

Popular Front welcomes Chhattisgarh Govt. plea before SC against NIA Act

IT News
Imphal, Jan 18

Popular Front of India National General Secretary M Mohamed Ali Jinnah has welcomed Chhattisgarh Government's decision to Challenge the constitutionality of the draconian NIA Act in the Supreme Court and urged other non-BJP State Governments also to approach apex court to strike down the act which is against the spirit of federalism. The plea filed by state government under Article 131 of the Constitution against the law expresses highly serious concerns which had already been raised by various political parties and civil rights groups since its introduction in 2008 and upon its amendment in 2019 by making it even more draconian. As, Chhattisgarh Government rightly pointed out, the law undermines federal character of the country by conferring excessive powers to the centre to interfere in the prerogatives given to the states by the constitution. As stated in the plea of the state government, there are no rules governing the exercise of these powers and no room for coordination with state in law, and it does not even require

consent of any form from the states. Besides, that fact that serious complaints in the past years regarding the misuse of the law by those in power at centre to hunt down its political opponents and to quell dissent only affirms the existing fears. There is no denying the fact that our mainstream opposition parties played a major role in creating this situation. It was UPA government that first enacted the law in 2008, despite criticism from the human rights organizations and activist. It is, however, highly hopeful, that states government are finally waking up to the reality.

Kerala government has set a good example by officially approaching the apex court against the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act. As a state where there are many instances of the misuse of the NIA Act and UAPA, Kerala state government can be in the forefront to follow the example of Chhattisgarh government and challenge both the laws. Taking the seriousness of the situation into account, Popular Front appeals other non BJP state governments to align themselves with Chhattisgarh in raising this demand and to save constitution and federal character of the country.

3-from Manipur arrested with Rs. 2.5 crores worth heroin in Meghalaya

IT News
Shillong, Jan 18

Three persons from Manipur have been arrested with Heroin worth around Rs.2.5 crores in Meghalaya. According to the press a joint team of ANTE, Khliehriat PS, Lumshong PS & Umkiang PP intercepted a Maroon cloud Maruti Suzuki Swift Car (ML-05-L-8177) at Khliehriat around 10:45pm of 15 January.

On thorough search of the vehicle 430.01 gms Heroin (packed in 40 soap boxes) with street value for more than 2.5 Crores was recovered.

All the occupants of the vehicle were detained for interrogation and later arrested. Their particulars are: (1). Thangsim Haokip @ Robinson (24 yrs) S/o Kamzathang Haokip R/o M Songgel.

(2). Shri. T. Sonlian (22 yrs) S/o Paupi Tonsing R/o Zogam Bazar Zenhong Lamka, Churachandpur.

3). Hatneikim Kuki (21 yrs) D/o Yanglet Kuki R/o - M

Songgel, Churachandpur, Manipur.

A case vide Khliehriat PS Case No. 6(1)2020 u/s 8(c)/21(c)/29 NDPS Act has been registered and investigation is going on.

Agency
Imphal, Jan 18

Sanjay Kishan and Jogen Mohan were on Saturday sworn in as ministers in Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal's ministry.

Governor Jagdish Mukhi administered the oath of office and secrecy to the two new ministers at a simple ceremony in the Darbar Hall of the Raj Bhawan here.

Both Mohan and Kishan were sworn in as ministers of state with independent charge. Among those present on the

SC directs telecom companies to pay Rs 1.47 lakh crore

By - Raju Vernekar
Mumbai, Jan 18

In a major setback to telecom operators, the Supreme Court has directed "Bharti Airtel" and "Vodafone-Idea", to pay Rs.1.47-lakh crore in past statutory dues of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) by January 23.

