BJP president Amit Shah. I think this is a burning issue," the minister said. On August 9, CM Deb had rubbished the need for NRC revision in Tripura, saying there was no such public demand. He also said he was unaware of such demands made by IPFT. Meanwhile, Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura (INPT), a Tripura-based

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regional party, has also demanded NRC revision. A three-member delegation of the party led by its president and rebel-turned politician Bijoy Kumar Hrangkhawl is slated to visit New Delhi and submit a memorandum on the issue, INPT general secretary Jagadish Debbarma said. "We will go to Delhi on August 28 and submit a memorandum for NRC in Tripura to the Registrar General of Citizen Register, the PMO, Home Minister and others by the end of this month," he said. He added his party would discuss possibilities of filing a petition in the Supreme Court.

Assam school principal arrested for not hoisting Tricolour on I-Day

Guwahati
Aug 19, 2018

A 34-year-old school principal in Assam's Morigaon district was arrested for not hoisting the national flag in his school on August 15, the police said on Saturday. Father James Xavier, principal of St Eugene English School in Bhurbanda locality of the district, was arrested on Thursday, a day after the incident, and subsequently released on bail. Morigaon Deputy Superintendent of Police Mrinmoy Goswami confirmed the arrest. "The principal said that the national flag was not

hoisted at the school by mistake. We are probing into the matter," he said.

A police officer leading the investigation into the case said that the accused has been booked for "disrespecting the national flag" as mentioned in the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act. The officer added the accused will be again interrogated in the coming days.

In Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, a school run by Christian missionaries was allegedly "forced" to hoist the Tricolour on Thursday by parents and a group of

Morigaon Deputy Superintendent of Police Mrinmoy Goswami confirmed the arrest. "The principal said that the national flag was not hoisted at the school by mistake. We are probing into the matter," he said.

Hindutva activists. The school officials had claimed that they did not call students for the flag hoisting ceremony on August 15 as rain was forecast for the day and the ground was soggy.

AAPSU starts policing against ILP violators, more than 100 sent out of state

Agency
Itanagar, Aug 19,

The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) has launched its statewide 'Operation Clean Drive' against illegal immigrants and non-Arunachalees without inner line permits (ILP). On Friday afternoon, several members of the AAPSU with identity tags were seen checking every passing vehicle on the capital's highway near the Raj Bhavan tri-junction. There was no police presence as the students went about their checking. It appeared that the state government had temporarily handed over its job to the AAPSU. However, later in the afternoon, the police were seen checking ILPs as the students stood by.

In Naharlagun, announcements were being made, asking those without papers to leave the state. The AAPSU claimed that with the help of the police, more than 1000 ILP violators were "driven out" from the capital complex on Friday. However, the police contradicted the union's claim. Capital SPM Harsha Vardhan



said 134 people were caught without ILP in the capital on Friday. He said all of them were sent out of the state after following due legal process. Vardhan also cautioned that any attempt to take the law into one's hands would be dealt with strictly, even as the AAPSU said it would continue with its drive on Saturday. A driver who was stopped by the students said he already had his ILP ready with him as he was warned about the drive by his employers. "It feels strange to be stopped and checked like this by students," he said, smiling. "With NRC not yet finalized, Arunachal is going to be an unpleasant place to

stay," he added. A government employee who was on a hospital run said he was stopped by students who asked for his ILP. "I don't have an ILP. They let me go after I showed them the identity issued by the government of Arunachal, but with a warning that I should get an ILP made. It is quite hurtful, but I will make an ILP," he said. The AAPSU announced its Operation Clean Drive following the publication of the NRC in Assam on 30 July, and asked all illegal immigrants to leave the state. The union also warned Indians who do not have ILPs to obtain it within 15 days or face deportation.

Nagaland Governor, CM extend flood relief to Kerala; check details here to donate

Agency
Kohima, Aug 19,

On behalf of the Government of Nagaland, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has announced Rs. 1 crore flood relief for Kerala which has been suffering owing to massive floods in which 357 lives have been claimed so far. Kerala has been hit by what is now deemed the worst floods in a century with at least 310,000 people displaced. Rio has appealed to the citizens of Nagaland to extend assistance in any way they can - either by contributing towards the relief fund or by praying for



the people of Kerala. The Governor of Nagaland, PB Acharya, has also donated Rs 2 lakh towards the Kerala Chief Minister's relief fund in aid of the people suffering towards the relief fund or by praying for

fund can be made directly through Account Number 37319948232, Bank- State Bank of India, Branch- City B r a n c h Thiruvananthapuram, IFS Code- SBIN0070028, and Name of Donee: CMDRF.

