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Azad quits Congress...

years under Indira Gandhi, the Rajiv Gandhi era, the Narasimha Rao period and eventually the tenure of Congress' longest serving president Sonia Gandhi who he addressed his blistering missive to.

A member of the G-23 group that sought change in the Congress, he told her the party had "lost both the will and ability under the tutelage of the coterie" running the affairs of the party to fight for what is right for India.

A "remote control model" had demolished the institutional integrity of the UPA government and now the Congress party, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister alleged in the often emotive, angry letter detailing his grievances.

"Unfortunately, after the entry of Rahul Gandhi into politics and particularly after January 2013 when he was appointed as vice president by you, the entire consultative mechanism which existed earlier was demolished by him," Azad wrote.

All senior and experienced leaders were sidelined and the new coterie of inexperienced sycophants started running the affairs of the party," he alleged.

Azad said the Congress at the national level has conceded political space available to the BJP and state level space to regional parties.

"This all happened because the leadership in the past eight years has tried to foist non-serious individual at the helm of the party," he alleged.

"The AICC leadership is squarely responsible for perpetrating a giant fraud on the party to perpetuate its hold on the ruins of what once was a national movement that fought for and attained the Independence of India," Azad lashed out.

"Does the Indian National Congress deserve this in the 75th year of India's independence is a question that the AICC leadership must ask itself."

In fact, before starting the Bharat Jodo Yatra -- the party's ambitious campaign across 12 states -- the leadership should undertake a 'Congress jodo' exercise across the country, he said.

"Unfortunately, the situation in the Congress has reached such a point of no return that now 'proxies' are being propped up to take over the leadership of the party. This experiment is doomed to fail because the party has been so comprehensively destroyed that the situation has become irretrievable," he said.

Azad also dwelt on the Congress' electoral debacles.

Under Sonia Gandhi's leadership since 2014 and subsequently that of Rahul Gandhi, the Congress lost two Lok Sabha elections in a humiliating manner and 39 of the 49 assembly elections held between 2014 and 2022, Azad wrote.

"Since the 2019 elections the situation in the party has only worsened. After Rahul Gandhi stepped down in a 'huff' and not before insulting all the senior party functionaries who have given their lives to the party in a meeting of the extended working committee, you took over as interim president, a position that you have continued to hold even today for the past three years, he went on to say.

The former Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha also brought up the incident of Rahul Gandhi tearing an ordinance before the media during UPA rule.

"This 'childish' behaviour completely subverted the authority of the prime minister and the Government of India. This one single action more than anything else contributed significantly to the defeat of the UPA government in 2014...," he claimed.

Referring to the letter written by him and 22 other leaders in August 2020 to flag the "abyssal drift" in the party, he said "the coterie chose to unleash its sycophants on us and got us attacked, vilified and humiliated in the most crude manner possible".

In its counterpunch, the Congress said the contents of Azad's letter were "not factual and its timing 'awful', coming when the entire party organisation was engaged in combating the BJP on key issues like price rise and polarisation.

A man who has been treated with the greatest respect by the Congress leadership was betrayed it by his vicious personal attacks which reveals his true character; Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh tweeted, adding that "GNA's DNA has been Modi-fied".

Hitting out at his former colleague, the party's media department head Pawan Khera added that Azad became restless as soon his Rajya Sabha term got over. He can't stay without post even for a second, Khera said.

"We have seen the love between Narendra Modi and Ghulam Nabi Azad, it was also seen in Parliament. That love has been manifested in this letter," he said.

Asked about Rahul Gandhi tearing the ordinance brought by his party, Khera said Azad did not speak out then as he was holding a post.

"If you think it was wrong, you would have thought it to be wrong then also, why were you silent then. That means you are selfish, your mouth gets shut before a post. Now you don't have a post and therefore you are speaking," Khera said.

Congress sources also rejected Azad's reported criticism that he was not properly consulted before a rejq of the Jammu and Kashmir's Congress unit.

Azad participated in four meetings at the party's 15 GRG 'war room' on Kashmir unit rejq with the last one being on July 14, sources said.

