

HD-10  
14/12

## JHARKHAND CHEMISTRY

Jharkhand

THE FIRST EXPANSION of the Union Cabinet by a Prime Minister is usually attended by high expectation. Yet the only Minister Manmohan Singh inducted into the Cabinet late last month was the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader, Shibu Soren. The tribal leader, who quit the Cabinet after the law caught up with him in a 1975 massacre case, is also an accused in the murder of his personal secretary, Shashinath Jha. That Mr. Soren's return was prompted by considerations weightier than the conditional bail obtained by him in the first case (the explanation advanced by the Prime Minister) is evident enough. The clue to Mr. Soren's rehabilitation is to be found in the contrasting performances of the two Jharkhand alliances that fought the 14th general election. The first, comprising the Congress, the JMM, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, and the two Communist parties, swept the polls, bagging 13 of the 14 Lok Sabha seats. Ironically, the remaining seat, Kodarma, was won by the Bharatiya Janata Party's Babulal Marandi, whom the party summarily removed from the post of Chief Minister in March 2003. If the BJP alliance suffered a 12.5 percentage point decline in vote share as compared with the previous general election, the Congress alliance maximised its gains, polling as much as 46.6 per cent of the popular vote. If the Prime Minister took the trouble of expanding his Ministry only to accommodate Mr. Soren, the culprit lies in these statistics.

The scale of the Jharkhand victory is undoubtedly a tribute to the shrewd alliance the Congress put together before the election. However, it takes chemistry rather than arithmetic for alliances to work on the ground. This alliance succeeded because it also proved to be a formidable social coalition. Between them, the Congress, the JMM, and the RJD boasted the support of substantial sections of the Dalits,

Adivasis and Other Backward Classes. A post-poll survey done by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) and published in *The Hindu* showed that in Jharkhand 56 per cent of Adivasis voted for the Congress alliance as against 33 per cent for the BJP alliance. The significance of this in a largely tribal State like Jharkhand can hardly be overstated.

Clearly, it is a tough battle ahead for the BJP. Aside from the powerful combination of social forces arrayed against it, the party has to contend with infighting, a lack of compatibility with its key ally and a poor incumbency record. While these factors would weigh against the ruling party in any election, they assume a special significance in the case of the BJP in Jharkhand — a State carved out of Bihar with much hope and hype in November 2000. Indeed, Chief Minister Marandi had promised to run Jharkhand as a model State that would stand in shining contrast to Bihar. It was hardly a difficult challenge considering that Jharkhand, besides being highly industrialised, is naturally endowed with rich reserves of minerals (the region accounts for 90 per cent of India's coking coal deposits). However the Chief Minister, dogged by dissidence and controversy, quit midway. He was replaced by Arjun Munda, a political novice who appears only to have made a bigger mess of governance and coalitional relations. Barely had Mr. Munda recovered from the shock of Verdict 2004 when the Janata Dal(United) pulled out of his Government in angry reaction to the Chief Minister's decision to drop some of its Ministers as part of a downsizing exercise. Not surprisingly, the BJP leadership has decided against projecting a Chief Ministerial candidate in the coming election. Mr. Marandi, the party's lone Member of Parliament from Jharkhand, is certain to have the last laugh.

14 DEC 2004

THE HINDU

# Munda must quit: Soren

Press Trust of India  
Jamtara, August 1

JMM CHIEF Shibu Soren tonight demanded Chief Minister Arjun Munda's resignation, as the latter was allegedly sentenced by a court during the peak of the Jharkhand movement.

Addressing a rally here, Soren alleged that Munda had been 'sentenced' by a court in 1990 following assault and other charges in East Singhbhum district when the movement was at its height.

Alleging a big political conspiracy had been hatched against the "son of the tribal" (Soren), he said he would fight through democratic and peaceful means.

