



THE ECHO OF INDIA

DAILY FROM KOLKATA • PORT BLAIR • SILIGURI

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VOL XIV ISSUE NO 54

PAGES 12

KOLKATA • TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 13, 2018

Rs 1.50

Shopian stone pelting
SC restrains cops from taking coercive step against Major accused of civilian killing

NEW DELHI, FEB 12 /--/ The Supreme Court today said that no coercive action will be taken against Major Aditya Kumar, accused of allegedly killing three civilians in firing to disperse a stone pelting mob in Shopian district of Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir Police registered an FIR against Major Aditya Kumar.

Directing that no coercive action would be taken against the Army Major in pursuance to the FIR, a bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra, Justice A M Khanwilkar and Justice D Y Chandrachud sought the response from the Centre and the Mehbooba Mufti government in the state.

The father of the accused Major, Lt. Col. Karamveer Singh, had petitioned seeking quashing of the FIR. The father contended that registration of FIR and the consequent proceedings would adversely impact the morale of the armed forces fighting militancy in the trouble-torn state. The court asked for a copy of the petition to be served on the office of the Attorney General K K Venugopal.

Senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi, who appeared for the petitioner, urged the court to stay the FIR. Major Aditya Kumar and other soldiers of the 10 Garhwal Rifles were accused of opening fire on a stone-pelting mob which had attacked an administrative army convoy near Ganowpora village in Shopian district on January 27.

The firing resulted in the death of three persons. "The manner in which the lodging of the FIR has been portrayed and projected by the political leadership and administrative high-ups of the state, reflected an extremely hostile atmosphere in the state," the petition said. "In these circumstances, the petitioner is left with no other viable option but to approach this Court under Article 32 of the Constitution of India for protection of valuable Fundamental Rights of his son and himself, enshrined under Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India," the plea said.

It said that Major Aditya Kumar was wrongly and arbitrarily named as the incident relates to an Army convoy on bonafide military duty in an area under AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act), which was isolated by an "unruly and enraged" stone-pelting mob.

Militants' bid to attack CRPF camp foiled in Srinagar, jawan killed in gunbattle

■ Mehbooba pitches for talks with Pak afresh ■ Army's search operation underway in Sunjwan

Srinagar / JAMMU, FEB 12 /--/ A gunfight today broke out between security forces and militants, who took shelter in a building in Karan Nagar area of the city after their attempt to strike a CRPF camp was foiled early today, officials said.

A CRPF jawan was killed in the exchange of fire in the heart of the city, they said. "The sentry at the camp noticed two suspicious persons at around 4.30 am, carrying backpacks and weapons. He challenged them and opened fire," a spokesman of the CRPF said. The militants fled from the spot and took shelter in an under-construction house nearby, the officials said. The building has been cordoned off by the CRPF. According to senior CRPF officials, there were two militants in the Intermittent exchange of fire was reported and the

CRPF moved in more troops to ensure that the militants do not escape.

Amid this development, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti today pitched afresh for a dialogue between India and Pakistan to end the violence in the restive state. The chief minister also hit out at some media houses, which, she claimed, have created an atmosphere in which the very talk of talks was considered anti-national. "If Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti say hold talks with Pakistan, they are dubbed anti-national. There is no alternative (to resolve the issue) except by holding talks," Mehbooba told the state Assembly in Jammu on the concluding day of the budget session. "If we (the Kashmiris) don't talk about it (dialogue), who will? Not a Bihar, not a punjabi," she said. Meanwhile, the Army said today that the search

operation was underway in its Sunjwan camp, which was attacked by a group of suspected J&M terrorists, killing six persons, including five soldiers. Three suspected Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists involved in the attack were killed in the retaliatory action by the Army inside the camp and a large quantity of arms and ammunition was seized from them.

"The search operation is still on (at the camp)," Jammu-based Army public relations officer Lt Col Devender Anand told newsmen. A group of heavily armed men struck the sprawling camp of the 36 brigade of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry before dawn on February 10. Five Army men, including two Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs), were killed in the attack. Several blasts were

heard inside the camp late last evening, breaking a lull after the initial exchange of fire, but the Army said the blasts were the result of sanitisation operation and there was no fresh contact with terrorists.

