

After HC's status quo order, Cong urges Governor to convene Rajasthan Assembly

MLAs stage protest demanding that CM Gehlot be allowed to prove majority

OUR BUREAU/AGENCIES
New Delhi, July 24

The Congress in Rajasthan has started putting pressure on Governor Kalraj Mishra to convene the Assembly for the government to seek a trust vote at the earliest. The Congress's move started soon after the Rajasthan High Court ordered *status quo* on the disqualification notice issued by the Assembly Speaker CP Joshi to 19 dissenting Congress MLAs, including the Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot.

Party MLAs protested at the Raj Bhawan in Jaipur demanding that the session should be convened soon. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot met with Mishra on Friday.

The BJP urged the Centre to send CRPF personnel for the protection of Governor.

In Delhi, Gehlot's advocate and senior Congress MP Kapil Sibal cited Supreme Court orders that upheld the principle that the strength of a Government should be proved on the floor of the House.

'Redefining democracy'

Coming down heavily against Mishra and the High Court's order, Sibal charged that the BJP is trying to give a "new definition for democracy". He said there is a new way for the functioning of the Governors. "In the past we have seen how Governors functioned in States like Arunachal Pradesh," he said.

He maintained Mishra should have gone by the Cabinet's recommendation to convene the House on Monday. "There was no response from governor," he



Governor Kalraj Mishra interacts with the Congress MLAs who accompanied Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to the Raj Bhawan, in Jaipur, on Friday.

said justifying the protest which was being held at Raj Bhawan. He said the Speaker is a Constitutional post and the presiding officer can send notices based on the complaint against rebels.

Meanwhile, a counsel for Joshi said: "The writ petition has been admitted and the

court has ordered for *status quo* on the notices dated July 14.

The matter will be heard in due course now." The bench said the writ petition is maintainable and is admitted on the ground of three pleas of the petitioners. "After completion of filing

of pleadings of the parties and the intervenors, Counsel for the parties shall be at liberty to file an application for early hearing of the writ petition. Till then, the *status quo*, as exists today viz-a-viz impugned notices dated 14.07.2020, shall be maintained," the order stated.

Prior to this, the court allowed an application for implementation of the Union of India in the list of respondents. The court also rejected two pleas which sought an order declaring that alleged actions of the petitioners as the members of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly do not come within the purview of disqualification envisaged under Para (2) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, and declaring Clause 2 (1) (a) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution ultra vires. Rejecting the petitions, the court said they are beyond its jurisdiction.

Kerala gold case: Remand of accused extended till Aug 21

VSAJEEV KUMAR/VINSON KURIAN
Kochi/Thiruvananthapuram, July 24

The NIA Special Court has extended till August 21 the remand of two accused in the case involving smuggling of gold via diplomatic channel through the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport.

The accused, Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair, the second and fourth accused, were brought to the court on Friday. The NIA later submitted that it has seized ₹1 crore in cash and one kg gold from the bank lockers owned by Swapna Suresh.

But her lawyer held that by a friend in West Asia had gifted the same to her. In her bail application, Swapna Suresh submitted that the charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act would not hold as there is no proven terrorist link. The court will consider her bail application on Wednesday (July 29). The court has also permitted the Customs to arrest both the accused following a petition filed by it and record their arrest. The Customs has arrested the first accused PS Sarith.

Shipping Ministry waives inland waterways charges

Move aimed at encouraging use of waterways for cargo movement, which is abysmally low now

OUR BUREAU
New Delhi, July 24

To draw more cargo to waterways, Ministry of Shipping has waived waterway usage charges for three years with immediate effect, said an official statement. The move comes in the backdrop of cargo moved on waterways stagnating in fiscal 2020 against the previous fiscal, according to official data.

Water usage charge was applicable on vessels using the national waterways. It was a hindrance in administration of traffic movement and collection of traffic data.

Waterways charge

Presently, Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) levies the waterway usage charges at a rate of ₹0.02 per

gross registered tonnage (GRT) per kilometer for inland cargo vessels and ₹0.05 per GRT for cruise vessels, according to a statement.

The decision is estimated to increase the inland waterway traffic movement to 110 million tonnes in 2022-23 from 72 mt in 2019-20, added the statement. The cargo loaded fiscal 2018-19 was a tad over 72 mt, according to official data.

Low usage

Union Minister of State for Shipping Mansukh Mandaviya said that currently only two per cent of total cargo traffic moves through waterways. Decision of waiving waterway charges will attract the industries to use the national waterways for their logistical needs.

As the mode of transport is eco-friendly and cheaper, it will not only reduce the burden on other transport modes but also promote the ease of doing business the Minister added.

Rao is father of economic reforms: Manmohan

OUR BUREAU
New Delhi, July 24

Inaugurating the birth centenary celebrations of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, his successor and Finance Minister in Rao's Cabinet Manmohan Singh said while economic reforms and liberalisation were indeed Rao's biggest contributions, his contributions to the country in different fields cannot be underestimated.