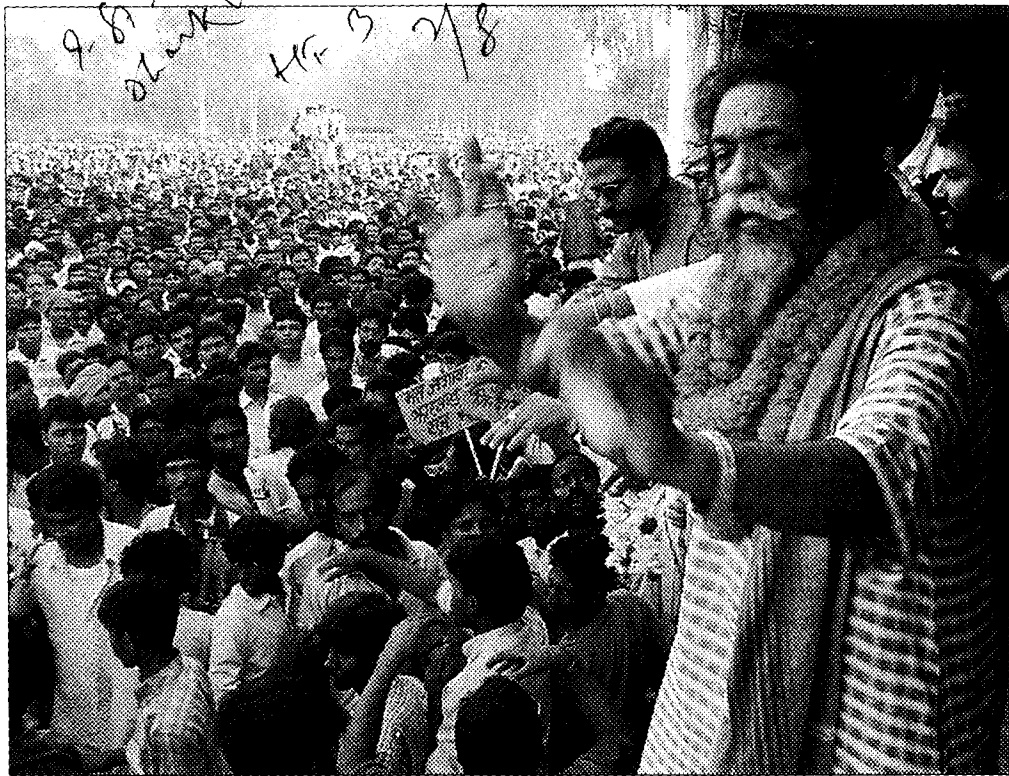
Soren said only his lawyers and a few party men would accompany him during his surrender before the sessions court here tomorrow in accordance with the directions given by the high court on Thursday.

Criticising the state government for selectively recommending withdrawal of statehood movement-related cases, the former union coal minister said the government should have withdrawn all the cases as promised in the Assembly.

Talking on former chief minister Babulal Marandi — who, the JMM believes, had raked up the Chirrudih massacre — Soren, who resurfaced on Friday after remaining in hiding for 10 days, urged the people to give him a fitting reply to him in the coming hustings.

He said, "Tomorrow, I'll announce a new strategy which will revitalise the party. We'll recruit more cadres and work for unity, particularly to keep the legislators with us".

Appealing to the people to support the party in the inter-



**DON'T WORRY, I'M FINE:** JMM supremo Shibu Soren at a rally in Jamtara on Sunday.

PTI

ests of the state, Soren warned his detractors he would set them right once he became Chief Minister of the state.

Pledging to maintain peace and tranquility in the state, Soren said, "I foiled the BJP's attempt to create a Gujarat-like situation in the state".

Asking party men not to lose patience and fall into the trap laid by the opponents, Soren advised them to remain united and work for the people. He also narrated how he had stopped retrenchment of labourers in the mafia-infested coal sector.

Reiterating full confidence and faith in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA

chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Soren said he had got justice from the high court and also expressed the hope of the same from the Jamtara court.

The rally, held amid adequate security and one that attracted around 20,000 people, was organised as Soren wished to go to the 'people's court' before turning in to the sessions court. "The public meeting has been organised outside Jamtara town as the district administration has imposed restrictions on the assembly of five or more people in a group within the town", said Kalimuddin Ansari, a JMM central committee member.

## Laloo blamed

JANATA DAL(U) leader Suraj Mandal on Sunday blamed RJD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav for the legal tangle involving JMM chief Shibu Soren.