Apart from these two companies, about 15 companies in the telecom business need to pay to the government, towards licence fees and spectrum usage charges (SUC) calculated on the basis of AGR. The above directions were given by a bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, S. Abdul Nazeer and M.R.Shah, while dismissing review petitions filed by these companies challenging SC's earlier order on Thursday. Holding that interest and penalty have rightly been levied on the telecom companies, SC specified that there should not be any further litigation on the matter. The telecom companies had sought an open court hearing on their review petition, but the SC decided to stick to its convention of doing an in-

chamber hearing. For Bharti Airtel, dues are around Rs 35,586 crore (Rs 21,682 crore as license fee (LF) and Rs 13,904 crore as SUC) and for Vodafone Idea the dues amount to Rs 53,038 crore (Rs 28,309 crore in LF and Rs 24,730 crore in SUC). Tata Teleservices, which has sold its consumer mobility business to "Airtel", faces dues of Rs.13,823 crore. The SC order of October 24, had directed operators to pay up their dues by January 23 following which the operators had sought a limited review of the ruling, on recovery of past dues amounting to Rs.1.47-lakh crore. The SC had ruled that the statutory dues need to be calculated by including non-telecom revenues in what is known as AGR of telecom companies.

The recovery of past dues by the government was based on AGR of around Rs.92,000 crore. The October 24 verdict had widened the definition of AGR to include non-core revenue, leaving telecom companies and even non-telecom companies facing hefty statutory dues. The Telecom Ministry in November had told Parliament

that telecom companies owe nearly Rs 1.47 lakh crore in LF and SUC. The total amount included- license fee of Rs 92,642 crore as of July 2019 and SUC of Rs 55,054 crore as of October 2019.

In an affidavit filed earlier in the SC, the Department of Telecom (DoT) had said that Airtel owes Rs 21,682.13 crore as licence fee to the government and dues from Vodafone totalled Rs 19,823.71 crore, Reliance Communications owed Rs 16,456.47 crore, BSNL owed Rs 2,098.72 crore, and MTNL Rs 2,537.48 crore.

The telecom sector was liberalised under the National Telecom Policy 1994 after which licenses were issued to companies in return for a fixed license fee. In 1999, the government gave an option to the licensees to migrate to the revenue sharing fee model, under which the telephone operators were required to share a percentage of their AGR with the government as LF and SUC. AGR is computed after allowing for certain deductions spelt out in these license agreements. The LF and SUC were set at 8 per cent and between 3-5 per cent of

AGR respectively, based on the agreement.

In 2005, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) challenged the government's definition for AGR calculation. In 2015, Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) stayed the case in favour of telecom companies and held that AGR includes all receipts, except capital receipts and revenue from non-core sources such as rent, profit on the sale of fixed assets, dividend, interest and miscellaneous income. However on 24 October, 2019, SC set aside TDSAT's order and upheld the definition of AGR as stipulated by the DoT.

An Airtel spokesperson said the company was disappointed with the verdict and was evaluating whether to file a curative petition. The industry needs to continue investing in expanding networks, acquiring spectrum and introducing new technology such as 5G. The money now required to pay punitive interest, penalty and interest on penalty, which forms nearly 75 per cent of AGR dues, would have better served the digital mission of the country.

Assam cabinet expansion, two new ministers sworn in as Independent charge

Agency
Imphal, Jan 18

Sanjay Kishan and Jogen Mohan were on Saturday sworn in as ministers in Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal's ministry.

Governor Jagdish Mukhi administered the oath of office and secrecy to the two new ministers at a simple ceremony in the Darbar Hall of the Raj Bhawan here.

Both Mohan and Kishan were sworn in as ministers of state with independent charge. Among those present on the

occasion were the chief minister, Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, Culture Minister Naba Kumar Doley, BJP president Ranjeet Dass and MPs Queen Oja and Kamakhya Prasad Tasa.

The swearing-in ceremony was conducted by Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna.

Both Kishan and Mohan are first time MLAs and represent Tinsukia and Mahomra assembly constituencies respectively.

While Kishan hails from the tea tribe community, Mohan represents the Ahom community. They replace Pallab Lochan Das, from the tea community, and Tapan Gogoi, an Ahom, who were elected to the Lok Sabha from Tezpur and Jorhat parliamentary constituencies respectively.

