

Death of infants: NHRC seeks proof of compensation from J&K govt

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/death-of-infants-nhrc-seeks-proof-of-compensation-from-jk-govt/articleshow/84806055.cms>

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Jammu and Kashmir government to submit proof of payment of compensation to families of children who had died in Jammu's Ramnagar area in 2020 after consuming spurious cough syrup supplied by a Baddi-based company. In a statement issued on Tuesday, social activist Sukesh C Khajuria — who had lodged a complaint with NHRC in this regard — said that NHRC directed the J&K chief secretary to submit proof of payment of monetary compensation of Rs 3 lakh to the kin of each deceased infant/child within four weeks, or be prepared for personal appearance before the commission. Twelve children had died in Ramnagar, Udhampur, in November 2020 after consuming spurious cough syrup sold by the Baddibased company. NHRC passed orders for compensation in January this year. "NHRC clarified that the said monetary compensation shall remain subject to the outcome of a petition pending before the Supreme Court of India," Khajuria stated. NHRC also directed the UT administration that a complete report should be sent latest by August 26, 2021, to the commission.

NHRC bats for "right to water" for citizens

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/nhrc-bats-for-right-to-water-for-citizens/2129427>

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Tuesday stressed on the need for "Right to Water", akin to "Right to Food", and said legislation on groundwater usage is required.

The suggestions were made during an online meeting on the subject hosted by the rights panel.

"Water is an important component of life. It is an obligation on the part of local bodies to supply potable water.

"However, conservation, preservation and distribution of water remain a vexed issue not only internationally but also regionally and locally," NHRC chairperson Justice (retd) Arun Kumar Mishra was quoted as saying in a statement.

He said contamination of ground and surface water continued to be a "serious problem" despite several efforts being made involving huge expenditure.

Mishra added that the commission looked forward to the Jal Jeevan Mission, 2024, which seeks to provide potable tap water in every village household.

During the meeting, several recommendations were made, including having "Right to Water" for citizens in the lines of "Right to Food", officials said.

"Besides recognising the need for "Right to Water", legislation is also required on groundwater use. "Right to Water" with reference to groundwater and surface water usage should be clearly defined, the revival of traditional water bodies be promoted," the rights panel recommended in the meeting.

Other recommendations included promoting crop rotation, growing crops that consume less water, using micro-irrigation technologies and discouraging the use of potable water for irrigation purposes.

Besides, chemical contamination, microbiological contamination also needs to be looked into. Attention also needs to be paid towards the preservation of dying watershed services like springs, which have been a perennial source of water supply to rivers and not just the rain and glacier melted water, the statement said.

The role of women in water usage and its management should also be encouraged, the NHRC recommended.

The rights panel member Rajiv Jain said crop rotation needs to be promoted to discourage excessive use of groundwater resources for irrigation purposes and codification of the right to potable water on the lines of Right to Food, needs to be ensured.

Co-chairing the meeting, NHRC member Justice (retd) M M Kumar said in view of the scarcity of drinking water, its judicious use and de-contamination needs to be promoted.

He spoke about several court judgments and Article 21 of the Constitution to extend "Right to Water" within the ambit of Right to Life.

Earlier, NHRC Secretary General Bimbadhar Pradhan, said "big-bang water reforms" are required to achieve sustainable development goals. He underlined several issues including over-exploitation, inequitable distribution and riparian issues related to water.

Bharat Lal, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti gave an insight into the efforts of the Union government towards ensuring potable tap water for every household by 2024.

He also said that the focus of the government is not just on addressing the issue of chemical contamination of water bodies, including underground and on the surface, but also on "geogenic contamination". PTI TRS KND NSD NSD

Bengal minister, MLA file petition in HC to become party to post-poll violence case

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newsscroll/bengal-minister-mla-file-petition-in-hc-to-become-party-to-postpoll-violence-case/2129388>

West Bengal minister Jyotipriya Mallick on Tuesday said that he and Trinamool Congress MLA Partha Bhowmick have filed applications before the Calcutta High Court seeking to be parties to the matter on alleged post-poll violence in the state, as names resembling theirs featured in a list of "notorious criminals" in a report of an NHRC enquiry committee probing the allegations. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) enquiry committee, formed by its chairperson on the direction by the Calcutta High Court, has in its final report on alleged post-poll violence in West Bengal submitted before a five-judge bench hearing PILs made scathing remarks on law and order in the state. "I and Partha Ghosh have filed applications before the high court seeking to be respondents in the PILs," Mallick, the state forest minister, said. Claiming that there is no criminal case registered against him in the entire state, the minister said that the names of Jyotipriyo Mallick and Partha Bhowmick appeared in a list of "notorious criminals" submitted by the committee in an annexure to the main report. Mallick said that he and Naihata MLA Bhowmick would seek to know whether the names in the list are meant to be theirs and if so, they would urge the court that these be expunged from it. Mallick had earlier said that steps would be taken in accordance with the law and, if needed, a defamation suit would be filed. An annexure of the report has a district-wise "list of notorious criminals". The lists have names resembling several ruling Trinamool Congress leaders, including the forest minister, Bhowmick, Canning Purba MLA Saukat Molla, former Dinhata MLA Udayan Guha and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's election agent in Nandigram constituency Sheikh Sufiyan. A clutch of PILs filed before the high court alleged that people were subjected to assault, made to flee homes, and their property was destroyed during post-poll violence in the state. The five-judge bench presided over by Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal had on June 18 directed the NHRC chairperson to constitute a committee to examine all cases with regard to alleged human rights violations during post-poll violence in West Bengal.

मतदान के बाद हिंसा पर NHRC की रिपोर्ट के खिलाफ बंगाल सरकार ने हाईकोर्ट में दायर किया हलफनामा

<https://hindi.news18.com/news/nation/bengal-government-submitted-affidavit-in-calcutta-high-court-against-nhrc-report-on-post-poll-violence-3671728.html>

पश्चिम बंगाल सरकार ने कलकत्ता उच्च न्यायालय (Calcutta High Court) के आदेश के बाद राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार (National Human Rights Commission) की उस रिपोर्ट के खिलाफ हलफनामा दायर कर दिया है, जिसमें कहा गया था कि विधानसभा चुनाव के बाद हुई हिंसा (Post-Poll Violence) के लिए राज्य सरकार पूरी तरह से जिम्मेदार है. राज्य सरकार ने आरोप लगाया कि लोकतांत्रिक रूप से चुनी गई सरकार को बदनाम करने की कोशिश की जा रही है. प्रदेश सरकार ने कहा कि 2 मई को विधानसभा चुनाव के नतीजे आने के बाद, राज्य में कहीं भी किसी भी तरह की कोई हिंसक घटना न हो इसके लिए सरकार ने सभी उपाय किए थे.