Mandal, a former JMM leader, said one of the conditions for setting up the Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council in 1995 was withdrawal of all cases registered after 1972 and Laloo, then Bihar CM, had agreed to it. But he ignored the promise.

PTI, Ranchi

9-57  
JLarkland

## মানুষের মধ্যেই ছিলাম, এই বলে বিজেপিকে তুলোধোনা করলেন শিবু

দেবজিৎ ভট্টাচার্য • রাঁচি

৩০ জুলাই: অজ্ঞাতবাসপর্ব শেষ হল জেএমএম প্রধান শিবু সোরেনের। টানা ১০ দিন বিভিন্ন এলাকায় আত্মগোপন করে থাকার পরে আজ সকালে তিনি রাঁচিতে ফিরে আসেন। এসেই তিনি বিজেপি-র বিরুদ্ধে অগ্নিবর্ষণ করেছেন। সেই প্রসঙ্গ শেষ করেছেন এই ভাবে— “লোকসভার মতো বিধানসভা ভোটও এই রাজ্যে বিজেপি-র ‘পরলোক’ নির্বাচন হয়ে যাবে।”

চিরুডিহি গণহত্যা মামলায় ১৭ জুলাই তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে গ্রেফতারি পরোয়ানা জারি করেছিল জামাতাড়া এসডিজিএম আদালত। তার পরের দু’দিন দিল্লিতে কাটানোর পরে সেখান থেকে তিনি অজ্ঞাতবাসে চলে যান। গোপন ভেরা থেকেই তিনি ছেলে হেমন্ত সোরেনের মাধ্যমে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাছে ইন্তফাপত্র পাঠান। তার পরে আজই প্রথম সাধারণ মানুষের সামনাসামনি হলেন শিবু সোরেন। সোরেন অবশ্য নিজেকে ‘পলাতক’ বলতে রাজি হননি। সেই কারণে আত্মসমর্পণ শব্দটি এক বারও উচ্চারণ করেননি। তাঁর বক্তব্য, “আমি মানুষের মধ্যেই ছিলাম। পুলিশ খুঁজে পায়নি। আমি কোনও দিনই পুলিশের হাতে নিজেকে সঁপে দিইনি। কালও দেব না।” তবে হাইকোর্টের নির্দেশ মেনে তিনি জামাতাড়া আদালতে ‘হাজির’ হবেন।

কাল জেএমএম সূত্রে বলা হয়েছিল, আজ রাঁচিতে ফিরে সোরেন সড়কপথে জামাতাড়ায় গিয়ে আত্মসমর্পণ করবেন। কিন্তু পরিবর্তিত পরিস্থিতিতে ওই পরিকল্পনা বাতিল করা হয়েছে। আজ রাঁচিতে ফিরে দলীয় নেতাদের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করে আগের সূচি বদল করেন দলীয় প্রধান। জে এম এমের কেন্দ্রীয় সংগঠনের সম্পাদক সুপ্রিয় ভট্টাচার্য বলেন, “আজ রাতে বোকোরায় নিজের বাড়িতে থাকবেন ‘গুরুজি’। সেখান থেকে শনিবার সকালে নিজের সংসদীয় এলাকা দুমকায় যাবেন। রবিবার জামাতাড়ায় জনসভা করবেন এবং সোমবার আদালতে হাজির হবেন তিনি।” দলীয় সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে, আদালতে হাজির হওয়ার আগে কোনও জমায়েত করতে চাননি সোরেন। এমনকী, মিছিল করার ক্ষেত্রেও আপত্তি জানিয়েছেন। আর পাঁচ জন সাধারণ মানুষের মতোই আদালতে যেতে চেয়েছেন তিনি।

আজ সকাল সাড়ে ১০টা নাগাদ প্রাক্তন কয়লামন্ত্রী কালো কাঁচ ঢাকা গাড়িতে চেপে বড় ছেলে তথা বিধানসভায় দলের মুখ্য

