CYMK

www.echoofindia.com

इंफो इंडिया
Hindi Daily
इंफो इंडिया
(Kolkata, Port Blair & Siliguri)

THE ECHO OF INDIA

DAILY FROM KOLKATA • PORT BLAIR • SILIGURI

Arthik Lipi
Bengali Daily
লিপি
(Kolkata, Siliguri & Port Blair)

VOL XIV ISSUE NO 221 | PAGES 12 | KOLKATA • WEDNESDAY • AUGUST 1, 2018 | Rs 1.50

MPs of Trinamool Congress, Aam Admi Party and Samajwadi Party staging protest over NRC issue, in front of Mahatma Gandhi statue at Parliament in New Delhi on Tuesday.

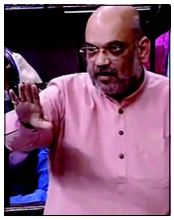
Oppn sees vote bank politics in NRC, for BJP it's national security: Shah

RS proceedings disrupted by noisy protests over issue

NEW DELHI, JULY 31 /--/ BJP president Amit Shah today asked Opposition parties to take a clear stand on the National Register of Citizens (NRC) issue in Assam and not indulge in vote bank politics, asserting that NRC will be implemented "to the last full stop" as his party stands for national security and Indians' rights.

Dismissing criticism by parties like the Congress and the Trinamool Congress (TMC), Shah told a press conference that the process for NRC, whose mandate is to identify illegal immigrants, was started in 2005, when the UPA was in power, but the government lacked the courage "to throw out illegal Bangladeshis". "It (NRC) will be implemented to the last full stop and comma," he said. Taking on West Bengal chief minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, who has accused the BJP of pursuing a 'divide and rule' policy, Shah alleged that she saw a "vote bank" in illegal immigrants while his party was looking at the security of the country and rights of its citizens. No Indian citizen should be concerned and natives of any other state living in Assam would not be touched, he said, adding, NRC must be implemented firmly and fairly.

The BJP has seized on the issue that resonates with its broader agenda of nationalism and Hindutva to corner Opposition parties in the election year, with Shah pitching the party as one standing for rights of Indians as opposed to its rivals who are concerned with the rights of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. "The BJP is committed to the national security and safety of its citizens. This is our top priority. All other parties should clear their stand," he said. The BJP president said the NRC is the soul of the Assam accord which the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had signed and it clearly stipulates that every single illegal immigrant would be identified and his name struck off the voters list. However, several Congress governments which ruled at the centre and the state lacked the courage to implement it. The Supreme Court later stepped in and the Modi government started the process, he said, adding that the apex court is monitoring the entire exercise. "I want to ask the Congress why you are questioning the NRC for vote bank. The Congress started the NRC process in 2005. But you lacked the courage to throw out illegal Bangladeshi immigrants because vote bank was important for you, not national security and rights of citizens," he said. It is a matter of "grave sorrow" that no party apart from the BJP found it fit to say that illegal immigrants have no place in this country. The BJP is not doing politics over it and its stand has been consistent on the issue whether in power or in opposition, he said. Meanwhile, with BJP chief Amit Shah accusing the Congress of not showing courage to identify illegal migrants in Assam, the opposition today asked the government to tread cautiously and not play politics on the issue of NRC.



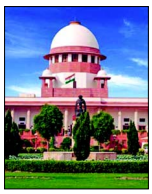
While the Congress asked the government to adopt a humanitarian approach and not leave out any Indian from the Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC), TMC demanded its complete withdrawal claiming that Indians were left out of it. As the Rajya Sabha debated the NRC issue after Congress and TMC members created uproar, Shah countered them by asking whether the Congress wanted to save the "illegal Bangladeshis". (PTI)

SC warns authorities against taking coercive step over Assam's draft NRC

Directs Centre to formulate procedure to deal with claims, objections

NEW DELHI, JULY 31 /--/ The Supreme Court today said the publication of the complete draft NRC of Assam cannot be the basis of any coercive action against anyone since it is merely a draft.

It also directed the Centre to formulate standard operating procedure (SOP) to deal with claims and objections. The apex court directed the Centre to place the SOP before it for approval and said it should be fair and giving reasonable opportunity to contest exclusion. A bench of justices Ranjan Gogoi and R F Nariman said the Centre should place the SOP before it by August 16 and that a local registrar has to give notice to those who have filed claims and objections, and give them reasonable opportunity for hearing. At the outset, Assam National Register of Citizens (NRC) coordinator Prateek Hajela placed before the court its status report giving details of publication of the draft NRC on Monday.



