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NARENDRA MODI

nair-a-dozen clashes and injuries to eight people but tried to pre-empt suggestions that the lockdown alone had prevented any major protests so far. He insisted that no violence had occurred at the places where the restrictions

of landline connectivity provided some relief.

Internet and mobile connectivity is yet to be restored, though. Most people in the Valley have no access to landlines.

Muneer Ahmad, a resident

He told a media conference that around 23,000 phone lines would be restored by evening, which is around half of all the telephone connections in the Valley. He said most of the connections would likely be functional by Sunday evening.

they reopen. Kansal did not explain why the government was rushing to reopen schools amid the fraught situation. He did not answer when a reporter asked who would take responsibility if anything happened to any schoolchild.

21/5/19

AGED COUPLE ALLEGE DIKTAT BY LANDLORD AFTER POLL RESULTS

Near Calcutta, kicked out over 'faith'

SUBHASISH CHAUDHURI

Jagatdal: An aged couple, rescued by police from a railway station in Barrackpore near Calcutta during the downpour on Friday, have narrated an 82-day ordeal that allegedly traces its roots to fault lines that have made their presence felt in Bengal in the recent past.

Aziz Mia, 85, and his wife Hasina Bano, 60, said they were thrown out by their landlord because of their religion three days after the Lok Sabha election results were declared.

The platform had been the couple's shelter for 82 days from May 26 till Friday night, when they were

found drenched and shivering in the torrential rain.

Describing landlord Kundan Shaw with great affection, Mia said: "We have seen him grow up before our very eyes. We always treated him like our own nephew.... He did this to us. It is still difficult to believe. He said he did it only because we are Muslim."

Mia, a rickshaw puller, and Bano said they had been living in their rented residence of over four decades in the Mominpur-Moti Bhavan area of Jagatdal in North 24-Parganas.

The belt holds enormous political significance in a Bengal that dramatically changed its colours at the hus-

tings in the 2019 general election. The area forms part of the Barrackpore Lok Sabha constituency where the BJP, rejuvenated by Arjun Singh who crossed over from Trinamul and won the election, is locked in a turf war with the ruling party in several pockets.

"Hum toh bhoolhi gaye they ke hum Musalman hain.... Itney dino baad achanak yaad dila diya, ke haan, hum toh Musalman hain (We had forgotten that we are Muslim.... Suddenly, after so long, we were reminded that yes, we are Muslim after all)," Bano said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Aziz Mia and Hasina Bano.
Picture by Pranab Biswas

Telegraph, 18.08.2019

Kicked out over 'religion'

FROM PAGE 1

Mia alleged that Shaw — whose deceased father was their original landlord till 2014 — beat them up and kicked them out of the one-room accommodation on May 26, letting them take nothing from their possessions.

"He threatened us with murder. He said now that things have changed in the area, after the results, we would be killed if we did not leave.... We fled," Mia said.

Landlord Shaw, who greeted this correspondent repeatedly with "Jai Shri Ram" over the phone on Saturday evening, said he was under pressure from others to ask them to leave. He said the couple left on their own, accused them of maligning him and vowed to fight any legal battle.

"Some people, I don't know who they are, came to me after the election results and said things will change now and, as a Hindu landlord, I should not allow Muslim tenants to stay here. I would be in trouble if I did, they said. So I asked the couple directly what should be done. They left on their own, without any violence or pressure. They left out of fear. They are simply trying to malign me now," said Shaw.

"But I am glad they went. They could barely pay up the Rs 200 rent for the place. They consumed beef there, on my premises. They used to boast of support for Muslims by the ruling party," Shaw told **The Telegraph**.

In the Barrackpore Lok Sabha seat, Jagatdal and numerous other pockets like Bhatpara, Kankinara, Noapara, Amdanga and Titagarh have been on the boil since the election results were declared.

Despite repeated visits by chief minister Mamata Banerjee and several senior cabinet colleagues — besides extensive intervention by the civil and police administration — violence has claimed at least seven lives since the results. The pockets keep erupting.

Mia and Bano appear to have been sucked into this cauldron. The couple have two



Aziz Mia and Hasina Bano after being rescued from Jagatdal station. Pictures by Pranab Biswas



A policeman guards the abandoned shed where the couple have been housed by police

adult sons, who fled with their wives and children to Siwan, their native place in Bihar, from a nearby place in Jagatdal when trouble broke out after the results.

On Friday night, some members of the Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) discovered the couple lying in a corner of the platform, drenched in torrential rain and shivering.

The APDR members alerted Barrackpore police commissioner Manoj Verma and sought his intervention. Verma activated the rescue.

On Saturday, Mia, who came to Bengal in 1950, moved a petition before the additional chief judicial magistrate of Barrackpore against the landlord, accusing him of criminal

intimidation, extortion, causing grievous injuries and trespassing. The petition has been forwarded to the Jagatdal police station for investigation.

"The couple were evicted and later the landlord constructed a wall there. It has become a legal issue now. The police are not authorised to break the wall. Let us see how the court decides the matter. Meanwhile, we have submitted a report to the administration and also moved court for imposition of Section 144 for that particular building. Moreover, a separate suo motu case has been registered against the landlord," commissioner Verma said.

