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BJP team visits Bengal's clash-hit areas of Asansol



Kolkata, Apr 1: A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) delegation on Sunday visited the violence-hit areas of Asansol in West Bengal ignoring the ban imposed by the state administration and accused the state government of "completely failing to stop the violence". Despite being stopped by police a few times, the four member team, along with their security personnel, entered the areas that were most severely hit during the clash a week ago and accused the Bengal government of failing to stop the violence. "We have met the affected people and listened to their problems they went through during the time of clash. It is a complete failure of the state government to stop

the violence. (Chief Minister) Mamata Banerjee is roaming around in Delhi but kids here are getting tortured and murdered," said BJP spokesperson Shah Nawaz Hussain, who was part of the team. "We have come here for peace. We will prepare a complete report and submit it to the party president as directed," he added. BJP President Amit Shah set up a four-member committee comprising party Vice President Om Mathur, Hussain and MPs Roopa Ganguly and B.D. Ram to take stock of the situation current situation in West Bardhaman district's Asansol-Raniganj area where a clash broke out between two communities following a Ram Navami rally. The state govern-

ment had beefed up security and issued prohibitory orders in the area. It also clarified it would not be able to provide ample police protection and pilot cars to the BJP delegation as it would violate the model code of conduct issued in the state since Saturday for the impending rural elections here. Police accused the BJP delegation of violating the prohibitory orders and said legal action would be taken against them. "They have violated the CrPC 144 imposed in the area by entering there. We would take actions against them according to law," Superintendent of Police, Asansol-Durgapur, L.N. Meena told IANS. A person was allegedly hacked to death while a Deputy Commissioner of

Police lost a hand after getting hit by a bomb during a clash between two groups centring on a Ram Navami procession organised by Sangh affiliates in Raniganj on Monday. Several shops and houses were vandalised and set ablaze during the clashes. Police stopped Union Minister Babul Supriyo, who is the local MP, from visiting the area a few days back, saying it would add to tension in the area. A Congress delegation led by state Congress president Adhir Chowdhury was also barred from entering Asansol while Communist Party of India-Marxist leader Sujjan Chakraborty and his associates were stopped by police from going to Raniganj on Saturday.

GJM to hold meeting at Bagrakote on April 5th: Binoy Tamang

HM Correspondent

Siliguri, April 1: Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) Board of Administrators' (BoA) chairman Binoy Tamang held a press conference at the Siliguri Journalists' Club on Sunday evening. Addressing media persons, Tamang who heads a separate faction of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) after severing ties with

fugitive GJM leader Bimal Gurung informed that the Binay-Anit GJM camp would convene a meeting at Bagrakote on April 5th to decide on its take on the ensuing panchayat elections in Bengal.

It's worth mentioning that the dates for panchayat elections in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts have not been announced while the rest of Bengal will go to the polls on

three phases starting May 1 as announced by the Bengal election commission on Saturday. Meanwhile, Tamang is also scheduled to hold a public meeting at Jogighopa on 'poila boisakh' the Bengali New Year during which he will be highlighting the developmental works undertaken by the GTA across Darjeeling hills. Besides, a meeting is scheduled on

April 4 at Lal Kothi the GTA headquarters in Darjeeling with railway officials to discuss the Sevoke-Rangpo rail project. GTA is likely to issue the mandatory NoC for the rail project as the railway department is said to have agreed to most of the demands set forth by the GTA. Tamang today thanked the state government for the prevailing peace in Darjeeling hills.

NBSTC starts Siliguri-Delo bus service



Mukesh Sharma

Kalimpong, April 1: North Bengal State Transport Corporation (NBSTC) has started Siliguri-Delo bus service via Kalimpong for which 30-seater bus has been pressed into service. The bus will leave NBSTC Siliguri depot at 6.30 am, reach Kalimpong at around 9 am and halt for half-an-hour at the motor stand before heading to Delo. Local passengers

will be charged a fare of Rs. 10 from the motor stand to Delo. Many students from Jalpaiguri Engineering College were seen taking the Siliguri-Delo service inaugural bus run. A passenger from Siliguri who every Sunday visits the Dr. Graham's Homes School which is located on the way to Delo today said, "I am thankful to the NBSTC for starting this bus service. Earlier, I had to pay around Rs. 200 as

local taxi fare from the motor stand to Dr. Graham's Homes School but today I reached the school paying a total fare of Rs. 105 from Siliguri. This bus service saved both my fare and time". Many local passengers were also seen taking the bus midway from Delo to the motor stand and appeared jubilant stating that they had to pay only a bus fare of Rs. 10 as compared to Rs. 30 in local taxi.