To this the bench asked what the future course of action was. Hajela told the court that the claims and objections with regard to inclusion and exclusion in the NRC could be filed from August 30 to September 28. He said till August 7, the draft NRC is being made available to the people to see whether their names are there or not. Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, said the ministry concerned is willing to formulate modalities of the SOP to deal with the process of claims and objections and that courts should direct that no coercive action shall be taken till equal opportunity is given to all. The bench asked Venugopal to place the SOP before it for approval. The second and final draft of the NRC, which is a list of the state's citizens, was published yesterday with over 2.89 crore names out of 3.29 crore applicants in Assam. Names of around 40.07 lakh applicants did not figure in the document. (PTI)

Mamata reacts to cancellation of event at St Stephen's College, says BJP cannot muzzle her voice

Says, NRC issue will lead to civil war, blood bath

NEW DELHI, JULY 31 /--/ West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today said the BJP cannot muzzle her voice and stop her from speaking against their policies.

Mamata's remarks comes in the wake of the cancelation of an event at the St Stephen's College in Delhi, where she was invited as the main speaker. The TMC supremo also said she would take to the streets if the BJP tries to stop her from speaking at events. Reacting sharply to the cancelation of the event, the chief minister said she would continue raising her voice for the under-privileged. "They feel that they can stop me, muzzle my voice. They would cancel my events. But I want to tell them that I would take to the streets to raise my voice against them, their policies. That is best for me," Mamata said at a gathering here. She also alleged that the ruling party is trying to threaten the judiciary and the media, and no one can speak against them.

The West Bengal chief minister was speaking as the chief guest at the Love Your Neighbour conference organised by the Catholic Bishops Conference in the national capital. Mamata had earlier hinted at a BJP hand behind the cancellation of her programme at St Stephen's College, but said she was unmoved by it as she would have a packed schedule during her visit to the national capital.

"Let it be cancelled, I don't mind. Let god save them. I have some other programmes also," she said when asked whether the cancellation of her programme at the prestigious college was an insult to the chief minister's chair. The college cited procedural norms last week and cancelled an address by Mamata to the students of the institute, which was scheduled for August 1.

Reacting on the ongoing NRC issue, she alleged that the exercise in Assam was done with a "political motive" to divide people and warned that it would lead to bloodbath and a civil war in the country. Attacking the BJP, she said the saffron party is trying to divide the country and asserted this will not be tolerated. "The NRC is being done with a political motive. We will not let this happen. They (BJP) are trying to divide the people. The situation cannot be tolerated. There will be a civil war, blood bath in the country," the TMC supremo told a conclave here. She said that even the names of family members of former president Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed have not been included in the NRC.

"The BJP has the audacity to say that they would implement NRC in Bengal and thinks only they and their supporters would stay in India and rest will have to leave the country," she said.

Asserting that the present situation cannot go on, Mamata said she would continue voicing her Opposition against the ruling party. She appealed to the all communities to build up a momentum against the decision of the government. "No one can give us direction. This is not the politics of India. Indian politics is about tolerance," she said.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi to get Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award

NEW DELHI, JULY 31 /--/ Former West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi has been selected for this year's Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award for promoting communal harmony and peace.

A decision in this regard was taken by the Advisory Committee of the award which met on July 28. "The Advisory Committee of the Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award in its meeting held on 28th July, 2018 decided that the 24th Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award be given to Gopalkrishna Gandhi for his outstanding contribution towards the promotion of communal harmony, peace and goodwill," member secretary of the committee Motilal Vora said in a statement. The award will be presented to Gopalkrishna Gandhi at a special ceremony on August 20 at Jawahar Bhawan.

The award, which carries a citation and cash amount of Rs 10 lakh, is given on the occasion of the birthday of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. It was instituted to commemorate the lasting contribution made by him to promote peace, communal harmony and fight against violence.

PM takes jibe at Cong over no-trust motion

NEW DELHI, JULY 31 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi today took a jibe at the Congress over the no-confidence motion against his government, saying he was "thankful" to the party for allowing him to expose the Opposition's hollowness and inform the masses about his dispensation's successes.

Modi said at a BJP parliamentary party meeting that the motion in the Lok Sabha showed the Opposition's political immaturity as his government neither lacked numbers nor faced any hostile political environment in the country, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar told newspersons. He was also felicitated on the occasion for the government's "grand win" during a division of votes on the motion. A source quoting Modi said the Prime Minister offered 'badhai' (congratulations) to party members and allies for the motion's defeat and 'double badhai' to those who brought it.