P

बंगाल सरकार ने हाईकोर्ट में 95 पेज का हलफनामा दायर किया है. बंगाल के गृह सचिव बीपी गोपालिका ने कहा कि एनएचआरसी की रिपोर्ट सत्तारूढ़ सरकार के खिलाफ पूर्वाग्रह से भरी हुई है और जानबूझकर राज्य सरकार को बदनाम करने वाली नकारात्मक रिपोर्ट तैयार की गई है.

राज्य सरकार ने आरोप लगाया कि एनएचआरसी समिति बीजेपी के बीजेपी के साथ अच्छे संबंध और इसी वजह से सत्ताधारी सरकार को बदनाम करने वाली गलत बनाई गई. सरकार ने जांच समिति में भाजपा नेता आतिफ राशिद को पैनल में शामिल करने पर सवाल उठाया.

बता दें कि एनएचआरसी समिति ने विधानसभा चुनाव के बाद हुई हिंसा की जांच करते हुए 12 जुलाई को कोलकाता उच्च न्यायालय में 50 पेज की रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत की थी. इसमें कहा गया था कि 2 मई से 20 जून के बीच कम से कम 1934 शिकायतें दर्ज की गईं जिसमें 29 हत्या के आरोप, 12 यौन उत्पीड़न और बलात्कार से संबंधित और लगभग 930 आगजनी और लूट की शिकायतें शामिल थीं. रिपोर्ट में एनएचआरसी ने कानून व्यवस्था पर भी गंभीर सवाल उठाए थे.

वहीं एनएचआरसी रिपोर्ट पर लगाए गए आरोपों से सरकार ने पूरी तरह से बेबुनियाद बताते हुए खारिज कर दिया और इससे इनकार किया कि चुनाव नतीजों के बाद हजारों नागरिकों की हत्या हुई या फिर लूट की घटनाएँ हुईं. सरकार ने एनएचआरसी के उस दावे को भी खारिज कर दिया जिसमें कहा था कि हिंसा के शिकार लोग पुलिस से डरते थे. बंगाल सरकार ने दावा किया कि जो भी जनहित याचिकाएं दायर हुई थीं वे सभी राजनीति से प्रेरित थीं.

Perverse, politically motivated: WB on NHRC post-poll violence report

Subrata Chattoraj

Kolkata: The West Bengal government has called the National Human Rights Commission's report on post-poll violence in Bengal "perverse, absurd and politically motivated" and has accused at least three members of the probe panel of having a "relationship with the BJP or the Central government".

The 95-page rejoinder to the NHRC-appointed committee's 3,428-page report, filed in the Calcutta high court, says the committee has stepped beyond the brief given by the court and — in its haste to conduct a "witch-hunt" — has questioned the judiciary in the state and even the Election Commission besides the state government and the police.

"The committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch-hunt against the entire state machinery in Beng-

al," the affidavit by state home secretary BP Gopalika says.

The NHRC chairperson "abused the process" and "appointed only those members interested in conducting a hatchet job against a democratically elected government" while he was expected "to form a non-partisan and fair committee," the affidavit adds. The affidavit also provides the background of three committee members — Rajiv Jain, Atif Rasheed and Rajuben L Desai — to harp on the "relationship they share with the BJP or the Central government".

It alleges that committee members "have converted this inquiry into a political theatre for their own personal political benefit". The committee members have treated this inquiry as a tool to exercise their political vendetta," the affidavit states, adding that it has ignored "all principles of fair play and non-partisanship".

TMC govt affidavit against NHRC's report

ARITRA SINGHA
Kolkata

The Trinamool Congress-led West Bengal government on Tuesday has submitted a report to Calcutta High Court to counter National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)'s report that states that the state machinery is responsible for the post poll violence in West Bengal.

In a 95-page affidavit West Bengal Home Secretary BP Gopalika said the NHRC report was fraught with 'inherent bias against the ruling dispensation' and therefore it gave a 'negative report against the state'.

Slamming the NHRC report, the West Bengal Home secretary also mentioned that the NHRC had violated the order of Calcutta High Court.

"The High Court had asked the NHRC team to submit a report and not recommend any course of action but with the NHRC suggesting CBI probe they have violated the order of the court," read the affidavit. Questioning inclusion of BJP leader Atif Rashid in the panel, the West Bengal government slammed the NHRC committee that said that the review of the post-poll violence in West Bengal to be 'witch hunt'.

I-Pac(ked) in hotel: TMC ministers to visit Tripura

Following tussle between Tripura police and poll strategist Prashant Kishor's I-Pac 23-member delegation team, Trinamool Congress ministers Bratya Basu and Moloy Ghatak along with Ritobrata Bandhopadhyay are visiting Tripura on Wednes-

day. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee after meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that the BJP government in Tripura has illegally kept the I-Pac delegation in 'house arrest'.

Confirming his visit to Tripura on Wednesday, West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu said that the BJP government in Tripura has completely 'destroyed' democracy.

Slamming the BJP government, former Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar said that the BJP is running 'Jungle Raj' in Tripura and also that there is no harm in letting the I-Pac team work there.

According to I-Pac sources, the police kept the team inside the hotel saying that they are covid positive.

CPI(M) slams Modi-Didi meet, BJP claims they are against name change

The CPI(M) leadership slammed Mamata meeting PM Modi's in Delhi. "Whenever there is a scam or a turbulent situation, the CM and the PM always hold a closed-door meet. Be it ponzi scams or change of police commissioner. Interestingly, every time after the two meet, the probes of the scams get stopped," said a senior CPI(M) leader.

Meanwhile, state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh said the party was never in favour of the name change of West Bengal. "Though there are think tanks in Delhi, BJP never favours changing name of West Bengal to Bangla. There is a history and no way will BJP allow wiping off the history," said Ghosh.

NHRC report 'perverse, absurd', state tells Cal HC

Subrata Chattoraj

Kolkata: The state government has called the National Human Rights Commission's report on post-poll violence in Bengal "perverse", "absurd" and "politically motivated" and accused at least three members of the probe panel of having a "relationship with the BJP or the central government".

The 95-page rejoinder to the NHRC-appointed committee's 3,428-page report, filed in the Calcutta High Court, says the committee has stepped beyond the brief given by the court and — in its haste to conduct a "witch-hunt" — has questioned the judiciary in the state and even the Election Commission besides the state government and the police.