The commissioner said the couple were among the at least

200 families forcefully evicted from homes and shops in the area since the results. "We have reinstated most of the others. Unfortunately, we could not do much in this case yet.... A favourable order from the court might help," Verma added.

The couple were taken to a police camp and housed in an abandoned godown at Babu Bagan. Local Trinamul leader Somenath Shyam arranged for food and clothing. Shyam has promised them legal support and rehabilitation. But the couple remain unsure.

On Saturday, Mia said: "Where do we go? This is our home.... Siwan is from a long, long time ago. From another lifetime. My wife is from Nanda."



The HMI team at the summit of Mt Elbrus on August 15

HMI team scales Europe summit

VIVEK CHHETRI

Darjeeling: A team from the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute here climbed Mt Elbrus, touted as the highest peak in Europe, on Independence Day.

The seven-member squad topped up its feat of scaling the 18,510ft mountain in Russia by performing yoga, something few climbers are known to have done so far.

"Our team unfurled the Tricolour atop Mt. Elbrus at 8.45am on August 15, 2019, to commemorate 73rd Independence Day along with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, 105th birth anniversary of our legendary climber Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and the 65th anniversary of HMI," Group Captain Jai Kishan, principal of the HMI and the team leader, said in a WhatsApp message.

Kishan and Havildar Pan-kaj Kumar performed Yogasana and Suryanamaskar at an altitude of 18,372ft, a little below the peak. "Since there were lots of people at the highest point, we found space a little below (200ft). This is the first time any mountaineering expedition has performed yoga on the summit of a mountain," said Kishan.

With temperatures between minus 10 and 15 degree Celsius and the members wearing heavy boots, lugging equipment and oxygen cylinders, yoga was not easy.

The other members in the team were Subedar Devi Singh (deputy leader) and instructors Roshan Chattraj, Aditya Gurung, Passang Tenzing Sherpa and Umang Mukhia.

The team started the last climb around 11pm on August 14 and reached the peak after a nine-hour trek the next morning. The members also perfor-

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Telegram 19/8/19

NGOs offer help to evicted couple

SUBHASISH CHAUDHURI

Jagatdal: Several NGOs on Sunday offered succour to the elderly Muslim couple sheltered at a police camp in Jagatdal after being allegedly thrown out of their home by their landlord because of their religion three days after the general election results.

Clothes, food and household items were handed over to Aziz Mia, 85, and Hasina Bano, 60, at the Babu Quarter — an abandoned godown — in the North 24-Parganas town.

The couple have been housed there after being rescued by police on Friday night amid torrential rain from a railway platform where they had spent 82 days since being allegedly driven out of their rented home of four decades on May 26.

Jagatdal is an Assembly segment under the Barrackpore Lok Sabha seat, which Trinamul turncoat Arjun Singh won on a BJP ticket this time. The area has been on the boil since then, with clashes leading scores to fleeing or being forced out.

On Sunday, among those who sent clothes and bed-sheets to the couple was Mudar Patherya, a financial



Aziz Mia and Hasina Bano

communicator and social worker from Calcutta. He sent the items through the Naihati-Jagatdal branch of the Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR), whose members found Mia and Bano shivering on the platform on Friday night and initiated the rescue.

Speaking over phone from Thailand, Patherya said: "Today I read about them (the couple) in **The Telegraph** and I was shocked to learn about their plight. As I am abroad, I sent some basic items of daily needs like clothes to the couple through my friends. I have told my friends to make a query about their needs and it will be a pleasure for me to extend my support to them in future also."

A few APDR members vis-

ited the couple on Sunday and handed over some items. "We are trying our best so that the couple can return to their rented house," said the APDR's Bijay Rajak.

Aziz, a rickshaw-puller, had come from Bihar's Siwan in 1950. He was back at work on Sunday after over two months, hoping some of the earnings would help meet the expenses of the legal battle he has started against his landlord.

Later, members of Roddha, an NGO, gave the couple some dry food and daily-use items. "It is unbelievable that an elderly couple were evicted only because of their religious identity. We will extend all possible help," Roddha founder Gourab Saha said.

Aziz had borrowed Rs 4,000 from a moneylender after his rescue. The moneylender has waived his interest. "I have told him (Aziz) not to pay interest and to repay the money at his convenience," the moneylender, who refused to be identified, said.

The gestures left Hasina overwhelmed. "It seems people have not forgotten humanity. But, for us, the road is still difficult as we are still not sure what awaits us," Hasina said.

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W.B. HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION
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File No. 2067 /25/ 15 /2019

Date: 20.08.2019

Enclosed is the news clipping of the 'Telegraph,' an English daily dated 18th August, 2019, the news item is captioned " **Near Calcutta, kicked out over 'faith' "** .

Commissioner of Police, Barrackpore is directed to enquire into the matter and to furnish a report to the Commission within four weeks from the date of communication of this direction.

(Justice Girish Chandra Gupta)
Chairperson

20/8/2019
(Naparajit Mukherjee)
Member

Asstt. Secy. (L & R Wing) / S.O.
is to take immediate action
PKR

20.08.19

Encl: News Item Dt. 18..08. 2019.

Ld. Registrar to keep NHRC posted about cognizance taken on the subject by WBHRC and upload in the website..

SDB

~~AS~~
Done
3/9

codes above -
files put up for appraisal.

13.9.19