Tea Union agitation in Mirik

DEEP MILAN PRADHAN

MIRIK, JULY 7/--/ As part of its district wide gate meeting agitation programme , the Himalayan Plantation Workers Union (HPWU) trade wing of Gorkha National Liberation Front on Saturday staged a demonstration outside the various tea garden under Mirik sub division. Trade union leader from HPWU Dipesh Thapa, R.S. Dewan , Ashok Pradhan Tika Rana, B.K Thapa, Jitas Kulung Bimal Subba, and Jan Andolan Party trade wings leader R.C. Giri and Rodhan Chhetri jointly placed a charter of demands to the managers. Trade union leaders said at the gate meeting they wanted daily wages up to Rsx 350 under the Minimum Wages Act . "We are very disappointed that the management does not provide satisfactory wages to labours," they said.

TU leaders at a gate meeting - EOI Photo

No-confidence motion against Chhattisgarh ministry defeated

RAIPUR, JULY 7 /--/ After a 14-hour debate, a no-trust motion moved by the Congress against the Raman Singh-led BJP government was defeated by a voice vote in the Chhattisgarh Assembly in the wee hours today.

The debate started after 12 noon on Friday and ended at 2.10 am today. Several issues including a sex CD case, corruption and law and order situation were raised. Chief minister Raman Singh termed the allegations levelled by the opposition as "direction-less and baseless".

The Congress has made a failed attempt to mislead people, he said during his reply which lasted for over an hour. "In the last 15 years, Congress has failed to play the role of constructive opposition and has never come up with any alternative policy. The no-confidence motion was direction-less, unprincipled, unsubstantiated and unplanned," Singh said. The Congress has failed to raise even one issue, fact or a piece of evidence which could have cornered the BJP government, the chief minister added.

The BJP is in power in 19 states, ruling almost 70 per cent of the country, while the Congress's rule has shrunk to only six per cent of the country's territory, Singh said. "The charge sheet presented by the Congress in the no-confidence motion clearly shows it has already accepted its defeat. In the winter session it had moved a no-confidence motion which had 168 points, now the number is reduced to 15. "Like the Congress party, its charge sheet has also shrunk," he quipped. Singh gave a detailed account of his government's achievements, and said it will retain power for the fourth time in a row in the coming Assembly polls.

Earlier, Leader of Opposition T S Singhdeo said the state government had cheated people by not fulfilling its promises and by perpetrating scams. "The government has failed on all fronts. Farmers are facing a crisis, the youth have no jobs, women are unsafe and public representatives are being targeted," the Congress leader said. Referring to the cases against state Congress chief Bhupesh Baghel, Singhdeo said Baghel was being targeted by the government machinery with political motives. The government did not agree to the demand of probe of the alleged suicide of Rinku Khanuja, he said.

I-Day football tournament in Rongpo

SANJAY AGARWAL

RANGPO, JULY 7/--/ Rangpo, the main entry point of Sikkim, is going to organise the 72nd Independence Day celebration open football tournament this year in an 11-side contest. With the support of the state government, the work of widening of Rangpo Bazar playground is in full swing. Football lovers are feeling encouraged to enjoy the football at Rangpo Bazar ground. An 11 -member football organising committee has been formed. On Saturday, the 11 members - Laal Kumar Rai ,Mr Sudhir Chettri, Santosh Gurung, Bhim Rai , Rakesh Tamang, Madhav Pradhan, Binoy Thapa , Mani Rai, Buddha Tamang and Dhiren Chettri in a meeting decided to make the football tournament a grand success. The cash prize is also increase from this year. The winner and runners-up of the tournament would get prizes of Rs 1 .50 lakhand Rs 1 lakh respectively along with attractive trophies. The entry fee is just Rs 3000. The final match would be played on August 15.

The football ground under preparation --- EOI Photo

Hardik, Alpesh, Jignesh booked over 'raid' at woman's house

AHMEDABAD, JULY 7 /--/ Patidar quota agitation leader Hardik Patel and Gujarat MLAs Alpesh Thakor and Jignesh Mevani were booked by police on trespass and other charges after allegedly leading a "raid" at a house where they claimed that liquor was illegally stored, an official said today.

Thakor, a Congress MLA, along with independent legislator Mevani and Patel, on Thursday "raided" the house of a woman, identified Kanchanben Makwana, with over a dozen supporters claiming they wanted to expose the alleged "liquor den" operating there. The house is located near the office of Gandhinagar superintendent of police. Makwana filed a complaint at the Gandhinagar Sector 21 police station. The complainant said the trio and their supporters entered her house when no male member was present there. "They even planted two pouches of country-made liquor there to prove her house was a liquor den," Makwana was quoted as saying by inspector V N Yadav.

"Makwana, in her complaint, said she does not sell liquor and the two pouches recovered from her house were planted by the people who entered her home," Yadav said. He said an FIR was lodged against Thakor, Mevani and Patel besides over a dozen others under various section of the Indian Penal Code including for house-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint (452), intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace (504), and intentionally giving false evidence (193). Yadav said no arrest has been made so far in the case. Gujarat has a law in force since 1960 that bans manufacture, storage, sale and consumption of alcohol.