"The committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch-hunt against the entire state machinery in Bengal," the affidavit by state home secretary BP Gopalika says, adding that the NHRC chairperson "abused the process" and "appointed only those members interested in conduc-

BENGAL GOVT'S RESPONSE

- 3 committee members — Rajiv Jain, Atif Rasheed and Rajuben L Desai — have a relationship with the BJP
- Sweeping allegations have been made against police
- Stress on arrests contrary to legal norms
- 1,429 cases initiated against 8,852 accused persons

- EC had declared the elections free and fair
- Details provided in report were 'sweeping homilies, absurd, and false'
- Recommendations of a CBI probe and shifting the trial outside Bengal are examples of the panel's clear "bias" and exceeding its mandate

ting a hatchet job against a democratically elected government" though he was expected "to form a non-partisan and fair committee".

The affidavit also provides in a table the background of three committee members — Rajiv Jain, Atif Rasheed and Rajuben L Desai — to harp on the "relationship they share with the BJP or the central government". It alleges that committee members "have converted this inquiry into a political theatre for their own personal political benefit". "The committee members have treated this inquiry as a tool to exercise their political vendetta," the affidavit states, adding that

it has ignored "all principles of fair play and non-partisanship".

The committee's "concerted efforts to completely discredit a democratically elected state government are a death knell to democracy in this great nation", the affidavit says in response to the NHRC committee's "law of ruler instead of rule of law" barb against the state government. The state government, the affidavit adds, "is entitled to cross-examine the members of the committee and compel them to prove the veracity of the statements made in the report".

► 'Panel's bias', P 11

'Pleas for CBI probe and shifting of trial show panel's bias'

► **Continued from P 1**

The recommendations of a CBI probe and shifting the trial outside Bengal are examples of the panel's clear "bias" and exceed its mandate, the affidavit says.

The panel, by not giving reasons why the trial should be shifted outside Bengal, "has opined that the judiciary in the state is complicit in the purported acts of violence". The panel's "questioning bail" to accused persons is meant to "raise allegations of bias against the judiciary as well", the affidavit adds, explaining that bail is given "by a competent court and not in the hands of the police". None of the bail orders had "recorded any adverse comments" against police, the affidavit says.

The state affidavit also questions the legal understanding and maths behind "general and sweeping allegations against the police" and says the committee's stress on arrests is contrary to legal norms. The "Election Commission declared that the election was free and fair", the affidavit states, adding that the panel's allegations of a "pernicious politico-bu-

The state's affidavit mentions 465 people recorded their statements and many more spoke to cops to question the NHRC committee's assertion that post-poll violence victims were too scared to speak

reaucratic-criminal nexus" contradicts "the EC's stand without any basis".

The affidavit mentions 465 people recorded their statements in the presence of judicial magistrates and many more spoke to cops to question the NHRC committee's assertion that post-poll violence victims were too scared to speak. The committee saw "fear in the eyes of the people" because its own eyes were "biased".

The National Commission for Women mentioned about 425 victims of violence but an inquiry found that it had forwarded a list of 121 complaints, the state affidavit says; 17 of them were non-cognisable and 67 were false.

मानवाधिकार आयोग की रिपोर्ट पक्षपातपूर्ण: सरकार चुनाव बाद हिंसा पर हाईकोर्ट में जमा किया हलफनामा

कोलकाता @ पत्रिका. पश्चिम बंगाल सरकार ने विधानसभा चुनाव के बाद राज्य में हुई हिंसा के मामले में कलकत्ता हाईकोर्ट में हलफनामा दाखिल करते हुए राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (एनएचआरसी) की रिपोर्ट को पक्षपातपूर्ण बताया है। 95 पेज के हलफनामे में राज्य सरकार की तरफ से दावा किया गया है कि विधानसभा चुनाव के बाद बंगाल में राजनीतिक हिंसा की घटना नहीं हुई है। बुधवार

को कार्यवाहक मुख्य न्यायाधीश राजेश बिंदल के नेतृत्व वाले पांच जजों की पीठ में मामले की सुनवाई होगी। बंगाल सरकार की ओर से वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता अभिषेक मनु सिंघवी ने हलफनामा दाखिल करते हुए कहा कि चुनाव बाद हिंसा पर हाईकोर्ट को राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग की ओर से सौंपी गई रिपोर्ट में अनेक विसंगतियां हैं। रिपोर्ट में चुनाव के पहले हिंसा की घटनाओं का जिक्र किया गया है।

NHRC report on poll violence absurd: Bengal

Subrata Chattoraj

Kolkata: The West Bengal government has called the National Human Rights Commission's report on post-poll violence in Bengal "perverse, absurd and politically motivated" and has accused at least three members of the probe panel of having a "relationship with the BJP or the Central government".

The 95-page rejoinder to the NHRC-appointed committee's 3,428-page report, filed in the Calcutta high court, says the committee has stepped beyond the brief given by the court and — in its haste to conduct a "witch-hunt" — has questioned the judiciary in the state and even the Election Commission besides the state government and the police.

"The committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch-hunt against the entire state machinery in Bengal," the affi-

davit by state home secretary BP Gopalika says.

The NHRC chairperson "abused the process" and "appointed only those members interested in conducting a hatchet job against a democratically elected government" while he was expected "to form a non-partisan and fair committee," the affidavit adds.

The affidavit also provides the background of three committee members — Rajiv Jain, Atif Rasheed and Rajuben L Desai — to harp on the "relationship they share with the BJP or the Central government". It alleges that committee members "have converted this inquiry into a political theatre for their own personal political benefit".

The committee members have treated this inquiry as a tool to exercise their political vendetta," the affidavit states.

