

DC, Leh Transferred; Sonam Wangchuk Prevails



By The Magpie

Leh, Tuesday, June 19, 2007

In a first incident of its kind in the history of Ladakh, the DC of Leh has been transferred due to the pressure built up by local NGOs, especially SECMOL and its Director Sonam Wangchuk. The differences between the NGOs and the DC, M.K.Dwivedi began last year when the DC issued a notice to all the NGOs of Leh demanding monthly reports of their activities, failing which raids on their premises

was threatened. The NGOs didn't like the tone and language used by the DC; they decided to give the report of their activities to the CEC (Chairman of the elected local government) instead and also filed a case against the DC for his "arbitrary" action. The matter became so heated that the Divisional Commissioner had to come to Leh and make peace between the two parties.

However the peace didn't last long and the matter took a new turn as there started a tussle between the DC and Mr. Wangchuk, who openly and forcefully criticised the former.

The DC didn't appreciate the criticisms of Mr. Wangchuk and pressed several charges against Mr. Wangchuk, like holding illegal government land at Phey village, breaking FCRA norms and even having anti-national links with China. Mr. Wangchuk denied all the charges and threatened to file a case of defamation against the DC. He met the Chief Secretary J&K and gave a memorandum to the Chief Minister J&K and later even met the President of India, defending himself and complaining about the DC's "misuse of his powers". He took the matter to the media also and put forward his case strongly.

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) learnt about the plight of the NGOs of Leh and Mr. Wangchuk. It launched a campaign on its web-site calling people to write to the President of India, PM of India, MP Mr. Omar Abdullah, The Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission India, The Governor of J&K, Chief Minister J&K and CEC, LAHDC, Leh, registering their protest against the "misuse of power" by Mr. Dwivedi. Thousands of letters and E-mails flooded the offices of the above officials and tremendous pressure was built to remove Mr. Dwivedi from Leh.

After the news of Mr. Dwivedi's removal from Leh became official, rumours were heard in the town that he was being transferred on his own application and also because the Congress Party was not happy with him.

This whole episode is an eye opener to all the future DCs of Leh that they cannot bully any organisation for no reason and misuse their given powers.