সচেতক দুর্গা সোরেনের সরকারি বাংলায় পৌঁছন। ওই গাড়িতে ছিলেন দুই সরকারি দেহরক্ষী ও জনা পাঁচেক অতি বিশ্বস্ত দলীয় কর্মী। শিবুর গাড়ির পিছনে ছিল আরও একটি গাড়ি। তাতে ঠাসা ছিল বেসরকারি দেহরক্ষী, যাঁরা অজ্ঞাতবাসে থাকাকালীন ‘গুরুজি’কে পুলিশের নজর এড়িয়ে ঝাড়খণ্ড ও পশ্চিমবঙ্গের এক জায়গা থেকে অন্য জায়গায় নিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন। আজও দুর্গা সোরেনের বাড়িতে কোনও পুলিশকর্মীকে দেখা যায়নি। জামাতাড়া আদালতে হাজির হওয়ার আগে ঝাড়খণ্ড পুলিশ যে ধাওয়া করবে না, এটা জেনে গিয়েছেন জেএমএম নেতারা।

তবে, ঝাড়খণ্ডের অন্য আদালতে শিবুর বিরুদ্ধে যে মামলাগুলি রয়েছে, তার ভিত্তিতে পুলিশ সোরেনকে ধরতে পারে, এমন আশঙ্কা তাঁদের মনে রয়ে গিয়েছে। এক জে এম এম নেতা বলেন, “জামাতাড়া কিংবা দুমকায় জনসভা করার সময়ে অন্য মামলায় পুলিশ ‘গুরুজি’কে ধরতে পারে। সে ক্ষেত্রে পুলিশি হেফাজত থেকে তাঁকে আদালতে হাজির করা হবে।”

জেএমএম প্রধান অবশ্য এই নিয়ে এতটুকু চিন্তিত নয়। তিনি বলেন, “এর আগে অনেক বারই পুলিশ আমাকে ধরেছে। আবারও ধরবে। সরকারের পুলিশ আছে, আমার মানুষ আছে।” তবে, সেই মানুষের তেমন ভিড় ছিল না আজ রাঁচিতে। কর্মী-সমর্থকদের তুলনায় দলীয় নেতাদেরই ভিড় ছিল বেশি। খদ্দেরের পাজমা-পাজ্জাবি ও গলায় তোয়ালে জড়িয়ে শিবু গাড়ি থেকে নামলে নিচুতলার হাতে গোনা কয়েক জন কর্মী তির-ধনুক আর পতাকা নিয়ে শ্লোগান দিতে দিতে দলীয় নেতাকে অভ্যর্থনা জানান। বাড়িতে ঢোকান আগেই সামনের বাগানে সাংবাদিকেরা ঘিরে ধরেন তাঁকে। ঘণ্টা খানেক ধরে নানা প্রশ্নের উত্তর দিয়ে জেএমএম প্রধান দলীয় নেতাদের নিয়ে বৈঠকে বসেন। বিকেলের দিকে রাঁচি থেকে বোকোরার উদ্দেশে রওনা দেন তিনি।

সাংবাদিকদের সঙ্গে কথা বলার সময়ে সোরেন বিজেপি-র কড়া সমালোচনা করার পাশাপাশি ইউপিএ সরকারের প্রতি নিজের আস্থা জ্ঞাপন করেন। শিবু বলেন, “আমার রাজনৈতিক জীবনে কালি মাখানোর উদ্দেশ্য নিয়েই বিজেপি এই ষড়যন্ত্র করেছে। ওরা বিভিন্ন কৌশলে আমাকে সাধারণ মানুষের কাছ থেকে দূরে সরিয়ে দিতে চাইছে।” শিবুর মন্তব্য, “এনডিএ-র ওই কৌশল’ কাজে আসেনি। ঝাড়খণ্ড আমার বাড়ি। আমি বাড়িতেই ফিরে এসেছি।” তবে, চিরুডিহি-কাণ্ড নিয়ে মুখ খুলতে চাননি তিনি।

# Skipping court a habit with the goat savour

Sandeep Sarkar in Ranchi



July 23. — Runaway Union coal minister Mr Sibu Soren could not, apparently, bear to see goats killed. Such was his love for the dumb creatures that he was alleged, along with nine others, to have beaten four persons to death — a year before the 1975 Chirudih massacre — for having killed a goat and then cooked and eaten its flesh. Even as Mr Soren avoids facing court on the Chirudih charges despite issuance of a non-bailable arrest warrant against him, it's

come to light that he didn't respond to summons in the earlier case either, making him perhaps the only Union minister India has ever had who's made it a habit to skip court appearances in such a way. The goat case, as it were, has since been closed with the other accused, who *did* make an appearance in court, having been acquitted for want of evidence.