Full report on www.toi.in

थापर मामले की रिपोर्ट रिपोर्ट आयोग जाएगी

जमशेदपुर | वरीय संवाददाता

टेलको थाना अंतर्गत खड़ंगाझाड़ स्थित मदर टेरेसा वेलफेयर ट्रस्ट के संचालक हरपाल सिंह थापर की घाघीडीह जेल में संदिग्ध हालात में मौत की जांच शुरू कर दी गई है।

मामले में ज्यूडिशियल मजिस्ट्रेट की जांच रिपोर्ट राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (एनएचआरसी), नई दिल्ली को भेजी जाएगी।

एग्जीक्यूटिव मजिस्ट्रेट की जांच रुकी: ज्ञात हो कि नाबालिग बच्चियों के यौन शोषण में आरोपी हरपाल सिंह थापर की 16 जुलाई को घाघीडीह जेल में मौत हो गई थी। पोस्टमार्टम रिपोर्ट में शरीर पर जलाने और पीटने के निशान पाए गए थे। जेल अधीक्षक ने स्वयं जमशेदपुर कोर्ट

“ जिला प्रशासन की ओर से भी हरपाल सिंह थापर की जेल में मौत में जांच का आदेश दिया गया था। जेल विभाग का आदेश है कि सिर्फ ज्यूडिशियल मजिस्ट्रेट की जांच रिपोर्ट को ही एनएचआरसी को भेजा जाएगा। इसलिए एग्जीक्यूटिव मजिस्ट्रेट की जांच को रोक दिया गया है।

- चंद्रदेव प्रसाद, एग्जीक्यूटिव मजिस्ट्रेट

से जांच की अपील की थी। संज्ञान लेते हुए कोर्ट ने 2 सदस्यीय ज्यूडिशियल मजिस्ट्रेट की कमेटी गठित की थी। जिला प्रशासन ने भी एग्जीक्यूटिव मजिस्ट्रेट चंद्रदेव प्रसाद को मामले की जांच का आदेश दिया गया था। गृह एवं कारा विभाग ने आदेश दिया कि केवल ज्यूडिशियल मजिस्ट्रेट की ही जांच रिपोर्ट को एनएचआरसी भेजा जाएगा।

Perverse, politically motivated: Bengal on NHRC report on post-poll violence

The West Bengal government has called the National Human Rights Commission's report on post-poll violence in Bengal "perverse, absurd and politically motivated" and has accused at least three members of the probe panel of having a "relationship with BJP or the Central government", reports **Subrata Chattoraj**. The 95-page rejoinder to the NHRC-appointed committee's 3,428-page report, filed in the Calcutta high court, says the committee has stepped beyond the brief given by the court and — in its haste to conduct a "witch-hunt" — has questioned the judiciary in the state and even the Election Commission besides the state government and the police.

"The committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch-hunt against the entire state machinery in Bengal," the affidavit by state home secretary BP Gopalika says.

NHRC कर्मिटी की रिपोर्ट पर बंगाल सरकार के सवाल

■ भाषा, कोलकाता: पश्चिम बंगाल सरकार ने कलकत्ता हाई कोर्ट के आदेश के बाद राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग की समिति की उस रिपोर्ट के खिलाफ हलफनामा दायर कर दिया है, जिसमें कहा गया था कि विधानसभा चुनाव के बाद हुई हिंसा के लिए राज्य सरकार पूरी तरह से जिम्मेदार है।

राज्य सरकार ने आरोप लगाया कि लोकतांत्रिक रूप से चुनी गई सरकार को बदनाम करने की कोशिश की जा रही है। प्रदेश सरकार ने कहा कि 2 मई को विधानसभा चुनाव के नतीजे आने के बाद, राज्य में कहीं भी किसी भी तरह की कोई हिंसक घटना न हो इसके लिए सरकार ने सभी उपाय किए थे।

राज्य सरकार का हाई कोर्ट में हलफनामा, बीजेपी नेता के समिति में होने पर की आपत्ति

वंगाल सरकार ने हाईकोर्ट में 95 पेज का हलफनामा दायर किया है। बंगाल के गृह सचिव वीपी गोपालिका ने कहा कि एनएचआरसी की रिपोर्ट सत्तारूढ़ सरकार के खिलाफ पूर्वाग्रह से भरी हुई है और जानबूझकर राज्य सरकार को बदनाम करने वाली नकारात्मक रिपोर्ट तैयार की गई है।

राज्य सरकार ने आरोप लगाया कि एनएचआरसी समिति बीजेपी के वीजेपी के साथ अच्छे संबंध और इसी वजह से सत्ताधारी सरकार को बदनाम करने वाली गलत रिपोर्ट बनाई गई। सरकार ने जांच समिति में बीजेपी नेता आतिफ राशिद को पैनल में शामिल करने पर सवाल उठाया।

TMC: NHRC panel probing post-poll violence biased

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 27 JULY

The West Bengal government has alleged in an affidavit filed before the Calcutta High Court that the NHRC committee which probed incidents of post-poll violence in the state "was fraught with bias against the ruling dispensation". Criticising the Mamata Banerjee government, the NHRC panel, in its report placed before the high court recently, has underscored that "the situation in the state is a manifestation of the law of ruler instead of rule of law". It recommended CBI probe into "grievous offences like murder and rape".

Slamming the report, the state government's reply stated that the NHRC committee was formed at the direction of Calcutta High Court to probe post-poll cases but it has gone beyond its scope recommending CBI investigation

and trial of post-poll violence cases outside the state.

The state has also termed the report to be politically motivated while pointed out that the state government and some police officers were insulted in the report submitted by NHRC.

It was alleged that the NHRC committee had exceeded its brief. Slamming the NHRC report, the state's reply urged the court to disregard it. The report comprises "absurd, sweeping homilies" and the team went around the state to collect false information, it was contended.

Denying the allegation that the entire state machinery in West Bengal is responsible for post-poll violence, it submitted that the "police and all other competent officers of the State of West Bengal have taken all steps to prevent any violence after the declaration of results for the West Bengal

State Legislative Assembly on 2 May".

To substantiate its allegations of bias against the NHRC, the state government reasoned that the members of the NHRC committee is linked to BJP or Union government.

On charges of molestation and murder, the state replied these charges are not supported by evidence, it was stated.

Maintaining that the acts of violence resulted in disruption of life and livelihood of thousands of people, the NHRC report said, "The local police have been grossly derelict, if not complicit, in this violence".

"The spate of violence shows a pernicious politico-bureaucratic-criminal nexus" the NHRC report observed. The state's reply denied the allegation that the police were acting under influence and in a biased manner.

Bengal govt. sees bias in NHRC report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The West Bengal government, in an affidavit submitted in the Calcutta High Court, has refuted the allegations made by the committee of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on post-poll violence in the State as “sweeping homilies, absurd, and false”.

“I state that the members of the Committee have close association with the BJP and/or the Central government. Such members have been deliberately chosen who have an inherent bias against the ruling dispensation and accordingly predisposed to give a negative report about law and order situation in West Bengal,” the affidavit said.

The matter is likely be heard again by the High Court on July 28.