Taking to micro-blogging site Twitter, Patel alleged that the "liquor mafia" can do anything in Gandhi's Gujarat, with the police and the ruling BJP giving them support.

Guv's Twitter handle receives complaints of corruption, wrongdoings in Mufti govt; report sought

SRINAGAR, JULY 7 /--/ Two weeks after he took over the reins in Jammu and Kashmir, Governor N N Vohra's official Twitter handle has got several complaints of alleged corruption and other wrongdoings against the previous PDP-BJP coalition government headed by Mehbooba Mufti.

The Twitter handle was set up on June 19, the day Mufti submitted her resignation as chief minister of the state after the BJP pulled out of the government. The Governor, through Twitter, has been receiving complaints about issues which were considered dead and buried.

The complaints received via the Twitter handle @jandkgovernor range from Mufti removing the director of super-speciality SKIMS hospital and nominating in-service professors as members of the governing council to former speaker and BJP leader Kavinder Gupta's doctor allegedly getting appointed through the backdoor.

PDP youth president Wahid-ur-Rehman Para, who was working as Secretary, JK State Sports Council, is also accused of "adjusting" 250 people in various government departments and public sector undertakings. "Ex-CM Sahiba (Mehbooba)ruined SKIMS & violated all norms by nominating inservice professors (friends of Dr Manzoor rather) as GB (governing body) members, then victimised all who raised voice - prof ahangar suspended as Director, my resignation was forced, promotion of 4 others stopped," Altaf G Haji, an Onco surgeon tweeted to Vohra.

Another Twitter user brought to Governor's notice the allegations made by a sitting PDP MLA, who had recently revolted against Mufti, about the wrongdoings committed by Para. "A quota of 250 seats were given to Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra and he adjusted his nears and dears in JK Bank, JKP, Youth Service and Sports and other departments, Ansari alleged. We request Governor for an immediate inquiry commision," Syed Ishfaq wrote. Pawan Sharma brought to Vohra's notice the appointment of Charu Gupta, daughter of Kavinder Gupta as Dental Surgeon, under the National health Mission.

A preparatory meeting for the upcoming Independence Day 2018 was held at the Conference Hall of Manan Kendra on Saturday. The meeting was chaired by Chief Secretary, Shri A.K.Shrivastava and it had the participation of HODs, officials and representatives from all the line Departments involved. The Chief Secretary allocated various roles and responsibilities to respective departments and laid down the lines of events scheduled for that day, said an IPR release.

Goa Guv suggests setting up of pre-marriage counselling centre in varsity: Guv

PANAJI, JULY 7 /--/ Goa Governor Mridula Sinha today asked students to take an oath that they will not break their marriage on petty issues and suggested setting up a pre- wedding counselling centre in the Goa University. "There is a need to set up a pre-marriage counselling (centre) for the youth in the Goa University. The youth should know how to run a family," Sinha said. "If they have any questions related to marriage, they can be answered (at the counselling centre) and this will help them lead a successful married life," she added. The Governor is also the chancellor of universities in the state. Sinha was addressing the 30th convocation of the Goa University here. President Ram Nath Kovind and chief minister Manohar Parrikar were also present on the occasion.

Sinha, in her speech, asked students present for the convocation to make five promises by raising their hands. The first of these was that students will not send their parents to old age homes. "Marriage is a necessity and that is why you will not break marriage on petty issues. You will make your marriage successful and will respect each other," the Governor said about the second promise. In the third promise, she appealed to the youth to fight against any injustice meted out to women.

Simultaneous elections not feasible: Puducherry CM

PUDUCHERRY, JULY 7 /--/ Puducherry chief minister V Narayanasamy today said it is not feasible to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

"Simultaneous polls are not feasible. I have written letters to the Law Commission and home ministry stating my stand on the subject," Narayanaswamy told newspersons here. The idea to conduct simultaneous elections is not an acceptable proposition, he said. He said the Law Commission has convened a two-day meeting with all national and state political parties to discuss its feasibility. The need for holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies has been voiced for several years now. More recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also voiced his support to the idea.

The chief minister said he had apprised Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, who was on a day-long visit to Puducherry yesterday, of the various grievances of the territorial government. The chief minister said he had sought his intervention to procure sufficient funds for Puducherry and also placed before him the plea that it be granted "statehood with special category status". He said he also took up various other issues such as -- including Puducherry in the Fifteenth Finance Commission, waiver of loans and 25 per cent quota of seats in UG and PG courses in Pondicherry University. The chief minister said as the Vice-President is the chancellor of the central university here, he had requested him to establish an institute of environment sciences and a department for skill development among others. "The Vice-President assured me that he would consider the plea to include Puducherry as one of the constituent regions of the Finance Commission," he added. Naidu had also assured him that he would soon convene a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of the university to meet all the demands in so far as university-related subjects were concerned, Narayanasamy said.

