

Cong appeals to all parties to join hands to defeat TRS

HYDERABAD, SEPT 7 /-- Describing the fight against TRS in the coming Assembly polls in Telangana as a "war for righteousness," state Congress president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy today said various Opposition parties, including TDP and civil society organisations should join forces with Congress.

The state Assembly was dissolved on Thursday as per the recommendation of the TRS government, paving way for early polls. The Assembly elections were originally scheduled to be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls next year. "We call upon all

EC to send team to review poll preparedness

political, non-political forces in Telangana, NGOs, civil society organisations, students bodies, employees organisations, all political parties, including Telugu Desam, to join forces to defeat this corrupt government by treating these elections as a Dhamma Yuddham (war for righteousness)," Reddy told newsmen here. There has been speculation about an electoral alliance between the Congress and TDP in Telangana. The TDP has been anti-Congress since its inception in 1982. Reddy said the coming election is not a fight between congress and TRS but a fight between "the family of TRS president and caretaker chief minister K Chandrababoo Naidu and the four core people of Telangana."

"Taking strong exception to Rao's attack on areas and its president Rahul Gandhi, Reddy said "the caretaker CMs comments are unbecoming of a Chief Minister."

Rao has described Rahul as the "biggest buffoon" in the country. On September 12, party leader Ghulam Nabi Azad would address a public meeting near here on minorities' issues. Meanwhile, the Election Commission today said it will send a team to Hyderabad next week to assess poll preparedness in Telangana, where the assembly has been dissolved on the ruling party's request for early elections.

Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Unesh Sinha will head the team, which will "assess the situation in the state regarding poll preparedness", the poll watchdog said in a statement. The team will reach the state on September 11. It will submit a report to the commission after the completion of the visit, it said. The state cabinet had Thursday recommended the dissolution of the state assembly. Its term was to otherwise end in June, 2019.



Asaid Gold medalist Swarna Burman being received by Arup Biswas, state minister for PWD, sports and youth affairs at Dum Dum airport upon her arrival from Jakarta...Shyamal Maitra

SC asks states to comply with its order to deal with cow vigilantism, mob lynchings

NEW DELHI, SEPT 7 /-- The Supreme Court today took a stern view of the fact that only nine of the 29 states and two of the seven Union Territories (UTs) have so far complied with its July 17 order giving a slew of directions to deal with mob violence and cow vigilantism incidents across the country.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra gave the last opportunity by granting one more week to the remaining states and UTs to do the needful and warned them that any default would be viewed seriously and their home secretaries will have to appear personally before it. "We direct the remaining states and UTs to file the compliance reports in a week. If the reports are not filed, the home secretaries of the defaulting states will have to appear personally before the bench, which also comprised Justices A K Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, said. Attorney General K Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, informed the bench that in pursuance of the apex court verdict, an empowered group of ministers has been set up to consider framing a law on mob violence. The court also directed the Rajasthan government to file a report within a week giving details of action taken by it in the alleged lynching of farmer Rakbar Khan on July 20 in Alwar district of the state.

Earlier, it had issued notice to the state government on the plea of Congress leader Tejseen Poonawala seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against Rajasthan officials, including the Chief Secretary and the police chief, for alleged violation of the top court's verdict in the lynching case.

Poonawala, in his plea, had said the 28-year old dairy farmer Rakbar Khan was attacked by a group of cow vigilantes in Lalwadi village of Ramgarh district in Rajasthan on July 20, three days after the apex court had delivered a detailed verdict. Khan, a resident of Haryana and his friend Aslam, were transporting two cows to Kolgoin through a forest area when a mob had attacked them on the alleged grounds they were taking the animals for slaughter, the plea said.

While Aslam managed to survive by hiding in the fields, the crowd killed Rakbar, it said, adding that there was a considerable delay in taking the deceased to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead on arrival. Today, lawyer Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for Uttar Pradesh government, informed the court that 11 states, including two UTs and Uttar Pradesh, have filed their compliance reports. Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for Poonawala, said that 23 states were yet to file their reports. The court then granted the last opportunity to all the states for filing their reports. It also directed the Centre, the states and UTs to give wide publicity to its directions given on the verdict on mob violence. It asked them to put the information on measures to curb the mob violence on their websites so that people know the recourse available to them.