POLITICS

Charge of bias

While highlighting the undeniable culture of political clashes in West Bengal, the NHRC's report on the violence following the Assembly election in the State has also raised questions on the Commission's own neutrality. BY **SUHRID SANKAR CHATTOPADHYAY**

THE report submitted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the post-election violence in West Bengal has caused a major flutter in political and social circles. The Calcutta High Court had directed the NHRC to look into complaints of violence following the Assembly election; on July 13, the Commission submitted its final report to the court. Scathing in its criticism of the newly elected Trinamool Congress government, the report has

brought to the fore the alarming rise of political violence in the State. However, its apparent political slant has raised questions regarding the Commission's absolute impartiality. "The situation in the State of West Bengal is a manifestation of 'Law of Ruler', instead of 'Rule of Law'," the report stated at the very outset.

The report tore into the State government, the police and the State administration. It said that the declaration of the Assembly election

results on May 2 was followed by "retributive violence by supporters of the ruling party against supporters of the main opposition party (the Bharatiya Janata Party). It resulted in disruption of life and livelihood of thousands of people and their economic strangulation. The local police has been grossly derelict, if not complicit, in this violence." It stated that the "spatio-temporal expanse" of violent incidents reflected the "appalling apathy of the State



SUVENDU ADHIKARI of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, observing "Shahid Sraddhanajali" in Kolkata on July 21, along with family members of party workers who died in post-election violence. July 21 is the day the Trinamool Congress observes as Shahid Divas in memory of Congress workers who died in police firing back in 1993 when Mamata Banerjee was a Congress leader and West Bengal was ruled by the Left.



CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee at press conference on July 15. Her party has dubbed the NHRC report partial and vindictive.

government towards plight of victims". The NHRC recommended that the Central Bureau of Investigation take up the matter and trials be held outside the State. It also suggested that a "court-monitored" Special Investigation Team be formed "consisting of senior supervisory IPS [Indian Police Service] officers and others" which would also start investigating cases of violence.

Post-election violence has been a burning topic in West Bengal in the past three months. Following its humiliating defeat at the hands of the Trinamool Congress, the BJP has made the issue its main political tool against the State government. Within four days of the declaration of the election results, a team from the Union Home Ministry arrived in Bengal to look into the allegations of widespread violence and the saffron party's IT cell went on an overdrive with the #bengalburning campaign on social media. Even after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee appealed for peace, the BJP alleged that the violence continued unabated.

According to the BJP, 38 of its activists were killed and around 20,000 rendered homeless. On June

18, the Calcutta High Court directed the NHRC to "examine all the cases... and submit a comprehensive report". The court asked the NHRC to suggest "steps to be taken to ensure confidence of the people that they can peacefully live in their houses and also carry on their occupation or business to earn their livelihood" and point out "the persons *prima facie* responsible for crime and the officers who maintained calculated silence on the issue".

TRINAMOOL CRIES FOUL

Mamata Banerjee maintained that the violence was a "pre-poll" phenomenon and took place at a time when the Election Commission was in charge of law and order. "They [the BJP] are misleading the people and distorting the facts. When the court will give us the time, we will file affidavit and give our opinion to the honourable court," she said. Reacting angrily to the leaking of the report, she said, "We have to give our opinion also. The court has also given us time. How could they leak it to the press before that, if not out of political vendetta?" She said this was the BJP's ploy to get back at the Trin-

amool and "malign the people of Bengal". Sougata Roy, member of the Lok Sabha from the Trinamool, said the report was "exaggerated" and even alleged that it was engineered by the BJP. "What can you expect when BJP activists become NHRC members?" he said.

POLITICALLY SLANTED

While the report has come as a shot in the arm for the BJP, certain aspects of it, including glaring omissions, have raised questions on the NHRC's political neutrality. From the very start, the report makes it seem that only the supporters and activists of the BJP were the victims of violence at the hands of ruling party members. "Most of the violent incidents included murder, rape, molestation, assault, vandalism, looting, dispossession, arson, extortion, threat and intimidation. Pertinently, they were neither sporadic nor random; instead, they targeted specific persons (those associated with the main opposition party)," the report stated. It also had a separate annexure containing a long "List of notorious criminals/goons" which included such Trinamool heavyweights as Jyotipriya Mullick, a Minister, and Saukat Mollah and Partha Bhowmik, both MLAs.

It repeatedly referred to one-sided attacks against BJP members but did not attempt to put the violence in any context or explore the nature of the violence. Instead, it appeared to choose a more simplistic stand that ultimately seemed to be politically advantageous for the saffron party. "Violence was retributive. It was in retaliation to those who 'dared' to vote or support the major opposition party," the report stated. It did not mention that the Left parties had also suffered at the hands of ruling party goons. In fact, on the night of May 2 itself, Kakoli Khetrapal, Communist Party of India (Marxist) election agent from Jamalpur, was killed when she and her husband Anil were attacked by alleged Trinamool activists. According to the CPI(M), no one had been arrested as of July 20.

Opposition parties have wel-

came the fact that the NHRC report has brought to the fore the culture of violence prevalent in the State. But they also point out the report's pronounced bias in favour of the BJP. Senior CPI(M) leader Sujana Chakraborty told *Frontline*: "Earlier it was only Left workers who were targeted, this time it was also the BJP, and even sections of the Trinamool, too. There is something lopsided about the NHRC report, and it gives the appearance of being a pro-BJP report. But certain undeniable truths have also come to the fore. The report echoed what we have been saying all along—in Bengal in place of the rule of law there is the law of the ruler."

However, even if the report appears politically motivated, it has caused considerable embarrassment to the ruling party, particularly since it cites data provided by the State

police itself. According to the report, out of the total of 1,934 complaints filed in police stations across the State, first information reports were filed in 1,168 cases; and out of the 9,304 accused cited in the FIRs, only 1,354 (14 per cent) had been arrested, and out of those arrested, 1086 (80 per cent) were out on bail. "Thus, overall speaking, less than 3 per cent of the accused are in jail while 97 per cent are out in the open, making a mockery of the whole system," the report stated.

The well-known psephologist Biswanath Chakraborty feels that these figures, more than mere allegations, have put the State government in a spot. "The report will be assessed by different political parties in their own manner, but the extent of the violence, as indicated by data provided by the State police, does not allow the government to remain in a

state of denial. In Bengal we are seeing workers and supporters of the defeated political party being suppressed and harassed after elections like a people of a defeated country in medieval times," he told *Frontline*.

While there is no doubt that the violence perpetrated on the BJP was severe, it is also undeniable that the violence was a direct fallout of a highly charged and intense electoral battle in which both the BJP and the Trinamool exchanged threats of dire retribution once they come to power. The political analyst Surajit C. Mukhopadhyay pointed out that the recent violence was different from the violence witnessed in the past mainly because of the intensely polarised nature of the election. Speaking to *Frontline*, he said: "In the past also there was violence, but it was more sporadic and on issues which were local. But this election, right from day one, was a hard, long-drawn polarising battle.... The NHRC report appears to be one-sided and biased towards a certain political perspective, which constrains and denudes it of important research content. It appears to have been done in haste. In their hurry to nail the State government, they have come up with shoddy work."

