Meghalaya Police register case against Sanbor Shullai for misconduct inside polling station

Agency
Shillong, April 12,

The police has registered a case against BJP candidate from Shillong Parliamentary seat, Sanbor Shullai for misconduct inside a polling station.

"We have filed a case on the basis of the FIR filed by the Returning Officer and the Presiding Officer against the BJP candidate," special SP (CID), R Muthu told media persons here today.

He further informed that the FIR was filed under Section 132 of Representation of the People's Act, 1951 which relates to misconduct inside a polling station.

The senior police official said that if the person is found to be guilty, he can be sentenced to imprisonment for 3 months or a fine or both, adding that an offence punishable under this section shall be cognizable. Muthu said that the police is currently examining the matter.

Meanwhile, Chief Electoral Officer, FR Kharkongor said the Returning officer was asked by the Election Commission to ascertain the case which happened in a polling station in Shillong constituency.

According to him, the candidate was not supposed to give a press conference at the polling station. "We are not barring the candidate to speak to the media person. But he should adress the press within the 100 meter radius of the press conference," Kharkongor said.

Five schools served show cause notices for sending students to Rahul Gandhi's rally

Agency
Hailakandi, April 12,

The district election officer (DEO) of Hailakandi has issued show cause notices to five schools for violating the model code of conduct (MCC) by sending students to Congress president Abdul Gandhi's rally at Panchgram.

The rally was organised there on Tuesday.

The DEO, Keerthi Jalli, also asked the heads of the educational institutions as to why immediate action, including cancellation of certification and permission to run the schools, should not be initiated for violation of the MCC and Representation of People's Act, 1951.

The heads of Adarsha Vidyalaya, Panchgram Quomi Madrassa, Moulana Abdul Ali Memorial Jaliliya Madrassa, Oxford High School and Cambridge High School – all situated at Panchgram – were the ones to get the notices on Wednesday, an official release said.

Taking exception to the presence of a large number of students in uniform at the Congress rally at Intake Field in Panchgram, DC Jalli, in her notices to the schools said, "You have insulted your position as an educator, the noblest of professions."

The institutions have been given 24 hours to reply to the notices, failing which strict action will be initiated against them, the release said.

PM Modi's visit to Assam on polling day violates MCC: Gogoi

Agency
Guwahati, April 12,

Former Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi on Thursday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the state for campaigning on polling day is a violation of the model code of conduct (MCC). Gogoi said this at the DCB Girls High School polling station in Jorhat when he was there to cast his vote.

His son Gaurav Gogoi, a sitting MP, was accompanying him. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi soliciting votes in Assam today when the polling process is on, across five constituencies in the state, is a violation of the MCC," Gogoi said.

He was speaking to reporters as he stood in line to exercise his franchise for the Koliabor parliamentary constituency, which his son, Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress, represents.

"Modi could have campaigned tomorrow since no polling is scheduled for the day. Soliciting votes in the name of the martyrs of the Assam Agitation is also an indirect violation of the MCC. The martyrs are ours and not of the BJP," the former chief minister asserted.

Modi is scheduled to address two poll rallies in Assam on Thursday to campaign for the second phase of polling to be held on April 18.

Asked if the BJP was worried about its performance in the state, the veteran Congress leader said, "Yes, otherwise why will the prime minister come here repeatedly. Modi claims himself to be the 'chowkidar' of the country."

Continue From page 2

'It's all this loosey-goosey "culture" thing.'

Nearly two years later, Balakrishnan was taking a gap year to create a heart-monitoring product she invented, and she was in the running for $100,000 to develop it. She was applying to college to study computer science and, in her spare time, competing in a beauty pageant, inspired by Miss USA 2017, Kara McCullough, who was a nuclear scientist. "I realized that I could use pageantry as a platform to show more girls that they could embrace their femininity and be involved in a very technical, male-dominated field," she says. Dinesh, in her final year at high school, had started an all-female hackathon that now takes place annually in New York. ("The vibe was definitely very different," she says, more focused on training newcomers.)

Patapati and Dinesh enrolled at Stanford last fall to study computer science; both are interested deeply in A.I. They've noticed the subtle tensions for women in the coding classes. Patapati, who founded the Women of A.I. group with an Apple tech lead, has watched as male colleagues ignore her raised hand in group discussions or repeat something she just said as if it were their idea. "I think sometimes it's just a bias that people don't even recognize that they have," she says. "That's been really upsetting."

