

## ED Director seeks report on Mamata's interruption during I-PAC raids

IANS

Enforcement Directorate (ED) Director Rahul Navin on Friday sought details of the bureaucrats and police officers of the West Bengal government who accompanied Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee when she visited two places where ED officials were conducting raid and search operations in connection with the alleged involvement of the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) in a coal smuggling case earlier this month.

Navin, who has been in Kolkata on a three-day visit since Thursday evening, held a marathon meeting on Friday with ED officials attached to the agency's Kolkata regional office to review the progress of ongoing investigations in several high-profile cases of alleged financial irregularities.

During the meeting, agency insiders said, Navin sought detailed information from the investigating officials whose simultaneous raid and search operations at I-PAC's office in Salt Lake and the residence of I-PAC co-founder Pratik Jain in Loudon Street in central Kolkata on January 8 were allegedly interrupted by the Chief



Minister and accompanying bureaucrats and police officers.

As the raid and search operations were underway at these two places on the morning of January 8, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accompanied by senior bureaucrats and police officers, visited both places one after another, the sources said. She left after taking away several files and electronic documents, they claimed.

I-PAC has been operating as the vote strategy agency for the Trinamool Congress since 2020. At the review meeting on Friday,

ED insiders said, Navin specifically questioned the investigating officials engaged in the raid and search operations about the conduct and body language of the bureaucrats and police officers who were present along with the Chief Minister during the alleged interruption.

Navin also reportedly enquired about the nature of the files and electronic documents that the Chief Minister's accompanying team allegedly took away from the two locations.

## Even Netaji would have been summoned for SIR hearing: Didi

Aritra Singha

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday alleged that the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state was so excessive that even Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose would have received a notice for a hearing had he been alive.

"I doubt that even Netaji would have been summoned for a hearing had he been alive. Already, Netaji's grand-nephew has been served with a hearing notice," Banerjee said.

She was speaking at a function marking the 129th birth anniversary of Netaji at Red Road in central Kolkata.

The Chief Minister said that notices for hearings on claims and objections to the draft voters' list were being issued indiscriminately.

She also accused the Narendra Modi-led Union government of attempting to distort India's history and diminish Netaji's contributions.

"The Planning Commission was Netaji's brainchild. The present Union government abolished the Planning Commission and replaced it with NITI Aayog. No one really knows or understands what this new entity is meant for," she said.

Banerjee further criticised the Centre for not declaring Netaji's birthday a national holiday. "This is very unfortunate, especially when the people of India do not even know the date of his demise," she added.

Reiterating her opposition to the ongoing SIR in West Bengal, the Chief Minister called for statewide protests, claiming the exercise had caused severe hardship to ordinary people.

"Those responsible for the suffering caused by the revision exercise will have to face the consequences someday," she said, without naming any individual or institution.

## Sri Lankan man lets another fly to London using his ticket, arrested

### Online Report

BENGALURU

A Sri Lankan national was arrested at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru for allegedly letting another person travel to London using his boarding pass issued in Rajagopal's name.

According to the police cited by the outlet Rajagopal cleared immigration before allegedly giving his boarding pass and visa to a "friend", who then boarded the London-bound flight. When officials noticed something was wrong, Rajagopal reportedly tried to book another ticket for himself, but security staff had already been alerted and detained him.

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