8 J&K Cong...

& Kashmir: I feel that in the prevailing circumstances, the Congress Party has lost its momentum in contributing towards the future of my State.

"Keeping in view the turmoil that the State of J&K has witnessed over the past decades, the people require a decisive leader like Azad to guide them towards a better future. I feel that the Congress Party has not been able to play the role that is expected of it," Chib said in his resignation letter addressed to Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Ajaz Kazmi condoles demise of PDD lineman in Manzgam

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Apni Trade Union, President, Ajaz Kazmi has expressed profound sadness over the demise of a PDD lineman, Mohammed Maqbool Khadem from Aishmuqam area, who was electrocuted in Manzgam.

In his message to the members of the deceased PDD lineman, Kazmi said that it was shocking to know the demise of the hardworking lineman whose services are yet to be recognised by the Govt.

"I express my sympathy with the bereaved family members and pray for the eternal peace of the depart-

ed soul," he said in his message to the bereaved family members.

He said that, "The victim family member of the deceased lineman should be given a Govt job and accordingly compensation be given."

He said that the Govt should regularize the daily wagers, implement minimum wage act in favour of the daily wagers and regularly release the wages.

"The daily wagers in PDD and other departments are facing hardships due to financial crunch yet the Govt has not given any heed to their genuine and humanitarian demands," he said.

This is for the first time for the Government Degree College Kathua that a certificate course in partnership

International Certificate Course commences at GDC Boys Kathua

STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: The Department of Physical Education and Sports, Government Degree College (GDC) Kathua in collaboration with International Association of Physical Education and Sports Incorporated (IAPES) is going to conduct an International Course on Strength and Conditioning, which will commence from 27th to 29th August 2022. This course will be inaugurated by the Principal GDC Kathua Prof. Sumanesh Jasrotia as Chief Guest on August 27, 2022.

This is for the first time for the Government Degree College Kathua that a certificate course in partnership

with an International organization is organized for the sportspersons and Physical Education students, Physical Directors, Trainers and Physiotherapists is organized. Professor Dr. Jewelson M. Santos, Chairman International Association of Physical Education and Sports and Prof. Dr. Jesus D Argarin, President IAPES and Prof. Sumanesh Jasrotia Principal GDC Kathua and Dr. Kishore Mukhopadhyay will be the main guests for the inaugural ceremony.

The world renowned speakers Mrinal Roy, CSCS a specialist from National Strength and Conditioning Association USA, Radha Krishnanswamy Strength and Training per-

sonal Trainer and biomechanics specialist, who was the part of Indian National Women Cricket Team that reached world Cup final 2017, Dr. Katherine Wojonwick, MD CASQSM, FAAFP, affiliate Faculty, University of South Florida, Paul Dwyer, CAT(C), CSCS Athletic Therapist in North Vancouver and Specialist from National Strength and Conditioning Association.

The members of College IQUAC Prof. Jaswinder Singh, HOD Physics, Prof. Raj Kiran, Prof. Rakesh Singh Jasrotia HOD Chemistry and Coordinator IIGNOU, Dr. Anupama Arora, Dr. Deepshikha Sharma, Dr. Pankaj Gupta, Dr. Surya

Partap Singh, Dr. Kailash Sharma and others coordinating for success of this International Certificate Course. However, GDC Kathua will not be involved in any financial matters with IAPES for this three days certificate course. The Principal GDC Kathua Prof. Sumanesh Jasrotia appreciated the hard work and dedication of Dr. J. S. Soodan

Physical Director/PTI of the institute in accomplishing this great work and for providing the students international exposure by organizing and collaborating with prestigious organizations of the world in the field of Physical Education and Sports Science.

Freebies at cost of taxpayers' money may push State towards 'imminent bankruptcy': SC

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Freebies are extended utilising taxpayers' money and may push the State towards "imminent bankruptcy", the Supreme Court said on Friday, as it directed that the pleas against the practice of political parties promising pre-election handouts be listed before a three-judge bench.

Observing that issues raised before it require an "extensive" hearing, the top court said though all promises cannot be equated with freebies as they relate to welfare schemes or measures for the public good, fiscal responsibility cannot be dispensed with under the guise of electoral promises. It said these schemes are not only part of the Directive Principles of State Policy but are also a responsibility of the welfare state.