Three arrested for CBSE paper leak

New Delhi, Apr 1: Two private school teachers and a tuition teacher have been arrested on Sunday for their alleged role in leaking the question paper of the CBSE examinations. With these arrests, the trail has been traced back to source, the police said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Dr. Ram Gopal Naik confirmed that the three — Rohit, Rishabh and Tauqeer — were arrested in the early hours of Sunday from Bawana. Sources said that Rohit and Rishabh are teachers in a private school and Tauqeer runs a coaching centre.

"Rohit is a Physics teacher and Rishabh is a Mathematics teacher. They both had access to rooms where the question papers were kept before the exam. They used to click pictures of the questions and send it to Tauqeer who would further share the questions with his students after writing them down on a different paper," said a senior police officer.

The police said that they're questioning other staffers of the school and the coaching centre.

CVC to take Aadhaar route to detect bureaucratic corruption

New Delhi, Apr 1: The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) would soon use Aadhaar to track corruption among bureaucrats, an official said on Sunday.

The anti-corruption watchdog was optimistic that information made available through a person's Permanent Account Number (PAN) and Aadhaar cards could help the CVC check if financial deals carried out by the card holder were within his or her means.

"We have prepared a concept paper. The idea is to prepare some kind of an operational procedure and if possible some kind of software so that once it is decided to investigate X, Y or Z, we can connect in a seamless manner with other departments to get the necessary details (regarding the person) using Aadhaar," Central Vigilance Commissioner KV Chowdhary said in an interview.

He said data about financial transactions, including those related to immovable properties and shares, were available in various domain areas of Income Tax authorities, registration departments or Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and other government agencies. With Aadhaar being made mandatory for some financial transactions, Chowdhary said it would be

in a position to get data from a few centralised agencies and use the information for the purpose of determining a transaction made by an individual and to probe Disproportionate Assets (DA).

The CVC said the CBI and other investigating agencies earlier did not have easy access to such data. "Now that the data is available and it is very valuable, it needs to be leveraged. This data... will give a much better picture of receipt, expenditure and investments of an officer," said Chowdhary, who headed the Income Tax Department before taking over as the chief of the probity watchdog.

Expressing the resolve to take every possible step and route to weed out corruption in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for a "corruption-free nation" and war against black money, he said the human aspect—such as role of individuals and auditors -- in the Punjab National Bank (PNB) loan scam showed that investigation needs to look at the use of technology for misdeeds and for covering them up.

This, Chowdhary said, would require some software preparation, Standard Operating Procedures and perhaps some approvals. "It is under preparation," he said.

3 jawans martyred, 11 terrorists killed in south Kashmir encounters

Srinagar, Apr 1: Terror groups in the Valley suffered a major setback as 11 terrorists were gunned down in counter-insurgency operations in three different areas in South Kashmir in which three Army jawans and two civilians were also killed. At a hurriedly called joint press conference of army, police and CRPF, Jammu and Kashmir police chief S P Vaid said this is one of the biggest counter-offensives in recent times against terror groups operating in the Kashmir Valley. The operations by security forces rendered a severe dent to terror groups such as the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Lashker-e-Taiba, officials said here.

Three army jawans have lost their lives in the operations at Kachdooru in Shopian, officials said, adding three bodies of terrorists have been recovered from the debris so far. The operation has been called off at Kachdooru and the security personnel will search the debris again tomorrow, the officials said. Earlier, at a press conference called at Victor Force headquarters at Awantipura, around 33 kilometres from here, Corps Commander of XV Corps, Lt Gen A K Bhatt, termed it one of the biggest operations in recent times and said the death of Lt Umar Fayaz, who was brutally killed in Shopian last year, had been avenged.

"Among the militants killed are Ishaq Malik and Rayees Thokar. They were responsible for his death," Bhatt said. Fayaz, 22, was killed by terrorists in May last year. His body was found with bullet wounds in the Hermain area of Shopian district in south Kashmir. The DGP also made a special mention of an SSP's efforts to convince a terrorist to surrender during the Dialgam encounter. "I would like to make a special mention about the Dialgam encounter where our Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) made a special effort, which is unheard of in any part of the world. He called the family members of one of the terrorists. They spoke with him for 30 minutes, to convince him to surrender," the officer said. "Unfortunately, he did not heed the advice of his family. During the talks, the district SSP tried to get him over. Instead he fired on the police leaving them with no option other than to retaliate. He was killed. The other one was caught alive," he said.