The apex court had on July 17 said that "horrendous acts of mobocracy" cannot be allowed to over run the law of the land and issued a slew of guidelines to deal with mob lynching and cow vigilantism, besides asking the Centre to consider enacting new law to sternly deal with such cases. The court had issued a slew of directions to the government to provide "preventive, remedial and punitive measures" to deal with offences like mob violence and cow vigilantism.

It had asked the state governments to designate a senior police officer, not below the rank of Superintendent of Police, as nodal officer in each district to take steps to prevent incidents of mob violence and lynching.

The officers were asked constitute a special task force to procure intelligence and information about those likely to commit such crimes or were involved in spreading hate speeches, provocative statements and fake news. The judgment was delivered on a batch of petitions including Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Tushar Gandhi and Congress leader Tejseen Poonawala seeking formulation of guidelines to curb incidents of mob violence and lynching in the country.

Cong hits out PM over spiraling petrol prices, fall of Rupee

NEW DELHI, SEPT 7 /-- The Congress today hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking whether petrol prices would hit the century mark under his government and if the rupee was in hospital.

Congress spokesperson R P N Singh said all political parties will take to the streets to protest against the rising prices of petrol and diesel that are hitting the common man hard and questioned the Prime Minister's silence on the issue. Singh said the September 10 'Bharat Bandh' protest is "not of the Congress but of the common man." The Prime Minister during the UPA's tenure had said that the rupee is in hospital. The rupee has touched an all-time low against the US dollar, where it is the Prime Minister now? He is neither tweeting nor giving any speech.

"Never has the rupee touched such low levels in the history of the country. The country wants to ask him why is he silent? Is the rupee in hospital today," the Congress leader questioned. Singh alleged that this government has failed on all fronts, including "economy, employment, welfare of the youth, farmers and every section of society". The Congress leader said the party has called a "Bharat Bandh" on September 10 to protest against the rising fuel prices and all opposition parties will take part in it. He said

"The Prime Minister during the UPA's tenure had said that the rupee is in hospital. The rupee has touched an all-time low against the US dollar, where is the Prime Minister now? He is neither tweeting nor giving any speech" - R P N Singh, Cong spokesperson



petrol has touched the Rs 80 mark in Delhi and has breached the Rs 90 mark at places like Bhiwandi and asked if it will "cross the century mark under this government". Singh said the government has earned Rs 11 lakh crore through taxes on petrol and diesel.

The common man, who has paid the taxes, should take to the streets to protest. He said the Congress will organise state-level press conferences in over 90 cities to highlight the fuel price rise and urged people to make the bandh a success by participating in it. The Congress will organise a nationwide protest on September 10 over rising fuel prices, party leaders had announced Thursday and asked other opposition parties and civil society groups to join the shutdown against the central

government. Congress leaders Ashok Gehlot, Ahmed Patel, Motilal Vora, Mallikarjun Kharge and Randeep Singh Surjewala had said the common man was bearing the brunt of escalating prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas as well as of other essential commodities.

Patel had said most Opposition parties have given their consent to support and Congress leaders have talked to the Left parties, the Samajwadi Party, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal and others, who have extended their support to the Congress on the issue. On Trinamool Congress, he said the party has agreed to support but won't give a call for bandh as they are in government. (PTI)

Now bridge collapses near Siliguri, truck driver hurt

SILIGURI, SEPT 7 /-- An old bridge collapsed near Siliguri in north Bengal on Friday, leaving a truck driver injured, a state minister said.

This is the second incident of bridge collapse in West Bengal in three days. The Majerhat bridge had collapsed in south Kolkata on September 4, killing three persons and injuring 24. The middle part of the bridge collapsed on a canal below at around 9.30 am when a truck was crossing it and the vehicle was stuck in the broken portion, officials said. The bridge connects the Manjanj and Phansidewa areas to Siliguri, a major city in Uttar Bengal. Phansidewa is around 22 kms from Siliguri.