"Freebies may create a situation wherein the State Government cannot provide basic amenities due to lack of funds and the State is pushed towards imminent bankruptcy. In the same breath, we should remember that such freebies are extended utilising taxpayers' money only for increasing the popularity of the party and electoral prospects," a bench headed by Chief Justice N. V. Ramana said.

The court order on Justice Ramana's last day in office comes against the backdrop of the freebies versus welfare scheme debate that has sparked a political slugfest in recent weeks.

The apex court said that there can be no denying the fact that in an electoral democracy, the true power ultimately lies with the electorate.



gramme delivery shall take place on the SWAYAM platform by the IGNOU Headquarters. The registration for the said programme is open and teachers of higher education can register for any suitable batch by uploading Institution I/Card or letter from the Head of Institution. Any teacher of any Higher Education Institute in India can register and participate in the Professional Development Programme on National Education Policy-2020. The certification on successful completion of the programme shall also be equally useful for purposes of API, CAS and any other career advancement requirements specified by UGC. "Every teacher associated with any of the Higher Education Institutions in the region must

himself/herself for this wonderful programme and have the honour of being the building block in transforming the education system", said Dr. Sandeep Gupta, Regional Director In charge, Regional Centre Jammu. Four Extension Centres have so far been established under the Regional Centre Jammu at Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras in Udhampur, Reasi, Poonch and Kathua districts in collaboration with G.K. Educational Trust. One Extension Centre has been set up at National Skill Training Institute, Chatha, Jammu; another Extension Centre has been notified at the Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Jammu. Prospective students across the region can visit these Extension Centres for availing admission guidance and pre-admission counselling related to IGNOU programmes free of cost.

taken away from them and they were not in possession of any IDs. So we are not aware of their exact identity," he said.

SIA files chargesheet...

media and in pursuance to a criminal conspiracy hatched with the terrorists, he received funds through hawala using bank channels maintained by him at ICICI Bank, Branch Macleodganj, Himachal Pradesh, from Saudi Arabia and Oman, he said.

The spokesperson said it also surfaced that after receiving funds through hawala, the accused distributed the same among active terrorists and close relatives of the killed terrorists. The SIA said the terrorists from across the border by using the cyber space are motivating the youth of Kashmir to receive and raise funds through their accounts to support terrorists and other subversive activities.

14 years rigorous...

Principal Sessions Judge observed, "taking into account the culpability as well as the aggravating and mitigating factors highlighted by the learned counsels both sides admittedly both the offenders are first offenders and have no previous criminal history. However it cannot be lost sight of that the offence of which they have been held guilty is heinous and encompasses the society as whole under its sweep particularly the youngsters and other vulnerable sections of the society. Therefore undue leniency to the convicts may prove to be counterproductive.

"So having considered the aggravating and mitigating circumstances court convicted the accused Lakhvinder Singh son of Balvinder Singh resident of village Jabbowal Kapoorthala Punjab and Gurjeet Singh son of Kuldeep Singh resident of village Nangal Labbana Kapurthala Punjab are sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of 14 years each with a fine of Rs 02 lakh each and in default of payment of fine, each accused shall undergo further rigorous imprisonment for a period of two years" the Court ordered. The period of imprisonment already undergone during investigation/trial shall be set off from the period of sentence.

Amit Shah holds...

Kashmir came up for discussion.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also held a meeting with Shah on Friday. There is a view that assembly elections in the Union territory could be held after the completion of the ongoing electoral roll revision exercise.

Sources have though discounted the possibility of the polls being held this year.

Don't burden utilities...

which have seen the BJP and Opposition parties like AAP being divided. Earlier, Sitharaman had blamed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for giving a perverse twist to the debate. Underlining that we should have a rigorous debate on the issue of freebies, Sitharaman suggested that the government supports deploying resources to aid one's journey out of poverty and empowering people, but one should not look at such efforts as entitlements. "This is an important issue for India to debate and all should join the debate," she said.

Safeena Baig elected...