The case dates back to 1974. In the FIR lodged by one Jang Bahadur Singh at Pirtad police station, Girdih, 10 persons including Mr Soren were named. The FIR states that one Babu Rai of Kudko village was accused of killing a goat and eating it. The news spread across the village and a search of Rai's house by some villagers "confirmed" it when they found the smashed goat skull in a corner.

The FIR states that thereafter a mob led by Mr Soren allegedly barged into Rai's

house and beat him up fatally. Rai died on the spot. The mob next went on the rampage and allegedly abducted three others, said to have shared the meal with Rai. The FIR states that the mob beat up the three who later succumbed to their injuries.

Eight of the accused were subsequently arrested while a warrant against Mr Soren was issued in 1981 by the CJM, Girdih, when neither Mr Soren nor his advocates appeared before the court following a summons. The case was, however, committed to trial before the session's court minus Mr Soren. The eight accused who faced trial were acquitted due to lack of evidence. The minister, though, is yet to make an appearance in the case and the police are, surprise, surprise, yet to execute the warrant issued by the CJM.

Indeed, the response of the minister-on-

the-run to the Chirudih charges has brought into focus the other pending cases against him and the fact that he's repeatedly failed to appear before court. For example, the CJM Jamshedpur, issued a bailable arrest warrant against him in 1999 in a case relating to Sec. 144 of the IPC. The minister failed to appear before the court and a year later, the magistrate ordered attachment of his property. The case has since come to a standstill as the investigating officer "failed to hand over the file" following her transfer to Hazaribagh. The police has, officially, asked for the file back.

**Monday date:** Mr Soren will have to wait till Monday for his criminal writ petition to be heard by the Jharkhand High Court. His lawyer told reporters, the Chief Justice said the petition would be listed on Monday.

**More reports on page 4**

## Jha mother's plea

NEW DELHI, July 23. — Mrs Priyambada Devi, mother of Mr Soren's secretary Shashinath Jha, abducted and murdered in 1994, has moved an application before a Delhi court seeking "mitochondrial DNA test" by the FBI of the skeletal remains believed to be her son's. The plea was moved by her counsel Mr K Sunil before additional sessions judge Mrs Indrmeet Kaur Kochchar who today reserved order on the matter. Mrs Priyambada Devi said since three DNA tests done on the skull and body of "my son" by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, after taking samples of the family members, turned out to be negative, now the FBI should conduct the latest and the most accurate test. The CBI said the CCMB also has this facility and it will take a month to report against the FBI's seven to 18 months. — PTI