On the ongoing operations at Kachdooru, the DGP said there was information about the presence of four to five terrorists, but "we will be able to give a clear picture only after the debris is cleared".

One civilian death was reported from Draggad and the other at Kachdooru, both in Shopian district, the police chief said. Violence broke out at the Kachdooru encounter site in which 25 civilians received pellet injuries while six others suffered bullet injuries, the police chief said. The DGP said that all the seven terrorists killed in the Draggad encounter were locals and their bodies have been claimed by their families. Inspector General of CRPF Zulfikar Hassan pointed out that people came in large numbers at the encounter site in Shopian.

"The operations will not stop and we will have to take all offensive measures in case they do not refrain from throwing stones at the jawans engaged in the counter-insurgency operations," he said.

Current laws inadequate to deal with data theft: Experts

New Delhi, Apr 1: At 462.12 million, India has the second highest number of Internet users in the world after China but lacks the legal framework to ensure data protection and privacy with current laws inadequate for the rapidly-evolving sector, say cyber security experts.

As data theft becomes the political buzzword pitching the ruling BJP against the opposition Congress, recent revelations on the issue have forced people to re-examine their everyday social media browsing habits, particularly on Facebook.

It started mid-March with international media reports claiming that the profiles of 50 million Facebook users were harvested by UK-based analytics firm Cambridge Analytica (CA) to influence the US presidential election and the pro-Brexit campaign as well as polls in other countries. The resulting storm engulfed India too, with former CA employee-turned-whistleblower Christopher Wylie claiming the firm extensively operated in the country and had served political parties, including the Congress and the Janata Dal (United). Beyond the global impact of the biggest-ever data breaches and the social media behemoth Facebook, the scandal brought to the fore the shortcoming of India's laws to deal with ever-advancing issues of

online privacy and data theft in the country, say experts.

"India has the second highest number of Internet users globally. However India's Information Technology Act, 2000, and its amendments — 2008 and 2011 — are not well suited to deal with social media and internet related cyber-crimes," said Jaspreet Singh, partner, Cyber Security, Ernst & Young.

According to figures by Internet World Stats, a website featuring data on global Internet usage, China had highest number of internet users at 738.5 million till December 31, 2017. India was second and the US third with 286.94 million users.

India does not have a dedicated law on data protection and privacy, said Singh.

"Consequently, the third party transfers and cross border movement of personal data, the entire sharing ecosystem, is not adequately dealt with under the Indian IT Act. If any organisation is disclosing the personal information to third parties in India for data profiling or other such marketing and business purposes, there is no effective legal solution that is available," he added.

Supreme Court lawyer Pavan Duggal said it would be a mistake to expect the IT Act to be a holistic one-point legal framework for cyber security as it was enacted 10 years ago.

"... there have been dramatic advances in cyber security and also cyber security breaches, but the law has stood frozen in point of time in history," the cyber law specialist told reporter.

Going by Indian law, the data breach episode, which has attracted a probe by regulators and governments in several countries and also triggered panic amongst millions of internet users, is at best "immoral or unethical" but not illegal.

"If you take Cambridge Analytica as an example, what they have done is mining of data and purchase of data with the consent of users by tricking them into giving their consent and taking off their data. "So you may call this entire practice of data collection and data harvesting immoral and unethical, but according to Indian laws it is not illegal. It is not against the law of the land," said cyber security expert Jiten Jain. The Facebook-CA episode throws up a host of issues, added Rama Vedashree, CEO of the Data Security Council of India (DSCI), stressing the need for clarity about the roles, obligations and responsibilities of all stakeholders towards protecting data and protecting individual privacy in the ecosystem.

"I won't call it the way it is being positioned—as a security breach or a data breach—

but possibly a breach of trust of the users who have shared their data because the data was used or harvested for some other purpose which the user was not even aware of. I think that is the fundamental thing (here)," she said. Biju Janata Dal MP Baijant Jay Panda has filed a private members bill in Parliament and been passionately championing the cause for "sensible new regulations". "Using data for marketing and political campaigning purposes should be done legitimately, with the consent of people whose data is being used and also in line with a modern regulatory framework that protects privacy and enshrines accountability for misuse of data," he said. Panda described the current Indian regulatory framework as inadequate, especially since these challenges are rapidly evolving in a widely connected world.

As debates over online privacy trended globally following the data breach expose, there were acrimonious exchanges in India between its two main parties.

While the BJP attacked the Congress and asked it to explain CA's role in its social media outreach, the Opposition party said it was the BJP which hired the services of the controversial firm during Bihar and other state polls as well as for its 'Mission 272-plus' campaign.