Baig was elected as Chairperson of the J&K UT Haj Committee, unopposed, after majority of the members supported her.

Another milestone in...

and Mobility to every village, 2353 PMGSY projects covering 17,336 km connecting 2071 habitations have already been completed. In 2021-22, 3284 Kms PMGSY roads were constructed, besides 7301 Kms were blacktopped. Further, 125 bridges are to be constructed under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) to provide connectivity to far-flung areas.

2 earthquakes jolt...

officials said. The epicentre of the first quake, which occurred at 3.28 am, was 62 km north-east of Katra area in Jammu region, they said.

The officials said the quake hit at a latitude of 33.17 degrees north and longitude of 75.57 degrees east at a depth of 5 km. The epicentre of the quake in Doda district, which occurred at 4.07 am, was 10 km north of Doda in Jammu region, they said.

This quake hit at a latitude of 33.23 degrees north and a longitude of 75.56 degrees east at a depth of 10 km, they added. Eleven earthquakes have jolted Katra, Doda, Udhampur and Kishtwar districts of the Union territory in the past four days.

NIA special courts...

NIA courts to other courts in order expedite the trial of NIA cases.

"In order to ease out the pressure from the NIA Courts, the Chief Justice has been pleased to transfer the Civil, Session trial cases (except Rape Cases) and NDPS cases pending in the Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge, (NIA Special Court), Anantnag to the Court of Principal District and Sessions Judge, Anantnag for disposal in accordance with law," an order issued by Registrar General of the High Court of J-K and Ladakh Sanjeev Gupta said. "Similarly, Session trial cases, NDPS and Civil Cases are transferred from the Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge (NIA Special Court), Baramulla to the Court of Principal District and Sessions Judge, Baramulla for disposal in accordance with law, the order reads.

The order said the NIA special courts in Anantnag and Baramulla are directed to expedite and take up the cases on priority.

Beautification of canals must with other smart city initiatives: BJP

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Beautification of canals is a must step along with other smart city initiatives being taken in the city, stated senior BJP leaders, while listening to the public grievances at BJP headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, here.

J&K BJP Vice-President & former Minister Sham Choudhary, BJP NEM & former Minister Priya Sethi and BJP All Moreha Incharge Munish Sharma listened to public grievances and took up the same with concerned officials for early solutions.

Many individuals and deputations visited the BJP office to meet the party leaders and narrate their woes & problems.

A deputation raised the important issue of beautification of canals in the city of temples. They stated that all the historic water resources must be protected, cleaned and steps be ensured to beautify them. They immediately talked to the Mayor JMC and other concerned department officials to take up the matter on priority basis and show utmost sincerity, dedication and co-operation to achieve the objective.

Sham Choudhary, while listening to the issues represented, said that BJP is concerned to the common masses and their issues. He said that all the senior functionaries of BJP are daily available at the party office to listen to the public grievances.

Priya Sethi, on the occasion, BJP leaders make every effort to solve the issues represented before at the earliest. She said that people reach the party office with a very positive mindset that their issues would be resolved soon.

Munish Sharma said that the BJP leaders have sincerely tried to start a communication bridge between masses and administration and general masses must avail its benefit.

Sikh organizations to support Bandh call of Bar Asso on Aug 29

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A joint Press conference of Sikh United Front J&K and amalgam of various Sikh Organizations J&K, Sudarshan Singh Wazir (Chairman Sikh United Front J&K), in which various Sikh organizations participated and unanimously decided to support the Jammu band call on 29-08-2022 given by Bar association of High Court Jammu and Kashmir UT.

The bar association appealed for Jammu band on 29th of August 2022 to protest for redressal of their respective grievances. Protesting since long and demanding that there should not be scattered judicial courts, which create inconvenience to the court official, Advocates as well as litigants and general public. So there should be construction of multistory building for housing all the Judicial work, registration work, commissions, CAT, DRT, AFT, and other tribunals within the court premises at Janpur Complex.

The Jammu Kashmir Sikh United front appealed Prime Minister of India Sh. Narinder Modi, Home Minister Sh. Amit Shah and LG of J&K UT Sh. Manoj Sinha to concede the demands of Bar Association of J