West Bengal: Ahead of Lok Sabha polls, Cong, CPI(M) keen to assess ground situation

Agency
Kolkata, Aug 19,

Out of the 42 Lok Sabha seats, the Trinamool Congress currently has 34, the BJP has two, the Congress has four seats, and the CPI(M) has two. (Representational) With an eye on the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the CPI(M) and the Congress, witnessing steady erosion in their support base, have initiated an assessment of the ground-level situation in the state. Facing a tough time in the state due to the "reign of terror and poaching of party leaders by the ruling TMC" and the BJP's emergence as the main opposition, the CPI(M) and the Congress hope that such an assessment would help them have a better understanding about their "ability to win", and the strength and weaknesses in all 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal. In the recent panchayat polls and all the by-elections since the 2016 Assembly polls, Mamata Banerjee's TMC has emerged as the clear winner, but the BJP had piped the Congress and the CPI(M) to become the main opposition in the state. CPI(M) politburo member Hannah Mollah said all the state units, including West Bengal, have been asked

to submit their organisational ground report at the next central committee meet, following which a discussion would take place regarding the state-wise political strategy. "All the state units have been asked to submit their organisational ground report, which also includes the seat-wise position. Then, we will discuss about preparing our strategy," Mollah told PTI. According to a senior CPI(M) state committee leader, a meeting has been convened later this month to discuss various modalities, including the party's ability to win seats on its own, and prospects of an adjustment with the Congress in the Lok Sabha polls. "Let us accept the fact that the situation in Bengal is not very conducive for us. We have to see which seats can be won if there is an adjustment with the Congress. After we discuss it, we will send the report to the central committee," he told PTI on condition of anonymity. "We hope the situation will change, as people are fed up with the BJP government at the Centre and the TMC government in the state. By a separate assessment of each and every Lok Sabha seat in the state, he said. Out of the 42 Lok Sabha seats, the Trinamool Congress currently has 34, the

BJP has two, the Congress has four seats, and the CPI(M) has two. In the 2009 general elections, the TMC had won 19 seats, the Congress six, the BJP one and the Left Front 15. Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, "Our target is to retain the four seats that we currently have and increase the tally". According to state Congress general secretary Omprakash Mishra, who has been a strong advocate of a Congress-CPI(M) alliance in West Bengal, if both the parties fight as a political front, then it is in a "comfortable position to win majority" of the seats. Mishra said a Congress victory in the upcoming Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh state elections would generate a strong wave in favour of it in Bengal as well. "If the Congress wins the elections in those three states, then the next Lok Sabha polls will be divided clearly between a Congress-led front and a BJP-led front. And in Bengal, both the Congress and CPI(M) would benefit out of it," he told PTI. A report prepared by Mishra, on behalf of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee (WBPPCC), was sent to the central leadership last month, recommending joining hands with the

Communist Party of India (Marxist) for the parliamentary election. However, a section of Congress MPs and MLAs feel that aligning with the TMC would be the best way to win maximum number of seats in 2019. According to Congress sources, the party is keen on fighting it alone or as an alliance partner with the CPI(M), as TMC supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has clearly said her party wants to contest the next Lok Sabha polls alone, and win all the 42 seats in the state. Earlier, she had said that in case of an all India anti-BJP opposition front, the party which is the most powerful against the BJP in a particular state should be allowed to fight the polls against the saffron brigade with the formula of 1:1. "Which means in Bengal, she will fight alone against the BJP... Her theory of 1:1 is completely absurd and unrealistic," said a senior state Congress leader. "Banerjee said at a recent rally that her party will fight alone, which means she is not keen on having an alliance. So, in that case, either we have to fight alone or in an alliance with the Left," he said. The TMC has given a call to win all the 42 seats in the state, whereas the BJP has set a target of winning at least 22 seats in Bengal.

Kerala floods Aid flows from Punjab, Himachal and Haryana

Agency
Ludhiana Aug 19,

Stepping up its efforts to help people in flood-ravaged Kerala, the Punjab government Saturday dispatched one lakh food packets from Ludhiana. A team of Sikh volunteers from Khalsa Aid also landed in Kochi (district Ernakulam) and started serving meals (langar) to displaced people. The volunteers have adopted a relief camp where meals are being served to 3,000 people.

Pardeep Aggarwal, deputy commissioner, Ludhiana, said, "A team of our senior officers led by IAS Basant Garg are going to Kerala. We have coordinated with Kerala government and choppers to transport relief material have been provided by the Indian Air Force (IAF). Choppers will take off from Halwara air force station tonight and land at Trivandrum in Kerala. Currently, cartons are being loaded. Ludhiana received a target of dispatching one lakh packets under the relief announced by CM Captain

Amarinder Singh." Ludhiana MP Raveet Singh Bittu said, "It is the teachings of our Gurus that we have to follow principle of 'Vand chhak' and think about others before ourselves. Kerala is a part of our country and they are in dire need of help. Punjab is ready to send more material as per their requirement. CM has announced an aid of Rs 10 crore for Kerala including Rs 5 crore for relief material. The first lot has been dispatched today from Ludhiana."

Kerala floods Cong, MLAs, MPs in Punjab to donate a month's salary

Agency
Chandigarh Aug 19

A day after announcing Rs 10 crore in aid for flood-ravaged Kerala, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said Saturday that all Congress MPs and MLAs of Punjab would donate their one-month salary as additional financial assistance. A government statement said the decision follows a directive from AICC president Rahul Gandhi to all Congress

MPs and MLAs across the country to give away a month's salary each to help the flood-hit people of Kerala. Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) president Sunil Jakhar said party workers had been asked to ensure the money reached the Kerala authorities over the next two-three days. The decision to donate a month's salary comes a day after the CM announced Rs 10 crore in aid for the flood-ravaged state. While Rs 5 crore has

been transferred to the Kerala CM's Relief Fund, the remaining is being sent in the form of ready-to-eat food and other essential supplies, said the statement. A total of 40,000 food packets weighing 40 MT were dispatched Saturday while another 60,000 packets was to be flown out from the Halwara airport Saturday night. Two more sorties have been scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, said the government statement