He reiterated that Lt Governor Kiran Bedi "does not have any authority to deny approval to any of the decisions the government took". The chief minister said the recent verdict of the Supreme Court on the power tussle between the Lt Governor of Delhi and the elected government there was applicable to the Puducherry, too. "The verdict is totally applicable to Puducherry also and this point has been repeatedly pointed out leaving no room for any doubt and wrong understanding," he said. The Lt Governor here "cannot reject" any of the cabinet decisions and could only seek clarification for any part of the decisions, Narayanasamy asserted.

Meanwhile, the government reimbursed students from the union territory who took the recent NEET examination in centres in other states. Narayanasamy said 304 students from Puducherry, who appeared for NEET in other states and incurred expenditure for travel and boarding, were reimbursed by the government.

BJP for continuing with Guv's rule in J&K: Ram Madhav

NEW DELHI, JULY 7 /--/ BJP general secretary Ram Madhav today rejected reports that his party was working to form a government in Jammu and Kashmir with rebel PDP MLAs and said that it was for continuing with Governor's rule in the state in the interest of peace, governance and development.

Madhav's comments on Twitter came after former state chief minister and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah tweeted a news report that claimed that a "big chunk of PDP MLAs are in touch with the BJP high command" and the saffron party was looking to form government. "Contrary to Ram Madhav's assertions, the state unit of the BJP confesses to being party to the efforts to break the PDP. Power at any cost would seem to be the guiding philosophy," Abdullah said, tagging the BJP leader in his tweet. Madhav, the BJP's pointsman for the state, replied: "Not true. I will certainly check with the state unit and ensure that BJP keeps itself scrupulously out of whatever is happening in other parties in the Valley. "We are for continuing with the Governor's rule in the interest of peace, governance and development in the state," he said. The BJP had last month pulled out of the coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir, bringing the state under Governor's rule.

Meanwhile the National Conference today said it would apprise Governor N N Vohra of the alleged discrimination and atrocities against the people in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, during the last three years. National Conference general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar was addressing a press conference along with party's constituency in-charges of Srinagar at party headquarters. The party has decided to call upon the governor and his advisors to raise the issue of discrimination and atrocities in Srinagar and want the administration to address them, he said. Sagar claimed that the party had raised the issues but the PDP-BJP government paid no heed to them. We had raised these issues in the last three years, but to no avail. The people of Srinagar have been subjected to curfews, restrictions, atrocities and economic losses, he stated.

"After south (Kashmir), Srinagar was targeted. An atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity was created in Srinagar and people were made to face difficulties, he said. Sagar said all the MLAs and constituency incharges of the party in Srinagar would call upon the governor in a few days and bring these issues to his notice. NC provincial president (Kashmir) Nasir Aslam Wani condemned the killing of three civilians in Kulgam allegedly in security forces' firing. We condemn the killings. We had hoped that such killings would stop but it was still continuing. We appeal to the Governor to stop these killings, he said. Sagar said the NC had a clear policy that oppression and suppression...are no options. It is a political issue and has to be resolved politically. (PTI)

Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Dr S P Vaid interacting with Amarnath Yatries to review the security and transport arrangements placed for the safety and hassle free movement of the Amarnath bound pilgrims on the national highway at Ramban on Saturday.

Punjab University dedicates shooting range to Kargil war hero Captain Vikram Batra

CHANDIGARH, JULY 7 /--/ The Panjab University (PU) dedicated today its state-of-the-art indoor shooting range to Kargil War hero Captain Vikram Batra, an alumnus of the varsity.

Captain Batra had died fighting Pakistani forces during the Kargil war in 1999 at the age of 24. He was awarded the highest wartime gallantry award Param Vir Chakra posthumously. Punjab finance minister Manpreet Singh Badal unveiled the plaque of Captain Batra at the shooting range in the university, an official release said here. Referring to the sacrifice of Captain Batra, Badal said many people come and go in this world but some people come but never leave, they become immortal. He urged youth to take the pledge for fighting against drug addiction, bribery, poverty and unemployment.

Earlier, PU Vice Chancellor Arun Grover said it is a great honour for the university to name the shooting range as 'Capt. Vikram Batra, PVC Shooting Range'. The V-C said Capt Batra was an alumnus of the university who stayed in the hostel number one in the PU campus while pursuing MA English in 1995-96 session after completing his BSc from DAV College, Chandigarh.

Colonel Rajiv Kapoor, Commanding Officer of the 13 battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, the Army unit in which Capt Batra had served, complemented the Punjab government and PU for the noble deed of naming the shooting range after the war hero.

Capt Batra was one in a billion having three characteristics - passion for country, compassion for subordinates and common public, and bravery of the highest level, he said. The colonel shared the journey of Capt Batra from the "baby of the Battalion to a hero of the nation". "His bravery, sacrifice, charm, and infectious smile still nests all hearts," the colonel added. Vishal Batra, twin brother of Capt Batra, said he was a great inspiration for youngsters.