THE STATESMAN

24 JULY 2004

# Jharkhand cops in Delhi to net Soren

Sandeep Sarkar in Ranchi

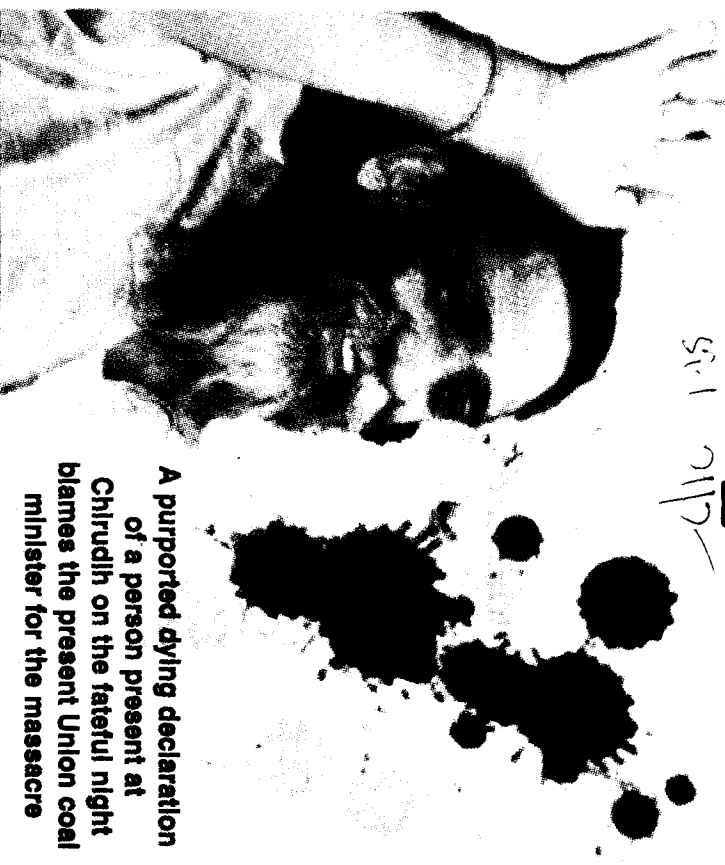
July 20. — A Jharkhand police team today reached Delhi to execute the arrest warrant against Mr Sibu Soren in connection with the 1975 Chirudih massacre, even as the Union coal minister applied for leave to the Lok Sabha Speaker citing personal reasons. The application was reportedly submitted to the Speaker's office yesterday.

The seven-member team — that includes Mr Neeraj Sinha, SP (special branch), and Mr Umesh Singh SP (CID) — is likely to seek Speaker Mr Somnath Chatterjee's permission for arresting Mr Soren. "Once the Speaker gives the green signal, the team will seek Delhi Police's help to arrest the minister," an officer said here.

Mr Soren has been untraceable since he left his residence at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday. He has not even gone to the room booked for him at Jharkhand House.

Senior officials here discussed today how the warrant could be executed at the earliest.

What may come in the way of the JMM chief getting a reprieve is the "dying declaration" of a person, who had categorically blamed the minister for the Chirudih massacre. Lakhindra Soren's statement was recorded at Sagar Hospital, Jamtara, in the presence of judicial magistrate Mr Laxman Ora-



**A purported dying declaration of a person present at Chirudih on the fateful night blames the present Union coal minister for the massacre**

on, now a High Court judge. Police and hospital records say Lakhindra, who was critically injured in the incident on 23 January, died the next day.

Lakhindra said he had gone to attend a meeting at Bankadih on the fateful day. "Before I could reach there, at 3.00 p.m., I came to know that Muslims had set Jakh village on fire... Meeting ka jagah se sab aadmi dawkar gaon gaya. Mfi-

field near Chirudih where Sibu Soren's people had gathered. Soren said Muslims have set Santhal homes on fire, let us first finish Muslims. The jungle began to reverberate with drumbeats."

Around 4,000 people then headed for Chirudih where two persons from the "minority side" fired at them. Lakhindra was injured. Mr Oraon had recorded that Lakhindra's thumb impression had to be affixed on the declaration since his right hand was badly injured.

Mr Soren's lawyers, however, will challenge Lakhindra's declaration. One of the lawyers, Mr Sanjiv Kumar Mahta, said the statement couldn't be called a dying declaration since Lakhindra died only 10 months ago, not on 24 January 1975. Mr Mahta said the magistrate described the statement as "dying declaration" because he felt Lakhindra wouldn't survive. To prove his point, he said the poll panel had issued an identity card (No. BR /27/155/-390289) to Lakhindra on 1 January 1994. "The case records should have been set right," Mr Mahta said.

PM on Soren: "You will know in due course of time," was the Prime Minister's reply when journalists asked him in Guwahati today about Mr Soren's fate. The Opposition disrupted proceedings in the Lok Sabha on the issue as the Congress defended the minister, saying the case was "politically motivated".

## Tracking the tainted

PATNA, July 20. — Several worthies from Bihar who have made it to the parliamentary pedestal have of late been moving in and out of courts, jails... and hospitals.

Mr Taslimuddin, Union minister of state for civil supplies, was in Araria yesterday to appear in a sessions trial (No. 232/96). The court rejected counsel's plea that the chargesheet be withdrawn as the case was fabricated. At least 12 cases of murder, loot, robberies and rape are pending against him.

