

# NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

## TMC's reign of terror prevails in West Bengal: Rahul Gandhi

**NEW DELHI, APR 26:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday strongly condemned the killing of party worker Debdeep Chatterjee allegedly by TMC goons, and said his party will not bow before this politics that stains India's non-violent tradition.

Chatterjee was brutally murdered in Asansol during post-poll violence. He was closely associated with Asansol North Congress candidate Prasenjit Puitandi, the party claimed.

The worker was attacked and beaten by those linked to the ruling All India Trinamool Congress and succumbed to injuries shortly thereafter, the West Bengal Congress alleged.

"The murder of Congress worker Debdeep Chatterjee by TMC-affiliated goons after the elections is utterly reprehensible. My deepest condolences to the grieving family," Gandhi said in a post on X.

"In West Bengal today, it is not democracy but TMC's reign of terror that prevails. Intimidating, attacking, and eliminating opposing voices after votes are cast - this has



become the defining character of TMC," Gandhi also said.

He said the Congress' politics has never been based on violence, nor will it ever be.

"We too have lost our workers, yet we have always chosen the path of non-violence and the Constitution. This is our legacy, this is our resolve. The demand is clear - immediate arrest of all the guilty, the harshest punishment, and grant full security and compensation for Debdeep's family," the former Congress chief said.

"We will not bow before this politics that stains India's non-violent tradition. Justice will be done," Gandhi said.

The West Bengal Congress, in a post on its X handle, said this tragic incident exposes the complete collapse of law and order in the state and raises serious questions about the safety of opposition workers in West Bengal.

"The fact that such violence has occurred immediately after polling highlights a deeply disturbing pattern of political intimidation and vendetta," it said.

The Congress stands firmly with the bereaved family and demands immediate arrest of all those responsible for this heinous crime and a fair, impartial, and time-bound investigation. It also said adequate

compensation and protection for the victim's family.

"It is deeply concerning that even an FIR had not been registered at the time of reporting, further indicating administrative apathy in the face of such a grave incident.

"The Indian National Congress reiterates that democracy cannot survive in an atmosphere of fear and violence. We will continue to raise our voice against such atrocities and fight to ensure justice for every victim," the party said.

The Congress said the murder of Chatterjee by goons associated with TMC is highly condemnable and termed it a direct attack on democracy.

"Democracy in West Bengal has ended, and TMC's reign of terror continues. Silencing and subduing opposing voices through violence has become TMC's hallmark. We demand that the culprits be arrested immediately and given the harshest possible punishment.

We will not allow the democracy of our country to be destroyed by these anti-people forces," the Congress said. (PTI)

## Participation Of Every Citizen In Census 2027 Vital: PM Modi

**NEW DELHI, APR 26:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the ongoing Census exercise is not just a government task but a responsibility of all citizens and participation of everyone is vital.

In his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi also said that all information provided by the people during the Census will remain secure and confidential, and appealed to all citizens to participate in the process and make the Census 2027 a success.

"Friends, the national Census is not just a government task; it is a responsibility for all of us. Your participation is vital. The information you provide remains completely secure and confidential, protected by robust digital security," he said.

The prime minister said Census is a very important campaign currently underway in the country and every Indian must be aware of it. He also noted that the Indian Census exercise is the largest such exercise in the world.

"Census 2027 has been



made digital. All information is being recorded directly through digital means," he said.

Modi said the personnel visiting people's homes are equipped with a mobile app and they will speak to everyone and enter the information right there. "Friends, your participation in this Census has also been made easier. You can now record your information yourself. A self-enumeration facility will

be available to you 15 days before the official visit. You can fill in the details at your own convenience," he said.

Once completed, the applicant will receive a unique ID via mobile or email, he said. "Later, when the official arrives at your home, you can simply show this ID to confirm your details," he said.

Modi said this eliminates the need to provide information twice, saving time and making the process seam-

less.

He said in states where self-enumeration has been completed, the work of house-listing by Census officials has already begun.

So far, the house-listing for approximately 12 million (1.2 crore) families has been completed, he said.

Modi said for those who have been through this process before, their experience this time is going to be different. (Agencies)

## Par Panel 'Taken Aback' As NMC Issues Regulations Without Law Ministry Clearance

**NEW DELHI, APR 26:** A parliamentary committee has said it was "taken aback" to find that crucial regulations issued by the National Medical Commission were not vetted by the Union law ministry, an essential prerequisite to prevent future infirmities.

In its report on "Infirmities in the regulations framed under the National Medical Commission Act", the Lok Sabha Committee on Subordinate Legislation said getting draft rules and regulations vetted by the law ministry from the legal, constitutional and drafting point of view is essential.