The brunt of the criticism in the report fell on the police and the administration. "Poor and common people have lost faith in police.... The police was either negligent or complicit or under pressure not to take any action against the goons belonging to the ruling dispensation," the report stated. In a separate annexure, the NHRC made a list of "delinquent police officers" in 13 police stations across the State where the registration of FIRs was "abysmally low" and where there was "no trust in the police and fear of retaliation by both the goons as well as the police was evident" in the verbal and written statements of the victims. The report spoke of a "pernicious politico-bureaucratic-criminal nexus" that "will ultimately corrode the entire edifice" of the State. "The presence of this nexus in a border State also has larger national security implications," the report stated. □



THE LEFT has pointed that it has been drawing attention to political violence in West Bengal for several years now and that the BJP is not the only party at the receiving end. Here, Left Front chairman Biman Bose and CPI(M) State secretary Surya Kanta Mishra leading a rally against political violence in Kolkata in April 2018.

NHRC TEAM ON A WITCH-HUNT, SAYS BENGAL GOVT IN AFFIDAVIT ON POLL VIOLENCE

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

KOLKATA: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) enquiry committee looking into post-poll violence in West Bengal is merely spearheading a witch-hunt against the Mamata Banerjee administration in Bengal as part of a concerted effort to discredit a democratically elected state government, the West Bengal government said in an affidavit filed on July 26 before the Calcutta high court.

"The Committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch hunt against the entire state machinery in West Bengal.... In conclusion it is stated that concerted efforts are being made by those behind the Committee to completely discredit a democratically elected state government," said the 95-page affidavit.

In June, a five-judge bench of the Calcutta high court directed NHRC to constitute a committee to examine all cases of alleged human rights violation during violence after the assembly polls, results of which were declared on May 2. The ruling Trinamool Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party fought a bitter and intense electoral battle; the latter expected to win at least 200 seats but it was the TMC that swept the polls and returned to power.

While the seven-member committee headed by NHRC member Rajiv Jain submitted an interim report on July 2, the final report was submitted on July 13.

The government affidavit said some of the committee members have a close association with the BJP or the BJP-led Union government. They were deliberately chosen to give a negative report against the state, it argued, while calling the PILs on post-poll violence politically motivated.

A senior NHRC official declined comment on the state's affidavit, saying that the matter was being heard in the court.

"... The NHRC report is based on facts provided by the state's DGP which shows that the police received at least 29 murder complaints. Still the CM is saying nothing has happened..." said Samik Bhattacharya, BJP spokesperson in the state.

Charge of bias

While highlighting the undeniable culture of political clashes in West Bengal, the NHRC's report on the violence following the Assembly election in the State has also raised questions on the Commission's own neutrality. BY **SUHRID SANKAR CHATTOPADHYAY**

THE report submitted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the post-election violence in West Bengal has caused a major flutter in political and social circles. The Calcutta High Court had directed the NHRC to look into complaints of violence following the Assembly election; on July 13, the Commission submitted its final report to the court. Scathing in its criticism of the newly elected Trinamool Congress government, the report has

brought to the fore the alarming rise of political violence in the State. However, its apparent political slant has raised questions regarding the Commission's absolute impartiality. "The situation in the State of West Bengal is a manifestation of 'Law of Ruler', instead of 'Rule of Law'," the report stated at the very outset.

The report tore into the State government, the police and the State administration. It said that the declaration of the Assembly election

results on May 2 was followed by "retributive violence by supporters of the ruling party against supporters of the main opposition party (the Bharatiya Janata Party). It resulted in disruption of life and livelihood of thousands of people and their economic strangulation. The local police has been grossly derelict, if not complicit, in this violence." It stated that the "spatio-temporal expanse" of violent incidents reflected the "appalling apathy of the State



SUVENDU ADHIKARI of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, observing "Shahid Sraddhanajali" in Kolkata on July 21, along with family members of party workers who died in post-election violence. July 21 is the day the Trinamool Congress observes as Shahid Divas in memory of Congress workers who died in police firing back in 1993 when Mamata Banerjee was a Congress leader and West Bengal was ruled by the Left.



CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee at press conference on July 15. Her party has dubbed the NHRC report partial and vindictive.

government towards plight of victims". The NHRC recommended that the Central Bureau of Investigation take up the matter and trials be held outside the State. It also suggested that a "court-monitored" Special Investigation Team be formed "consisting of senior supervisory IPS [Indian Police Service] officers and others" which would also start investigating cases of violence.

Post-election violence has been a burning topic in West Bengal in the past three months. Following its humiliating defeat at the hands of the Trinamool Congress, the BJP has made the issue its main political tool against the State government. Within four days of the declaration of the election results, a team from the Union Home Ministry arrived in Bengal to look into the allegations of widespread violence and the saffron party's IT cell went on an overdrive with the #bengalburning campaign on social media. Even after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee appealed for peace, the BJP alleged that the violence continued unabated.

According to the BJP, 38 of its activists were killed and around 20,000 rendered homeless. On June

18, the Calcutta High Court directed the NHRC to "examine all the cases... and submit a comprehensive report". The court asked the NHRC to suggest "steps to be taken to ensure confidence of the people that they can peacefully live in their houses and also carry on their occupation or business to earn their livelihood" and point out "the persons *prima facie* responsible for crime and the officers who maintained calculated silence on the issue".

TRINAMOOL CRIES FOUL

Mamata Banerjee maintained that the violence was a "pre-poll" phenomenon and took place at a time when the Election Commission was in charge of law and order. "They [the BJP] are misleading the people and distorting the facts. When the court will give us the time, we will file affidavit and give our opinion to the honourable court," she said. Reacting angrily to the leaking of the report, she said, "We have to give our opinion also. The court has also given us time. How could they leak it to the press before that, if not out of political vendetta?" She said this was the BJP's ploy to get back at the Trin-

amool and "malign the people of Bengal". Sougata Roy, member of the Lok Sabha from the Trinamool, said the report was "exaggerated" and even alleged that it was engineered by the BJP. "What can you expect when BJP activists become NHRC members?" he said.