Dinesh says "there's absolutely a difference in confidence levels" between the male and female newcomers. The Stanford curriculum is so intense that even the relative veterans like her are scrambling: When we spoke recently, she had just spent "three all-nighters in a row" on a single project, for which students had to engineer a "print" command from scratch. At 18, she has few illusions about the road ahead. When she went to a blockchain conference, it was a sea of "middle-aged white and Asian men," she says. "I'm never going to one again," she adds with a laugh. "My dream is to work on autonomous driving at Tesla or Waymo or some company like that. Or if I see that there's something missing, maybe I'll start my own company." She has begun moving in that direction already, having met one venture capitalist via #BuiltByGirls. "So now I know I can start reaching out to her, and I can start reaching out to other people that she might know," she says.

Will she look around, 20 years from now, to see that software has returned to its roots, with women everywhere? "I'm not really sure what will happen," she admits. "But I do think it is absolutely on the upward climb.

(Concluded)

'Honest chowkidar or corrupt naamdaar, choice is yours': PM Modi in Maharashtra

Agency
New Delhi April 12,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday continued his spate of attacks on the Congress saying that the party is "not concerned" about protecting the interests of the nation. PM Modi said the people have given a new slogan, "remove Congress to remove poverty".

"In the past five years, the world has seen a strong and decisive government. Before that there was a remote-controlled government for ten years when news of scams was the order of the day," said PM Modi, who was addressing an election rally in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar.

PM Modi said, "Today, the world identifies the present government as a strong one. You are going to decide the furure course in the election. You have to decide what you want, an honest chowkidar or a corrupt naamdaar (a reference used by the prime minister for Congress president Rahul Gandhi). You have to decide if you will vote for the heroes of Hindustan or advocates of Pakistan."

In his election speech, the prime minister did not mention Balakot air strike by the Indian Air Force directly but made a veiled reference to it while targeting the Congress-led Opposition camp. He alleged that under the previous UPA government, permission was not given to the armed forces to attack terror camps across the Line of Control.

PM Modi also hit out at Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar, an influential leader in Maharashtra and former defence minister. Pawar's NCP was in alliance with the Congress in the UPA government. The two parties are contesting the Lok Sabha elections in alliance in Maharashtra.

The prime minister said the Congress and the NCP are supporting those parties advocating "separation of Jammu and Kashmri from India and having two prime ministers in the country".

Taking a jibe at Pawar, PM Modi said, "I have no hopes from the Congress but what has happened to Sharad Rao Pawar, who is from the land of legendary Chhatrapati Shivaji (a medieval ruler in Maharashtra)…You quit the Congress on the issue of nationalism. For how long will you maintain silence on the demand for two prime ministers in the country".

PM Modi said his government has taken decisive action to combat terrorism. He said, "Under Congress-NCP government, the nation only received pain. There were Mumbai terror attacks and Pune bomb blasts…You have seen the government of this chowkidar. Where have those bomb blasts gone?"

The prime minister said, "This chowkidar has created fear among the terrorists that a single misdeed by them will be accounted for…they will be taken out from the deepest hole."

Ahmednagar, the venue of PM Modi's election rally, will go to the polls on April 23 in the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections. Maharashtra sends a total of 48 MPs to the Lok Sabha. Polling for seven Lok Sabha seats of Maharashtra was held on Thursday. The state will vote in three more phases on April 18, April 23 and April 29 for the remaining 41 Lok Sabha seats. Votes will be counted on May 23.

Lok Sabha elections: People are eager for change, says Congress candidate for Pune, Joshi

Agency
New Delhi April 12,

Senior Congressman from the city and party candidate for Pune Lok Sabha elections interacted with Team Hindustan Times. Following are the edited excerpts from the interaction

There is a strong demand for change in Pune, right from the common man to the business community. People are fed up of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. While campaigning in the city, I am getting these reactions from the people. Residents are eager for change and I can sense it. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate is now tired and I have taken the lead in the first phase of poll campaign. The Bharatiya Janata Party government has done nothing in the last five years, Girish Bapat is the speed breaker in Pune's development. Pune is a non-capital, yet one of the fast-growing cities in the country city. So, my vision is to make Pune a high-tech city considering its growing young population.