Parliamentary affairs minister Abdul Rehman Veer told the Legislative Assembly that the operation was in the final stages. He said that the injured Army personnel included a Lieutenant Colonel and a Major. The latest attack on the Army camp took place nearly 15 months after the Jammu region was hit by a similar attack. The last terror attack in the Jammu region had taken place on November 29, 2016, when terrorists stormed the Army's Nagrota camp on the outskirts of Jammu city, killing seven Army personnel including two officers. Three terrorists were gunned down in the



Security personnel taking position at Karan Nagar, Srinagar.

The terrorists had struck before dawn on Saturday and managed to sneak into the camp from the rear side of the base after a brief exchange of fire with the sentry on its periphery. (PTI)

Rajnath reviews security in J&K

NEW DELHI, FEB 12 /--/ Union home minister Rajnath Singh today reviewed the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, where two terror attacks in last three days have left nine persons dead, including five Army men, officials said.

During an hour-long meeting with top officials, the home minister was given a detailed presentation about the situation in the state, particularly attack on an Army camp in Jammu and a gunfight between security forces and militants in Srinagar. Singh was told that the highest level of security has been put in place in the entire state and steps were being taken to foil attempts by terrorists to disturb peace, an official said.

Cong seeks Bhagwat's apology to Army, nation for his remark

Comments misrepresented, says RSS

NEW DELHI, FEB 12 /--/ The Congress today demanded that RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat apologise to the country for his remarks on the armed forces and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to clarify whether he approves of "private militia" to guard the nation's frontiers.

Congress senior spokesperson Anand Sharma termed Bhagwat's statement as "sad and disturbing" and said nations which have allowed private militias and military outfits independent of the country's armed forces to fight for it have come to grief and have paid a heavy price. Sharma cited examples of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Congo, and said India cannot allow such a development.

"The RSS chief's statement is a direct insult to the Indian armed forces by claiming that in the eventuality of a battle to be fought, the RSS can mobilise itself in three days while the Indian Army will take six to seven months," Sharma said.

"The RSS chief should apologise to the country and the armed forces, as he has put a question mark on the capability and bravery of the Indian Army. Such statements and thoughts weaken the morale of our armed forces," the Congress leader said. The Congress attacked the RSS chief even as the Sangh clarified that Bhagwat had said that "if situation arises and the Constitution permits, Indian Army would take six months to prepare the society whereas Sangh swayamsevaks can be trained in three days, as swayamsevaks practise discipline

regularly". Sharma said. "The prime minister of India will have to clarify his position on this, on whether he is thinking of allowing the work of national security to be handed over to the RSS other than the Indian Army." He said the Congress and its workers are opposing this across the country. "We expect that this mistake be rectified as it is not in national interest and we take this very seriously as the entire country is disturbed," the Congress leader said. "Nothing could be more insulting.

It was the undertaking given by the Sangh to the then home minister of India Vallabhbhai Patel, who was also the Deputy Prime Minister, for the lifting of the ban on it after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress leader said.

"That position remains unchanged, he said, adding "though the fact is that the RSS is the parent and mother organisation and the controlling ideology of the ruling BJP, which is a political front of the RSS". Congress president Rahul Gandhi today accused the RSS chief of "disrespecting" the Army and those who have laid down their lives for the country. The RSS chief's speech was an "insult" to every Indian, the Congress president said and demanded an apology from the RSS. "The RSS chief's speech is an insult to every Indian, because it disrespects those who have died for our nation. It is an insult to our flag because it insults every soldier who ever saluted it. Shame on you Mr Bhagwat, for disrespecting our martyrs and our Army. #ApologiseRSS," he tweeted.



We as a democracy cannot allow any organisation and institution to be given any space when it comes to national defence," he said.

"It is said, disturbing and shocking that while Indian Army is grappling with a serious terror attack, RSS chief made a statement which is deeply disturbing. It disrespects the Constitutional framework, it is an insult to the tricolour to protect which the Indian armed fight carrying it," he said.

Sharma said the RSS has throughout claimed to be a social and cultural organisation.

"A minister of the government is supporting and defending the RSS. Kiren Rijju is not a minister of state but a minister of Sangh," TMC leader Derek O'Brien told reporters today.