'Built consensus'

On the foreign affairs front, Rao made efforts to improve the relationship with neighbours including China.

"India signed the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement along with the SAARC countries. Then the 'Look East Policy' was also his brainchild to link India with East and South-East

Asian countries," Singh said. Hailing Rao as his friend, philosopher and guide, Singh said real tough decisions had to be urgently taken in 1991, as India faced a foreign exchange crisis, with foreign exchange reserves down to about two weeks' imports, bringing the nation to the edge of a precipice. "But then politically it was a big question if one could take hard decisions to meet the challenging situation. It was a precariously placed minority Government, which was dependent on outside support for stability. Yet Narasimha Rao-ji was able to carry everyone along, convincing them with his conviction. Enjoying his confidence, I went about my job to carry forward his vision. Victor Hugo had once said that no power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come - In-



Manmohan Singh

dia's emergence as major economic power was one such idea. There was an arduous journey ahead but it was time to let the whole world know loud and clear that India was wide awake. The rest is history. Looking back, Narasimha Rao-ji can truly be called the father of Economic Reforms in India," Singh said.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in her message, congratulated the Telangana unit of the Congress for organising the centenary celebrations. She said the country was able to overcome a grave economic crisis and many other challenges through Rao's bold leadership. "The Union budget of July 24, 1991 paved the way for the economic transformation of our country. PV Narasimha Rao's tenure is also marked by a number of political, social and foreign policy achievements that have endured. Above all, he was a dedicated Congressman who served the party devotedly in various capacities," she said.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said from joining the Congress in his teenage years to becoming the Prime Minister of the largest democracy, Rao's remarkable political journey reflected his grit and determination.

This Independence Day, public health is the main concern

Home Ministry advises against crowded venues; suggests best use of technology

OUR BUREAU
New Delhi, July 24

Due to the pandemic, the Independence Day this year will be celebrated without large crowds, maintaining social distancing, and following all the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare including use of face masks and proper sanitisation. "All the programmes should be organised in a way that large congregation of people is avoided and technology is used in a best possible manner for celebration befit-

ting the occasion. The events organised could be web-cast in order to reach out people at large, who are not able to participate," said an official statement issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Red Fort ceremony

The ceremony at the Red Fort consists of presentation of a Guard of Honour by the Armed Forces and the Delhi Police to the Prime Minister, unfurling of the National Flag accompanied by playing of the National Anthem and firing of 21-gun salute, speech by Prime Minister, singing of the National Anthem immediately after PM's speech, and release of tri-coloured balloons at the end.

Similarly, at the State and district levels, the ceremony will be conducted by the Chief



Preparations for Independence Day celebrations in full swing at the Red Fort grounds in New Delhi on Friday. SANDEEP SAXENA

Ministers and District Magistrates respectively.

It may be ensured that National Flag is hoisted at all State Capitals/Districts/Block/Panchayat levels, the statement added.

"Performance of the Police/Military bands may be recorded at places of historic importance associated with Independence movement and recorded versions thereof may

be displayed through large screens/digital media, during public functions and on social media," the statement said

It further added that it would be appropriate that the theme of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' is suitably spread and publicised among the masses through various activities/messages in the functions and on social media during Independence Day celebrations.

Pune industries functioning with 47% of employees, says Survey

Industrialists, traders urge Maharashtra govt not to impose any more lockdowns

RADHESHYAM JADHAV
Pune, July 24

Industries in Pune district are functioning with 47 per cent of the total manpower and the current level of production for July 2020 is about 40 per cent of that in July 2019, according to a survey conducted by the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA).

Pune district has more than 13 lakh registered MSMEs and 650-700 large-scale units. Together they employ over 17 lakh, a quarter of them are in the IT/ITeS sector.

Micro industries reported 30 per cent production while medium industries reported



Industrial production was only at 40 per cent in July 2020 compared with July 2019. BLOOMBERG

57 per cent followed by large-scale industries (53 per cent) and small industries (42 per cent).

Medium industries are working with 65 per cent employees followed by large industries (54 per cent), small industries (48 per cent) and micro industries (39 per cent). This is the fourth survey conducted by

the MCCIA to record the status of industries amidst the Covid-19 crisis and lockdowns.

Demand uncertainty

Prashant Girbane, Director-General, MCCIA, speaking to BusinessLine said, "The biggest issue industries are facing is not about seeking permission to start work or

transportation, but the uncertainty of demand. We hope that demand will go up in August with more unlocking resulting in more production".

He added that compared to the last survey, industries have shown an upward trend in production and the number of employees resuming work. Meanwhile, industrialists and traders in Pune district have urged the State government not to impose frequent lockdowns, as they feel that lockdowns have not helped to curb the spread of the pandemic.

The Pimpri-Chinchwad Small and Medium Scale Industries Association has demanded that the government must exempt the industry from lockdowns.