The Siwan district administration today shifted the RJD MP, Mr Shahaabuddin, from hospital to jail in compliance with yesterday's Patna High Court order. A show-cause notice was issued to the DM and SP for allowing the MP to rest in hospital though technically he was in judicial custody. The officials were ordered to send him to jail within 48 hours.

Mr AP Srivastava, the district fast track court judge, has been dismissed for allowing the jailed Shahaabuddin to attend the monsoon session of Parliament.

Chargesheeted in 24 criminal cases, Mr Shahaabuddin was among the six jailbirds who contested the Lok Sabha polls from behind the bars.

Late tonight, Pappu Yadav was transferred to Beur jail in accordance with a Supreme Court directive. The Bench (coram: Hegde, Sinha and Mathur, JJ) today took strong exception to the VIP treatment being given to him at Patna Medical College Hospital for a "minor" illness. It passed the order after studying the CBI report on his sneak visit to Madhepura during the election. The LJP MP from Purnea is an accused in the Ajit Sarkar murder case.

Patna High Court has also indicted the police for failing to arrest Surebhan Singh, the LJP MP from Ballia. The district court has issued an arrest warrant against him for the murder of Umesh Yadav, the leader of a local body. The High Court yesterday directed the state government to send records of the case to the Speaker, Mr Somnath Chatterjee. The arrest warrant was issued on 21 February by the additional chief judicial magistrate, Bath.

Meanwhile, Manoranjan Singh, alias Dhurmal Singh, MLA from Barhampur, surrendered to Bokaro police yesterday. He has been booked in at least 30 criminal cases, including 23 in Jharkhand. — Manoj Chaturajia

HC SEEKS CASE STATUS REPORT

# Soren contests arrest warrant

*WFF J. S. Jharkhand 52-1*  
Statesman News Service

RANCHI, July 19. — Union coal minister Mr Siby Soren today challenged in Jharkhand High Court the arrest warrant issued against him by the Jamtara sub-divisional judicial magistrate in connection with the 1975 Chirudih massacre case.

In the criminal writ petition, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha president prayed that the arrest warrant issued in 1986 be quashed.

The warrant was issued because Mr Soren had failed to appear in the sessions court when the case was committed to it. The minister argued in the petition that no notice was sent to him asking him to be present in the court.

The government in its report has pointed out that the arrest warrant was issued against Mr Soren and nine others in 1986, but was not delivered to them.

The Union minister in his petition also challenged the separation of the Chirudih massacre case from other cases filed during the Jharkhand movement. Mr Soren prayed that the Chirudih case be clubbed with other Jharkhand movement cases in which charges against the accused have been dropped.

The petition is likely to come up for hearing on 20 July.

In another development, the Jamtara SDJM today handed over to the SP the arrest warrant against Mr Soren and seven other accused.

Legal experts said Mr Soren had a valid point in moving the High Court for quashing the SDJM's order on grounds that he was on bail and that no summon was served on him before the bail was cancelled in 1986. They said that if Mr Soren had not been served summons, the cancellation of the bail and the subsequent issuance of arrest warrant were not valid. A lawyer said the state government



## Centre is behind him

NEW DELHI, July 19. — The Centre has thrown its weight behind Mr Siby Soren because the Congress has high stakes in Jharkhand where Assembly elections are due early next year. The party doesn't want to sour its relations with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. The Congress-JMM alliance yielded dividend in the Lok Sabha polls as the alliance won 13 of the 14 seats. — SNS

Details on page 5

might find it difficult to counter the petition since an important file pertaining to Mr Soren and seven co-accused had gone missing. Another lawyer, however, said technical flaws made by the court might be overlooked since the motive was much more important.

Jharkhand High Court has ordered the Jamtara district judge to submit a report detailing the status of the case. The judge has also been asked to report how the file relating to Mr Soren and seven other accused in the case have gone missing, and explain why the arrest warrant issued by the SDJM could not be issued and delivered to Mr Soren.

Waiting for Guruji, page 5

THE STATESMAN

20 JUL 2004