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee paying homage to Swami Prabhupada, at the ISKCON temple in Mayapur.—Photo courtesy: Facebook

Mamata requests Alfred Ford for a motor manufacturing unit in state

MAYAPUR, FEB 12 /--/ West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today "requested" Alfred Ford, the great grandson of Henry Ford, to consider setting up a manufacturing unit of Ford Motor Company in the state. Mamata said Ford has stated that he will "look into" the request. The chief minister made a pitch for the unit while she came to the Mayapur ISKON temple in Nadia district, where she was greeted by Alfred Ford, the great grandson of Henry Ford, the founder of the US auto major. "We requested Mr Ford (Alfred Ford) to plan a new manufacturing unit here in West Bengal. They have one in Chennai. He said he will look into it," she said. Asked whether he would consider her request, Alfred Ford, whose initiated name is Ambarish Das, told news agency PTI: "I have told her that I really do not have very

much to do with that anymore, but I will put in a word for her." Ford India Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ford Motor Company, has an integrated manufacturing plant in Maraimalai Nagar near Chennai in Tamil Nadu. The facility has an annual production capacity of 200,000 vehicles and 340,000 engines. It was the first visit to the Mayapur ISKON temple by any chief minister of the state. Ford meanwhile sought help from the chief minister for making the ISKON Mayapur a world heritage centre. "We will surely help them in that. I am so happy to come here," Mamata said.

The chief minister later said in a tweet that ISKON Mayapur will definitely be a new landmark in the religious tourism destination, not only in the state and the country, but also in the world. (PTI)

Kalinga Institute' tribal varsity branch in city from 2019

MoU signed with NGO, says founder Achyuta Samanta

KOLKATA, FEB 12 /--/ The eminent Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) of Odisha, which provides free education from kindergarten to post-graduation to 37,000 tribal students, would run a similar centre in the city for poor children.

The KISS has entered into an agreement with a city-based NGO to run the centre in the Eastern metropolis from the academic session of 2019. KISS, which was declared a Deemed to be University by the Union human resource development ministry in August 2017, has become the first tribal

university in the world. Talking to news persons on Sunday night, Achyuta Samanta founder of KISS, said: "We have signed an MoU with a NGO (Help us to Help them) to run a centre like the KISS in Kolkata."

"The centre to come up in Joka area would start functioning with 1000 children," Samanta who is also the founder of the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) said. According to him, not only tribal but other poor children would be enrolled in the Kolkata centre for free education to bring



them in the mainstream. Besides the one in Bhubaneswar, the KISS also runs a centre for 600 street children in Delhi. "We also plan to open such centres in Bihar and Jharkhand among others," the KISS

founder said. The institute, which was the first of its kind in 1982-83, currently has 27,000 students. Besides, 10,000 of its alumni also stay in its facilities.

"The KISS provides poor tribal students free food, lodging and education from KG to PG. We also provide them jobs after completion of education," Samanta stated. Asked about sourcing of funds to run such a mammoth institution, the institute's founder said a portion it comes from KITT's turnover and contribution from employees, sale of products in Delhi. "We also plan to open such centres in Bihar and Jharkhand among others," the KISS

India, Oman call for isolating sponsors of terrorism

MUSCAT, FEB 12 /--/ India and Oman will coordinate efforts to counter the "misuse" of religion by groups and states for perpetrating acts of terrorism as they called for isolating its sponsors, in an apparent reference to Pakistan. According to a joint statement issued today at the end of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Oman during which he met Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the two leaders exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest, including the security situation in West and South Asia.

"The two sides acknowledged the common threat posed by terrorism to peace and security and agreed to continue working together bilaterally, regionally and globally to counter this menace," said the statement. It said the two leaders called for

isolating the sponsors and supporters of terrorism and agreed to coordinate efforts to counter extremism and radicalisation and misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred and perpetrating acts of terrorism. The statement said, indirectly referring to Pakistan, which is blamed for providing safe havens to terrorists and training Islamist militants.

Prime Minister Modi and Sultan Qaboos bin Said decided to promote the experiences of India and Oman in building inclusive societies as effective models in countering extremism and radicalisation. (PTI)