With this the strength of the ministry has increased to 18, including the chief minister, with 12 from the BJP and three each from the alliance partners Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Bodo People's Front (BPF).

Land at cheaper rate to Pakistani migrants in Rajasthan

By our correspondent
Jaipur, Jan. 18

While opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the Congress ruled Rajasthan Govt has began giving land at cheaper rates to Pakistani migrants igniting a sharp discussion among political circles.

Barely a few weeks after taking out a Peace March in Jaipur against the CAA, the Ashok Gehlot Government has allotted plots at half their market price (50% discount) to Pakistani migrants in the state capital.

According to the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA), about a hundred people displaced from Pakistan were issued

allotment letters in the Khushar Extension Housing Scheme by Zonal Office-IX.

This was a part of its effort to fulfil the public welfare announcements of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and the plan was executed in accordance with the instructions of the Minister of Urban Development, Shanti Dhariwal.

Allotment letters were issued by JDA Commissioner T. Ravikanth at 50 per cent concessional rates to Pak displaced Ramesh, Zaveri Lal, Baidan, Harpal and Hiralal early this week. After receiving the allotment letters, the happy Pakistani migrants thanked the state government and the JDA for offering them plots at discounted rates.

Cultural performance enthralls audience on the opening day of 5th Khundongbam Brojendro Theatre Festival

IT News
Imphal, Jan 18

5th Khundongbam Brojendro Theatre Festival begins today at JN Manipur Dance Academy, Imphal today. The inaugural function of the theatre festival organised by Khundongbam Brojendro Cultural Trust, was graced by renowned theatre director Ratan Thiyam, who is also the Chairman of the Chorus Repertory Theatre as the Chief Guest while Dr. R.K. Nimai, Retd. IAS presided over it. Prof. N. Tombi eminent theatre critic and scholar attended as guest of honours. The inaugural function was



begin with heart throbbing fusion cultural performance "TAIREN)". Later, Theatre group Kanglei Living Arts ,

Uchiwa performed Khundongbam Brojendro's play 'Karinungee Nupee Lonjaruba'. The play is

directed Th. Premjit. Khundongbam Brojendro aka Momon was born on January 18, 1946. He is the son of

Khundongbam Itocha and Angom Ningol Ibaychoubi and eight children he is second son. He completed his master Degree from Lucknow University. He served Co-operative society as inspector. And retired as asst Register from same office. NINGAMHOUDRABA a Sumang Leela play was his first work. He wrote many Leela some of the selected are BOR INTRAVIEW 1977. At that time this plays (Sumang leela) performed over 150 times at different places particularly at Rup Mahal Hall. Some of the Drama he wrote are - Heigatlang

1977.Ei Mamani 1978, Echasa Epa Lamboiragay 1980, Ema ge Moumou 1978,

Echa sa Epa Lamboiragay , one of his classic play was performed for around 160 times at Rupmahal theatre and is still record.

After some year MGM theatre also play his drama some of the drama are Mou Mari 1977, Nonglei Nungsit 1982, Ngamkhei wathok 1985, Luhongba mathal 1997, Refuges 2000. Some of his leela also play as teleplay and also broughtcast to radio. And also play as film. Born in poor family he suffered a lots during his studies.

Assam Rifles recover contraband drugs worth more than 8.58 crores near Moreh

IT News
Imphal, Jan 18

Troops of Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) recovered contraband drugs worth more than Rs 8.58 Crores along Indo-Myanmar Border on January 16. Based on specific input, troops of Assam Rifles challenged a person crossing Indo-Myanmar border on an unregistered two wheeler near Moreh. The two wheeler was loaded with three gunny bags. The individual on being challenged by the troops, dropped the two wheeler along with the load and fled towards Myanmar. On thorough search of the bags and two wheeler, troops recovered 4.290 Kgs of suspected Brown Sugar approximately valued at Rs. 8.58 Crores in the international market. The recovered contraband items along with the two wheeler have been handed over to Moreh Police Station for further investigation