POLITICALLY SLANTED

While the report has come as a shot in the arm for the BJP, certain aspects of it, including glaring omissions, have raised questions on the NHRC's political neutrality. From the very start, the report makes it seem that only the supporters and activists of the BJP were the victims of violence at the hands of ruling party members. "Most of the violent incidents included murder, rape, molestation, assault, vandalism, looting, dispossession, arson, extortion, threat and intimidation. Pertinently, they were neither sporadic nor random; instead, they targeted specific persons (those associated with the main opposition party)," the report stated. It also had a separate annexure containing a long "List of notorious criminals/goons" which included such Trinamool heavyweights as Jyotipriya Mullick, a Minister, and Saukat Mollah and Partha Bhowmik, both MLAs.

It repeatedly referred to one-sided attacks against BJP members but did not attempt to put the violence in any context or explore the nature of the violence. Instead, it appeared to choose a more simplistic stand that ultimately seemed to be politically advantageous for the saffron party. "Violence was retributive. It was in retaliation to those who 'dared' to vote or support the major opposition party," the report stated. It did not mention that the Left parties had also suffered at the hands of ruling party goons. In fact, on the night of May 2 itself, Kakoli Khetrapal, Communist Party of India (Marxist) election agent from Jamalpur, was killed when she and her husband Anil were attacked by alleged Trinamool activists. According to the CPI(M), no one had been arrested as of July 20.

Opposition parties have wel-

comed the fact that the NHRC report has brought to the fore the culture of violence prevalent in the State. But they also point out the report's pronounced bias in favour of the BJP. Senior CPI(M) leader Sujana Chakraborty told *Frontline*: "Earlier it was only Left workers who were targeted, this time it was also the BJP, and even sections of the Trinamool, too. There is something lopsided about the NHRC report, and it gives the appearance of being a pro-BJP report. But certain undeniable truths have also come to the fore. The report echoed what we have been saying all along—in Bengal in place of the rule of law there is the law of the ruler."

However, even if the report appears politically motivated, it has caused considerable embarrassment to the ruling party, particularly since it cites data provided by the State

police itself. According to the report, out of the total of 1,934 complaints filed in police stations across the State, first information reports were filed in 1,168 cases; and out of the 9,304 accused cited in the FIRs, only 1,354 (14 per cent) had been arrested, and out of those arrested, 1086 (80 per cent) were out on bail. "Thus, overall speaking, less than 3 per cent of the accused are in jail while 97 per cent are out in the open, making a mockery of the whole system," the report stated.

The well-known psephologist Biswanath Chakraborty feels that these figures, more than mere allegations, have put the State government in a spot. "The report will be assessed by different political parties in their own manner, but the extent of the violence, as indicated by data provided by the State police, does not allow the government to remain in a

state of denial. In Bengal we are seeing workers and supporters of the defeated political party being suppressed and harassed after elections like a people of a defeated country in medieval times," he told *Frontline*.

While there is no doubt that the violence perpetrated on the BJP was severe, it is also undeniable that the violence was a direct fallout of a highly charged and intense electoral battle in which both the BJP and the Trinamool exchanged threats of dire retribution once they come to power. The political analyst Surajit C. Mukhopadhyay pointed out that the recent violence was different from the violence witnessed in the past mainly because of the intensely polarised nature of the election. Speaking to *Frontline*, he said: "In the past also there was violence, but it was more sporadic and on issues which were local. But this election, right from day one, was a hard, long-drawn polarising battle.... The NHRC report appears to be one-sided and biased towards a certain political perspective, which constrains and denudes it of important research content. It appears to have been done in haste. In their hurry to nail the State government, they have come up with shoddy work."

The brunt of the criticism in the report fell on the police and the administration. "Poor and common people have lost faith in police.... The police was either negligent or complicit or under pressure not to take any action against the goons belonging to the ruling dispensation," the report stated. In a separate annexure, the NHRC made a list of "delinquent police officers" in 13 police stations across the State where the registration of FIRs was "abysmally low" and where there was "no trust in the police and fear of retaliation by both the goons as well as the police was evident" in the verbal and written statements of the victims. The report spoke of a "pernicious politico-bureaucratic-criminal nexus" that "will ultimately corrode the entire edifice" of the State. "The presence of this nexus in a border State also has larger national security implications," the report stated. □



THE LEFT has pointed that it has been drawing attention to political violence in West Bengal for several years now and that the BJP is not the only party at the receiving end. Here, Left Front chairman Biman Bose and CPI(M) State secretary Surya Kanta Mishra leading a rally against political violence in Kolkata in April 2018.

Charge of bias

While highlighting the undeniable culture of political clashes in West Bengal, the NHRC's report on the violence following the Assembly election in the State has also raised questions on the Commission's own neutrality. BY **SUHRID SANKAR CHATTOPADHYAY**

THE report submitted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the post-election violence in West Bengal has caused a major flutter in political and social circles. The Calcutta High Court had directed the NHRC to look into complaints of violence following the Assembly election; on July 13, the Commission submitted its final report to the court. Scathing in its criticism of the newly elected Trinamool Congress government, the report has

brought to the fore the alarming rise of political violence in the State. However, its apparent political slant has raised questions regarding the Commission's absolute impartiality. "The situation in the State of West Bengal is a manifestation of 'Law of Ruler', instead of 'Rule of Law'," the report stated at the very outset.

The report tore into the State government, the police and the State administration. It said that the declaration of the Assembly election

results on May 2 was followed by "retributive violence by supporters of the ruling party against supporters of the main opposition party (the Bharatiya Janata Party). It resulted in disruption of life and livelihood of thousands of people and their economic strangulation. The local police has been grossly derelict, if not complicit, in this violence." It stated that the "spatio-temporal expanse" of violent incidents reflected the "appalling apathy of the State



SUVENDU ADHIKARI of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, observing "Shahid Sraddhanajali" in Kolkata on July 21, along with family members of party workers who died in post-election violence. July 21 is the day the Trinamool Congress observes as Shahid Divas in memory of Congress workers who died in police firing back in 1993 when Mamata Banerjee was a Congress leader and West Bengal was ruled by the Left.



CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee at press conference on July 15. Her party has dubbed the NHRC report partial and vindictive.

government towards plight of victims". The NHRC recommended that the Central Bureau of Investigation take up the matter and trials be held outside the State. It also suggested that a "court-monitored" Special Investigation Team be formed "consisting of senior supervisory IPS [Indian Police Service] officers and others" which would also start investigating cases of violence.

Post-election violence has been a burning topic in West Bengal in the past three months. Following its humiliating defeat at the hands of the Trinamool Congress, the BJP has made the issue its main political tool against the State government. Within four days of the declaration of the election results, a team from the Union Home Ministry arrived in Bengal to look into the allegations of widespread violence and the saffron party's IT cell went on an overdrive with the #bengalburning campaign on social media. Even after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee appealed for peace, the BJP alleged that the violence continued unabated.