Industrialists said that almost 60 per cent of industries in the auto hub spread across Pune district have started operations even as they continue to wait for the migrant labourers to return.

Apollo pharmacy launches training tool myGurukool

OUR BUREAU
Chennai, July 24

Apollo Pharmacy on Friday announced the launch of 'myGurukool' - an innovative Learning Management System (LMS) to enhance skills and capabilities of its 30,000 employees.

In a press release, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise said 'myGurukool' is the first of its kind training platform for the retail pharmacy business with training modules thoroughly engaging with contemporary gamification tools.

Unsung heroes

"My 30,000 unsung heroes of Apollo Pharmacy have been serving more than half million customers every day, notwithstanding the odds and this speaks for their resolute commitment to service and dedication to patient care," the release quoted Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group as saying.

Covid-19: 'Centre, ICMR in denial mode regarding community transmission'

RAHUL WADKE
Mumbai, July 24

The community transmission of Covid virus is on, especially in States such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and New Delhi. The number of Covid patients is increasing exponentially and the rate of infection is also soaring. Moreover, the tracing of those persons who had come in contact with patients has also become extremely difficult, said Avinash Bhondwe, Maharashtra state president of Indian Medical Association (IMA).

On Friday, 4.40 lakh active cases were reported in the country.

Bhondwe told BusinessLine that inability to successfully undertake contact tracing is a sign of community transmission. In the above-mentioned States, the situation is such that new patients with Covid infection are those who have no travel history or any direct contact with a Covid-19 hotspot.

He opined that the Centre should take a considered and matured view of the situation without worrying about international image and declare that community transmission has

happened in the country and accordingly take steps. IMA (Maharashtra) has been saying consistently that community transmission is happening and with due precaution, it can still be controlled.

Bhondwe said that in hot spots and containment zones, the medical teams need to be sent to every home for testing for Covid and those with comorbid conditions and senior citizens must be compulsorily tested. In such an exercise the number of patients will rise but they would be detected and saved in time. Since such patients would be in quarantine and isolation facilities, the chain of transmission will break.

Assam and Kerala have recognised community transmission happening in some districts. But ICMR and the Union Health Ministry is still in a denial mode. The Centre should declare that the present high growth in the number of cases is a sign of community transmission and take additional steps for its control. It will need additional surveillance in hotspots and housing societies, he

said. He added that the first stage of the pandemic was the people travelling from foreign countries who got infected, the second stage was those who got infected from such travellers. At that stage contact tracing was possible. But as the pandemic spread and daily wage workers went back to their native places, the viral transmission was huge. Till date, early detection of viral infection in a person and detailed contact tracing is not happening methodically. Only close family members are being traced and tested, he lamented.

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BusinessLine

Covid-19: Out-of-school poor kids are now child labourers?

RADHESHYAM JADHAV
Pune, July 24

Thousands of school students hailing from poor families in Maharashtra are completely disconnected from schools and teachers following the Covid-19 outbreak. Teachers fear that the majority of children might have taken up jobs to support their families financially in these times of lockdown.

"The number of child labour has definitely gone up, though there is no such survey. Online education is limited to a few who have mobile handsets and an internet connection, and those who don't have these have been cut off from education in the last five months. It is difficult

to keep poor children in the flow of education even during normal circumstances, and the Covid-19 crisis has worsened the financial condition of poor families," said Bhau Chaskar, member of Maharashtra-based Active Teachers' Forum (ATF). Chaskar added that along with child labour, child marriages of girls too would go up.

According to 2011 census, India reported 43.53 lakh children working as labourers. About 52 per cent of India's total child workers are located in four States, with Uttar Pradesh leading with 8.96 lakh child labourers followed by Maharashtra (4.96 lakh), Bihar (4.51 lakh) and Andhra Pradesh (4 lakh).



It is difficult to keep poor children in schools normally and the Covid-19 crisis has worsened the situation

"Since child labour is the result of socio-economic conditions, a definite timeline for elimination of child labour cannot be ascertained," the Ministry of Labour and

Employment told Lok Sabha in March. The Covid-19 crisis is causing an unprecedented drop-off in economic activity, stated the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and

UNICEF in a recent report titled 'Covid-19 and Child Labour: A Times of Crisis, A Time to Act'. The report says that children are often the most available labour in households. When households need more financial support, they turn to children. Parental unemployment due to economic shocks lead children to step in to provide temporary support. Such effects have been documented in India and a few other countries. The report added that child labour is prevalent mainly in the informal economy, where children can easily step in as unskilled labourers. Threats to children's rights from an enlarged informal sector

should therefore, not be underestimated.

The recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reveals that the cost of schooling was the biggest reason for children not attending school. The median number of years of schooling completed was just 4.4 for girls compared to 6.9 for boys.

"This kharif season, many children in rural Maharashtra worked with their parents in the fields. Children left school bags at home and are helping their parents to earn a livelihood," says activist and school teacher Maruti Khude. He is not sure how many of his students will return to school once regular classes start.