"The Committee, during an examination of the regulations published by the National Medical Commission (NMC) under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, found to its surprise that one of the most integral procedures in the framing of any subordinate legislation, that of getting it 'vetted' by the Ministry of Law and Justice from the constitutional, legal and drafting point of view was 'missed'," it said.

The report was tabled in the recently concluded Budget session of Parliament. The committee report is



based on the examination of the National Medical Commission (Recognition of Medical Qualifications) Regulations, 2023; Teachers Eligibility Qualifications in Medical Institutions Regulations, 2022; and the Medical Institutions (Qualifications of Faculty) Regulations, 2025, drafted by the NMC.

The parliamentary panel said it "was taken aback to find such occurrences" where the law ministry was not kept in the loop.

Getting bills, Acts, rules, regulations duly 'vetted' by the law ministry is a "non-negotiable step" which ought not be "missed" as had been "candidly accepted" by the

representatives of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare also during the deposition before the committee, the report noted. Rules, regulations and orders issued under a particular law are called subordinate legislation.

They are also called delegated legislation, as Parliament allows the executive to frame rules for the efficient functioning and implementation of laws passed by it.

"The nature of such delegated legislation, which is published in the Gazette of India, needs to be taken seriously. These delegated legislations, once in the public domain, form the fulcrum for

subsequent executive actions by the nodal agency and, as such, merit utmost caution and due diligence to weed out any iota of mistake which could have serious legal ramifications on account of loopholes/vulnerability in the document," the panel cautioned.

Keeping such instances in view, the committee recommended to the health ministry "to be alert" and ensure that such errors do not creep up in future. It also said that all the drafted subordinate legislations should be duly vetted by the law ministry before they are published in the Gazette of India. (Agencies)

## BJP spreading rumours of contact between Punjab AAP MLAs, Raghav: Sanjay Singh

**NEW DELHI, APR 26:** Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh on Sunday dismissed claims that party MLAs in Punjab are in contact with Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha, who recently joined the BJP, labelling such developments as "misinformation and rumours."

Singh accused the BJP and Raghav Chadha of deliberately spreading these rumours and noted that protests are being held across Punjab against the "betrayal" by Chadha and other Rajya Sabha MPs who left AAP to join the BJP.

"The public sentiment is against them for betraying AAP and Punjab," Singh claimed during a press conference.

On Friday, the AAP suffered a jolt when Raghav



Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Sandeep Pathak, Harbhajan Singh, Rajendra Gupta, Vikram Sahni and Swati Maliwal quit and merged with the BJP, alleging that the Arvind Kejriwal-led party had strayed from its principles, values and core morals.

"According to the Constitution, two-thirds of the total

left AAP for the BJP are likely to lose their Rajya Sabha memberships, as he believes no MLA would want to risk their future by aligning with them. "Would anyone wish to join him and risk their own membership being cancelled? Everyone understands this in politics," Singh remarked.

He reiterated that the claims regarding Punjab MLAs maintaining contact with Chadha are nothing more than misinformation and an attempt to spread rumours.

Additionally, Singh mentioned that he has submitted a petition to the Rajya Sabha chairman requesting the termination of the memberships of the seven AAP Rajya Sabha MPs who switched to the BJP. (Agencies)

## Allahabad HC slaps Rs 15L costs on man for suppressing facts in maintenance case against wife

**PRAYAGRAJ, APR 26:** The Allahabad High Court has dismissed a petition filed by an advocate seeking expeditious disposal of a maintenance case against his wife, terming the litigation "vexatious" and "born out of pretences".

Justice Vinod Diwakar imposed a compensatory cost

of Rs 15 lakh on the petitioner-husband for suppressing material facts in his affidavits and subjecting his wife to systemic depletion.

The court observed that the man, an able-bodied practising advocate, had not only concealed a prior maintenance order in his favour, but also diverted substantial personal loans taken by his wife for his own "luxurious life" and "alcoholic drinks".

According to the facts of the case, the petitioner and the respondent were married on May 18, 2019. At the time, both were preparing for competitive examinations. Shortly after, the wife secured a job as an additional private secretary in the Allahabad High Court, while the petitioner, despite being a law graduate and a registered advocate, remained unemployed.

Soon disputes arose, leading to multiple litigations. The husband filed a maintenance application before a principal judge in the family court in Etawah. Software

He then approached the high court with a prayer to expedite the proceedings, claiming that he had no independent source of income for survival.

