

AITC PRESS RELEASE

Why Is Home Minister Amit Shah Wilfully Silent Over 4 Tragic Deaths In Chopra Due To BSF Negligence? Party Leaders Bratya Basu, Dr Shashi Panja & Kunal Ghosh Ask Bengal BJP Leaders

“TRINAMOOL IMPLORES BENGAL GOVERNOR TO REACH CHOPRA & DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE DEATH OF 4 CHILDREN DUE TO BSF NEGLIGENCE”

Kolkata, 13.02.2024

Slamming the wilful silence of the BJP-led Central government over BSF's negligence that caused the tragic death of four innocent children in Uttar Dinajpur's Chopta a day earlier, All India Trinamool Congress leaders on Tuesday demanded justice for the grieving families amid the state BJP unit's deliberate ignorance of the matter. Earlier in the day, Trinamool leaders and hundreds of locals held a silent protest dharna near the BSF camp in Chopra demanding action against errant officials.

Addressing a press conference in Trinamool Bhavan this morning on the BSF atrocities in border villages, **AITC leader and state minister Bratya Basu said**, “There has to be accountability for such incidents. State BJP leaders inform the Union Home Minister about everything that goes on in West Bengal. More than 24 hours have passed since the innocent children of Chopra died a tragic death. **We want to know why Home Minister Amit Shah hasn't reached out to mourning families to extend his condolences over the phone and ensure action against those responsible.** Has he asked a Bengal BJP delegation to visit Chopra? Why is Amit Shah silent on the matter?”

AITC National Spokesperson and state minister Dr Shashi Panja said, “The illegal work being done by the BSF turned out to be a death trap for these children. It was agonising to see the lifeless bodies of the children. Neither the villagers nor the local administrative officials were informed that work was going on to widen the drain.”

Highlighting the atrocities committed by some BSF personnel in border areas, she added, “**In 2022, we went to Bagda where a woman was brutally gangraped in front of her child.**

BSF escaped any action. We demanded answers from the Home Ministry but they chose to remain silent and did not take accountability...One of our ministers raised this issue in the Assembly and exposed how the BSF inappropriately touched women in front of their children...Where is the BJP now? What is the goal of BJP and CPI(M) visiting Sandeshkhali? Is it just because their leaders were arrested? The BJP keeps sending letters to the Home Ministry or protest outside Raj Bhavan. Why are they not raising their voices against the death of innocent children?"

Trinamool Congress also formed a 12-member delegation in the matter comprising MPs, MLAs, senior ministers, and State leaders. In a letter to the Governor, the delegation sought an urgent appointment on this issue and the Hon'ble Governor has agreed to meet on February 15. The delegation includes Trinamool MPs Dola Sen and Pratima Mondal as well as state leaders Chandrima Bhattacharya, Firhad Hakim, Aroop Biswas, Udayan Guha, Bratya Basu, Dr Shashi Panja, Birbaha Hansda, Gautam Deb, Jagadish Chandra Barma Basunia, and Kunal Ghosh.

"If the Governor can visit Sandeshkhali, he should visit Chopra as well. He should visit Chopra and probe into the tragic case of the death of 4 innocent children. Several complaints have surfaced against the BSF in the past years. The Jawans are our sons but the BSF is being used for political reasons...The delegation sought an appointment from the Hon'ble Governor on this issue and he has agreed to meet at 12 noon on February 15," said AITC Spokesperson Kunal Ghosh.

"Our silent protest today reflects the deep pain & sorrow caused by the tragic death of 4 innocent children due to @BSF_India's negligence in Uttar Dinajpur's Chopra. For what crime did these innocent souls pay the ultimate price, HM @AmitShah? At the protest site, each face bears the weight of mourning, demanding accountability & justice for these precious lives lost," AITC posted on X.

The West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights also held a press conference on the matter this evening. A team from the child rights commission will also be visiting Chopra on Wednesday.