According to the BJP, 38 of its activists were killed and around 20,000 rendered homeless. On June

18, the Calcutta High Court directed the NHRC to "examine all the cases... and submit a comprehensive report". The court asked the NHRC to suggest "steps to be taken to ensure confidence of the people that they can peacefully live in their houses and also carry on their occupation or business to earn their livelihood" and point out "the persons *prima facie* responsible for crime and the officers who maintained calculated silence on the issue".

TRINAMOOL CRIES FOUL

Mamata Banerjee maintained that the violence was a "pre-poll" phenomenon and took place at a time when the Election Commission was in charge of law and order. "They [the BJP] are misleading the people and distorting the facts. When the court will give us the time, we will file affidavit and give our opinion to the honourable court," she said. Reacting angrily to the leaking of the report, she said, "We have to give our opinion also. The court has also given us time. How could they leak it to the press before that, if not out of political vendetta?" She said this was the BJP's ploy to get back at the Trin-

amool and "malign the people of Bengal". Sougata Roy, member of the Lok Sabha from the Trinamool, said the report was "exaggerated" and even alleged that it was engineered by the BJP. "What can you expect when BJP activists become NHRC members?" he said.

POLITICALLY SLANTED

While the report has come as a shot in the arm for the BJP, certain aspects of it, including glaring omissions, have raised questions on the NHRC's political neutrality. From the very start, the report makes it seem that only the supporters and activists of the BJP were the victims of violence at the hands of ruling party members. "Most of the violent incidents included murder, rape, molestation, assault, vandalism, looting, dispossession, arson, extortion, threat and intimidation. Pertinently, they were neither sporadic nor random; instead, they targeted specific persons (those associated with the main opposition party)," the report stated. It also had a separate annexure containing a long "List of notorious criminals/goons" which included such Trinamool heavyweights as Jyotipriya Mullick, a Minister, and Saukat Mollah and Partha Bhowmik, both MLAs.

It repeatedly referred to one-sided attacks against BJP members but did not attempt to put the violence in any context or explore the nature of the violence. Instead, it appeared to choose a more simplistic stand that ultimately seemed to be politically advantageous for the saffron party. "Violence was retributive. It was in retaliation to those who 'dared' to vote or support the major opposition party," the report stated. It did not mention that the Left parties had also suffered at the hands of ruling party goons. In fact, on the night of May 2 itself, Kakoli Khetrapal, Communist Party of India (Marxist) election agent from Jamalpur, was killed when she and her husband Anil were attacked by alleged Trinamool activists. According to the CPI(M), no one had been arrested as of July 20.

Opposition parties have wel-

comed the fact that the NHRC report has brought to the fore the culture of violence prevalent in the State. But they also point out the report's pronounced bias in favour of the BJP. Senior CPI(M) leader Sujana Chakraborty told *Frontline*: "Earlier it was only Left workers who were targeted, this time it was also the BJP, and even sections of the Trinamool, too. There is something lopsided about the NHRC report, and it gives the appearance of being a pro-BJP report. But certain undeniable truths have also come to the fore. The report echoed what we have been saying all along—in Bengal in place of the rule of law there is the law of the ruler."

However, even if the report appears politically motivated, it has caused considerable embarrassment to the ruling party, particularly since it cites data provided by the State

police itself. According to the report, out of the total of 1,934 complaints filed in police stations across the State, first information reports were filed in 1,168 cases; and out of the 9,304 accused cited in the FIRs, only 1,354 (14 per cent) had been arrested, and out of those arrested, 1086 (80 per cent) were out on bail. "Thus, overall speaking, less than 3 per cent of the accused are in jail while 97 per cent are out in the open, making a mockery of the whole system," the report stated.

The well-known psephologist Biswanath Chakraborty feels that these figures, more than mere allegations, have put the State government in a spot. "The report will be assessed by different political parties in their own manner, but the extent of the violence, as indicated by data provided by the State police, does not allow the government to remain in a

state of denial. In Bengal we are seeing workers and supporters of the defeated political party being suppressed and harassed after elections like a people of a defeated country in medieval times," he told *Frontline*.

While there is no doubt that the violence perpetrated on the BJP was severe, it is also undeniable that the violence was a direct fallout of a highly charged and intense electoral battle in which both the BJP and the Trinamool exchanged threats of dire retribution once they come to power. The political analyst Surajit C. Mukhopadhyay pointed out that the recent violence was different from the violence witnessed in the past mainly because of the intensely polarised nature of the election. Speaking to *Frontline*, he said: "In the past also there was violence, but it was more sporadic and on issues which were local. But this election, right from day one, was a hard, long-drawn polarising battle.... The NHRC report appears to be one-sided and biased towards a certain political perspective, which constrains and denudes it of important research content. It appears to have been done in haste. In their hurry to nail the State government, they have come up with shoddy work."

The brunt of the criticism in the report fell on the police and the administration. "Poor and common people have lost faith in police.... The police was either negligent or complicit or under pressure not to take any action against the goons belonging to the ruling dispensation," the report stated. In a separate annexure, the NHRC made a list of "delinquent police officers" in 13 police stations across the State where the registration of FIRs was "abysmally low" and where there was "no trust in the police and fear of retaliation by both the goons as well as the police was evident" in the verbal and written statements of the victims. The report spoke of a "pernicious politico-bureaucratic-criminal nexus" that "will ultimately corrode the entire edifice" of the State. "The presence of this nexus in a border State also has larger national security implications," the report stated. □



THE LEFT has pointed that it has been drawing attention to political violence in West Bengal for several years now and that the BJP is not the only party at the receiving end. Here, Left Front chairman Biman Bose and CPI(M) State secretary Surya Kanta Mishra leading a rally against political violence in Kolkata in April 2018.

Bengal slams NHRC report on violence

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: The West Bengal government has called the National Human Rights Commission's report on post-poll violence in Bengal "perverse, absurd and politically motivated" and has accused at least three members of the probe panel of having a "relationship with the BJP or the Central government".

The 95-page rejoinder to the NHRC-appointed committee's 3,428-page report, filed in the Calcutta high court, says the committee has stepped beyond the brief given by the court and — in its haste to conduct a "witch-hunt" — has questioned the judiciary in the state and even the Election Commission besides the state government and the police.

"The committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch-hunt against the entire state machinery in Bengal," the affidavit by state home secretary BP Gopalika says.