Top four points on the agenda about Pune in your polling campaign.

My top focus is on the youth and students in our city, followed by safety of women, environment and traffic situation. All these are serious issues of Pune which needs to be addressed. Pune has become an international educational hub and students from across the globe come here to study. However, students from Pune after graduation want to go to any institute like Indian Institute of Management (IIM) or pursue postgraduate courses outside the city. Hence, more government institutions should be set up in the city as many students cannot afford the hefty fees of private institutions. Efforts should be made to create more employment avenues in the city.

While women work at par with men at workplace, their safety should be top priority. Steps should be taken to reduce the city's crime rate. Ineffective water management has left residents to face weekly water cuts. So, my effort will be to look at and improve every sector in Pune.

What the most serious issue facing Pune now?

Traffic problem is the main issue in the city and the BJP government has failed to address it. The solution is sustainable public transport. When I was a member of legislative assembly (MLA), I took up the 'Mission PMPML' initiative for one year. Today, as there is no good quality buses and poor service, people prefer to use personal vehicles.

A no-nonsense official like Tukaram Mundhe, who was serving as the chairman and managing director of Pune Municipal Transport Corporation Limited (PMPML), was transferred by the BJP government in short time. Route rationalisation, maintenance of buses and upgrade of depots are needed, which we will do after coming to power. Metro is a necessity, but huge amount of funds are invested in the project. The Metro plan was Congress' project, but its execution started only after the BJP government came to power in the state and centre.

No, I always followed up of the project and its permission was given during the Congress rule. On the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) level, its detailed project report (DPR) was also chalked out during the Congress period. So, BJP is responsible for its delay, as BJP Pune MP Anil Shirole opposed its layout at that time. Nagpur Metro is functional, but Pune is lagging behind. The reason is chief minister Devendra Fadnavis holds grudge against Pune and Bapat.

While the bus rapid transit system (BRTS) launch timing was wrong for us, so BJP went ahead with the pilot project. Many controversies happened, but the BJP government didn't address it. Metro cannot be the only solution to Pune's traffic issue.

It is not right to say that Congress' popularity has gone down in Pune. When Suresh Kalmadi was an active politician, he used to focus in Delhi and being a Rajya Sabha member of Parliament (MP), I used to concentrate in Pune. Many projects happened when Kalmadi was Pune's MP. People need a face and I am the face of Pune Congress, everyone recognises me. People trust me and and I will win this election.

How are you going to fulfil the promises made by Congress in national manifesto and your assurance to take steps to provide job opportunities for youth?

I will not be giving assurances, but work on options that are feasible and workable. The things which can be worked out only will be included in my Pune manifesto, which will be released soon.

While you have criticised sitting MP Anil Shirole's works, what will be your focus areas if you win the polls?

BJP changing its Pune Lok Sabha candidate speaks volumes about Anil Shirole's work. Now I have a burden on me, as Pune's development stalled from 2014 and I need to fill the gap. I need to prepare a development plan till 2024.

Congress to go solo in Delhi, blames AAP for failure of alliance talks

Agency
New Delhi April 12,

The Congress on Friday announced that it will contest all seven Lok Sabha seats of Delhi alone. Party in-charge for Delhi PC Chacko blamed the Aam Aadmi Party's leadership for the failure of not having an alliance against the BJP in the national capital.

"Even today, we are ready for an alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party with seat sharing arrangement of three seats to the Congress and four to them," Chacko told a press conference in New Delhi.

Chacko said that in the talks with the AAP, represented by Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, the two parties arrived at an understanding on seat-sharing. "In the last election held in Delhi, the Indian National Congress received 21 per cent vote while the Aam Aadmi Party secured 26 per cent votes. Together we won 47 per cent votes. On pro rata basis, the Congress should get 3 seats while the Aam Aadmi Party should contest on four seats in Delhi. This was the understanding in talks with Sanjay Singh," he said.

Chacko said after "pact was arrived at" during the talks for alliance, the AAP leadership suggested to have seat-sharing understanding in Haryana and Punjab also. But the Congress did not agree to the AAP condition saying that the political situation is different in those states.

"The day before yesterday, a statement from the AAP came that the Congress is not ready for an understanding. This is not true," Chacko said.