It was submitted on behalf of the wife that on November 10, 2020, her husband took a personal loan of Rs 11.50 lakh from her salary account in the SBI having a branch in the Lucknow bench of the

high court by "fraudulently" taking her into confidence on a false promise to purchase a plot of land.

On October 6, 2022, the petitioner again took a personal loan of Rs 13.56 lakh to be repaid in six years from the respondent's salary account in the Jhalwa branch of the SBI in Prayagraj.

The respondent-wife has been paying a monthly EMI of Rs 26,020 since then, which she will pay till October, 2028.

According to the respondent, the loan was taken under the guise of purchasing a plot, but the petitioner fraudulently kept transferring the loan amount into his personal account through UPI and exhausted it on alcoholic drinks, luxurious lifestyle, and other nefarious activities.

It was also argued that "fed up by the petitioner, the wife filed a divorce petition, and on May 20, 2025, her husband filed an application for maintenance based on concocted and false averments".

Allowing the application, the family court on September 15, 2025, directed the wife to pay Rs 5,000 per month as interim maintenance and Rs 10,000 towards litigation expenses.

Challenging the order, the wife filed a review application, which is pending before the family court in Prayagraj.

After going through the entire conduct of the peti-

tioner, the high court observed, "Needless to mention, the entire loan amount has been unauthorisedly misused by the petitioner-husband as reflected from the pattern of withdrawal of the amount, while some transactions reflect a large amount had been transferred through UPI and other similar modes."

"In view of the aforesaid facts and circumstances, this court is of the considered opinion that the present petition does not warrant the exercise of supervisory jurisdiction vested with this court.

"Accordingly, the equity demands that the present petition be dismissed with the compensatory cost of Rs 15,00,000 to be given to the respondent-wife within six weeks from today by way of a demand draft," it said.

In case of non-deposit of the cost money, the court directed the district magistrate in Etawah to recover the same as arrears of land revenue within three months on expiry of the time granted to the petitioner.

The court also directed the district magistrate to constitute a committee to inquire into the movable and immovable assets owned and possessed by the petitioner immediately after the receipt of a copy of the court order for record and compliance with its terms. (PTI)

## Philippine officials say 2 Americans among suspected communist rebels killed in clash with troops

**MANILA (PHILIPPINES), APR 26:** Two Americans were among 19 suspected communist guerrillas who were killed in clashes with Philippine troops in a central province earlier this week, a government anti-insurgency task force said Saturday night.

The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict said the Americans were killed with 17 other suspected New People's Army guerrillas in a series of clashes with army forces on April 19 in the coastal town of Toboso in Negros Occidental province. The deadly fighting was first reported on Monday.

The task force warned Americans of Filipino descent in the United States to be wary of being lured by left-wing activist groups into joining or supporting Filipino insurgents in the Philippines in a recruitment process it described as "terror-grooming".

The US and the Philippines have separately designated the New People's Army as a terrorist organisation.

Human rights groups, however, called for an independent investiga-



tion into the clashes, saying that civilians were killed including a student leader from the state-run University of the Philippines, two local advocates for farmers' rights and a local community journalist who wanted to show support for impoverished villagers.

"We call on the international community to monitor this case closely, as it is not an isolated incident but part of a continuing pattern of international Humanitarian Law violations across the Philippine countryside," the National Union of People's Lawyers, a human rights group, said.

Undersecretary Ernesto Torres Jr., the executive director of the counterinsurgency task force, identified the two slain Americans as Lyle Prijoles and Kai Dana-Rene Sorem.

The US Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Torres said that all 19 people killed have been identified and their remains have been turned over to family. "These facts point to a disturbing convergence: foreign nationals in a live combat setting, where the risks are immediate and the consequences irreversible," he said.

"The presence of two American fatalities in a single encounter should prompt careful reflection on how involvement in certain activities or networks may lead to unintended expo-

sure to dangerous environments," Torres said.

The two Americans arrived in the Philippines in March and "were believed to have subsequently travelled to Negros Occidental, where they were killed on April 19," Torres said, without providing other details.

"Our thoughts are with their families, who now face the burden of loss under circumstances that unfolded far from their homes," Torres said.

Military officials said the clash erupted as army troops responded to information provided by villagers about the presence of suspected rebels, and that a rebel commander with a bounty of 1 million pesos (USD 16,600) on his head was killed. A soldier was wounded in the fighting.

Troops seized 24 firearms at the scene of the clashes and an unspecified number of fleeing guerrillas were captured, the task force said.

At its peak decades ago, the insurgent force had an estimated 25,000 fighters, who waged one of Asia's longest-running communist rebellions.