"Let the matter be inquired into," Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi told newsmen in Kolkata when asked about the back-to-back collapse of the Majerhat bridge and the one today. North Bengal Development Minister Rabindranath Ghosh said movement of loaded trucks was banned on the bridge but many such vehicles bound for the north-eastern states continued to take it. "This incident is a result of that," Ghosh added. Ghosh also said the bridge was constructed long ago

and its papers were not available. The repair work of the structure would be undertaken after the PWD prepared a report, he added. State tourism minister Gautam Deb said the bridge was maintained by the Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad (a sub-divisional body), run by the CPM led Left Front. "I will report to chief minister Mamata Banerjee," Deb added. Engineers and state government officials have rushed to the spot. Senior CPM leader of Darjeeling district Jibesh Sarkar accused the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government and the district administration of ignoring repeated pleas to repair the bridge.

"We had informed the state and the local administration that it needed to be repaired. But as it is a Left-run mahakuma parishad, funds were not released by the government," he told news agency PTI. An under-construction flyover had collapsed at Phansidewa on August 11, but there was no casualty. The chief minister had on Thursday said a nationwide survey of bridges should be undertaken. There were 20 bridges in and around Kolkata, which had gone past their expiry dates, Mamata had said.



The collapsed bridge at Phansidewa near Siliguri—EOI Photo

2 suspected Islamist group members shot dead in Bangladesh

DHAKA, SEPT 7 /-- Bangladesh Police today shot dead two suspected members of an Islamist group blamed for several attacks in the Muslim-majority country, including the murder of progressive writer-publisher, officials said. The suspects were killed in what police described as "gunfight" in Sreenagar upazila of Munshiganj. bdnw54 reported. Both men in their early 30s were the members of the banned Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militant group, said Nizam Ullah, a district intelligence officer of Munshiganj police. The JMB is said to have links with the Islamic State. The police had signalled two motor cyclists to stop around 2am on Sreenagar Highway which they ignored and entered the nearby Chashara KC road, said an additional superintendent of police Kazi Maksuda Lima.

Police chased them and they opened fire forcing the police to retaliate. At one point, both of them were shot dead. Two sub-inspectors and a constable of police were also injured in the incident, according to the police. The law enforcement agencies seized 11 hand-made bombs, a pistol and two machetes from the scene. "We had information that both of them were involved in the murder of blogger Shahjahan Bachchu," Abdur Rahman, the key suspect in the murder of Bachchu, died in a shootout with the police in June. On June 11, four unidentified assailants on two motorcycles gunned down Bachchu in the Upazila.

The 55-year-old former general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh's Munshiganj district unit was a publisher of Bishkek Presshouse. He was known as a free-thinking writer in his ancestral village Kakaldi. The killing of Bachchu, 60, was the first Islamist attack on a prominent secular figure in two years.

AI plane lands on under-construction runway at Male airport; pilots taken off duty

NEW DELHI, SEPT 7 /-- An Air India aircraft, carrying more than 136 people, today landed on a wrong runway at the Male airport in the Maldives, and following the incident two pilots have been taken off duty, officials said.

An Air India spokesperson said the plane landed at an "uncommissioned runway" and that all passengers are safe. A

senior DGCA official said the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has been informed since it is a serious incident.

The A320 neo plane was operating from Thiruvananthapuram to Male. A senior Air India official said the aircraft "VT EXL" landed on an under-construction runway at Male". The plane landed at



Velana international airport at Male.

There were 136 passengers and crew on board. Tyres of the plane were deflated and the aircraft was towed away to the parking bay, the official said. Citing a preliminary report, the spokesperson said two tyres of the aircraft were deflated. "It could be because the pilots applied brakes on realising that

they landed on a wrong runway. "The local authorities are conducting a probe," he added. The senior official at aviation regulator DGCA said both pilots of the plane have been "off rostered".

Off rostering refers to pilots being taken off their flying duties. "Being a serious incident, the AAIB has been informed," the official added.