The government got a platform to share the successes of its four and a half years rule with people far and wide, and also to expose the opposition, he said. The Indian diaspora at Uganda, an African country he visited recently, had also keenly followed the debate on the motion.

Imran's party considering inviting Modi for his oath taking ceremony

LAHORE, JULY 31 /--/ Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) is considering inviting the leaders of the SAARC countries including Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his oath taking ceremony as the Prime Minister next month, a party official said today.

The PTI, led by 65-year-old Khan, has emerged as the single largest party in the National Assembly after the July 25 elections, but it is still short of numbers to form the government on its own. Khan on Monday said that he would take oath as prime minister on August 11. "The core committee of Tehreek-i-Insaf is considering inviting the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) heads including Mr Modi and a decision on this is expected shortly," a leader of Khan's party told PTI. He also termed Modi's telephone call to Khan on his victory in the 2018 polls a welcoming sign to begin a new chapter in relations between the two countries. Spokesperson for Khan's party Fawad Chaudhry also did not rule out inviting Modi to the swearing in ceremony. "A decision about it will be taken by the party in consultation with the foreign ministry in coming days," Chaudhry said. The Indian Prime Minister had on Monday telephoned Khan to congratulate him on his party's victory in the general elections and hoped that "Pakistan and India will work to open a new chapter in bilateral ties". Khan thanked Modi for his wishes and emphasised that disputes should be resolved through dialogue.

"Wars and bloodshed instead of resolving disputes lead to tragedies," Khan had said. Khan in his victory speech had also said that better relations between Pakistan and India would be "good for all of us". "If India's leadership is ready, we are ready to improve ties with India. If you take on step forward we will take two steps forward," he had said. The relations between India and Pakistan remained tense since 2014. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had travelled to Delhi to attend Modi's oath taking ceremony and the Indian premier had in December 2015 made a stopover in Lahore to greet his counterpart on his birthday.

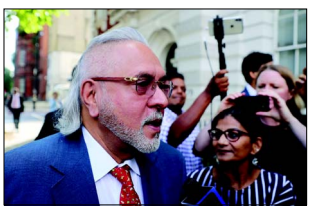
The India-Pakistan ties nose-dived in recent years with no bilateral talks taking place. The ties between the two countries had strained after the terror attacks by Pakistan-based groups in 2016 and India's surgical strikes inside Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The sentencing of alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav to death by a military court in April last year further deteriorated bilateral ties.

Vijay Mallya to be kept at Mumbai's Arthur road jail: Officials

Money laundering charges completely false, says liquor baron

NEW DELHI/LONDON, JULY 31 /--/ Mumbai's Arthur road jail, where fugitive liquor baron Vijay Mallya would be kept after extradition from the UK, was one of the best in the country, ministry of home affairs (MHA) officials said today.

The prisons in India were as good as in any other country in the world and prisoners' rights were fully protected in Indian jails. Mallya's apprehension about threat to his life was "misleading", a home affairs ministry official said. The comments came after a court in the UK today asked the Indian authorities to submit a video within three weeks of Arthur Road Jail cell where they plan to keep Mallya post-extradition to face the law in connection with the Rs 9,000 crore loan default cases. The official said that adequate medical facilities were available to treat the prisoners in Arthur road jail, where Mallya would get full security cover as an undertrial prisoner and it was highly secured as per international standards. The Centre had already conducted an assessment of security cover given to prisoners in the Arthur road jail and its findings conveyed to the UK court.



Mallya, 62, was in the UK since March 2016 and he was arrested by the Scotland Yard on an extradition warrant on April 18. However, he was soon granted bail by the court. India and the UK have an extradition treaty, signed in 1992, but so far only one extradition has taken place under the arrangement. A defiant Vijay Mallya, the liquor tycoon wanted in India on fraud charges, said today that the allegations of money laundering and stealing money against him are "completely false".

Mallya made the comments outside the Westminster Magistrates' Court where he arrived along with his son Siddharth for closing arguments in his high-profile extradition trial. The 62-year-old former Kingfisher Airlines boss, who has been on bail on an extradition warrant since his arrest in April last year, is fighting extradition to India on charges of fraud and money laundering amounting to around Rs 9,000 crores. "The allegations of money laundering and stealing money are completely false," Mallya told reporters outside the court. "At the end of the day, the courts will decide," he added.