

Manipur CM calls drone attacks act of terror

PTI, IMPHAL: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Tuesday condemned the drone bomb attacks on civilians as acts of terrorism and vowed a firm response.

Taking to X, Singh expressed his outrage, stating, "Dropping bombs on civilian populations and security forces using drones is an act of terrorism, and I condemn such cowardly acts in the strongest terms." Singh's comments followed two separate drone bomb attacks in Koutruk and Senjam Chirang in Imphal West district, which resulted in the deaths of two persons, including a woman, and injuries to 12 others.

"The Manipur state government takes such unprovoked assaults with utmost seriousness and will respond decisively to combat these forms of terrorism targeting the indigenous population," Singh said.

He emphasised, "We denounce all forms of violence, and the people of Manipur shall unite against hate, division, and separatism." The use of drones in these bomb attacks marks the first instance of "hi-tech weapons" being employed in the state.

While drones had previously been used by warring groups for surveillance and tracking militants, this represents a significant escalation, an official told PTI.

On the attack at Koutruk, the official said "Police re-

sponded promptly." "There was mobilisation of armed miscreants in many places which had seen intense conflict in the past. When the attack started in Koutruk, the IGP, DIG and SP and other police forces rushed to the area to counter the situation. Retaliatory firing and combing operations along with Army and central forces were conducted," a police statement said.

Meanwhile, Manipur Director General of Police Rajiv Singh said that the police alone cannot deal with the situation in the violence-hit state and continued assistance from Central forces was required.

Speaking to reporters after visiting Koutruk and Kadangband areas, he said, "This is a new thing and things have escalated. We are taking it very seriously." "We have spoken to NSG (National Security Guards), and more experts are coming. We have constituted a committee to critically examine the drones. We will soon search for means to deal with the drone attacks. We have some means to deal with drones and we are trying to deploy those," he said.

More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis since May last year.

Bengali theatre personality returns State award

PTI, KOLKATA: Amid protests by civil society organisations over the rape-murder of a trainee doctor, Bengali theatre personality **Biplab Bandyopadhyay** on Tuesday announced returning the state-instituted Best

Theatre Director' award over the RG Kar Hospital issue. Bandyopadhyay, eminent play-

wright and director, said in a statement that he is returning the award conferred on him earlier this year by the Paschimanga Natya Akademi and the Rs 30,000 monetary grant.

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Died:
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