

6 Govt & Politics



DELHI **CONFIDENTIAL**



STEPPING OUT

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS Lok Sabha MP Saugata Roy has resigned from the Joint Committee on Personal Data Protection Bill 2019. Trinamool sources said a miffed Roy, whose name was announced in the House, took the step after party chief Mamata Banerjee insisted on the inclusion of Mahua Moitra in the committee. Moitra has been pursuing the issue in court.

VISIT OFF, TALKS ON

JAPANESE PRIME Minister Shinzo Abe's visit may have been called off earlier this month due to protests in Assam over the new citizenship law, but New Delhi and Tokyo are not letting that affect the bilateral dialogue between the two sides. An Indian team went to Tokyo this week and held talks on maritime affairs and disarmament and non-proliferation — both key strategic areas. While no concrete outcomes were announced, it is expected that the deliverables will be part of Abe's visit in 2020.

CAPITAL TEAM

WHILE THE Congress had pulled 72-year-old Subhash Chopra out of political wilderness and handed him the baton of the Delhi Congress ahead of Assembly elections, it has given the task of selecting candidates to a young team. So AICC in-charge of Gujarat and former Youth Congress chief Rajeev Satav will head a committee that will screen the candidates. He will be assisted by two young AICC secretaries — Virender Singh Rathore from Haryana and Challa Vamshi Chand Reddy from Telangana. While some senior leaders prefer a seat-sharing understanding between the Congress and AAP, most of the state leaders are said to be against the idea.

‘Don’t be influenced by violence spread by Oppn parties, communal forces’

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 26

BJP GENERAL secretary Ram Madhav on Thursday said the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) or National Population Register (NPR) have nothing to do with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and blamed Opposition parties and communal forces for “violence” in the country.

“Many leaders including the Prime Minister have made it clear that CAA or NPR have nothing to do with NRC,” Madhav said here. “The Prime Minister said two days ago in New Delhi that so far in the government there was no discussion on NRC.”

Saying that the new citizenship law was not against anyone or discriminatory towards Muslims, Madhav said, “I want to tell the people not to be influenced by the violence and disruption spread by Opposition parties and communal forces in the country. Everyone should read this Act. There is nothing in the Act which is against any faith or religion.”

The senior BJP leader also said



Ram Madhav

that NPR is not connected with the citizenship register. “The NPR is just an extension of the census exercise, which is done every 10 years under which demographic and population data is collected. It was started by the UPA government in 2010,” he said.

To a question about the release of mainstream political leaders who have been detained in the Valley since August 5, the BJP leader said, “It (release) is an on-going process. Several people have been released, sometimes from house arrest and sometimes from preventive detention also. It is an ongoing process, and the state administration based on security assessment will take appropriate action from time to time.”

Kerala cabinet nod to Rs 1.3 cr compensation to ex-ISRO scientist

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 26

THE KERALA cabinet on Thursday approved a recommendation that former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan be paid Rs 1.3 crore as compensation for his unlawful arrest and torture while in police custody.

The recommended amount would be paid to the scientist accused in the ISRO spy case, apart from the compensation of Rs 50 lakh he was given following a Supreme Court order and Rs 10 lakh suggested by the National Human Rights Commission.

An official communication from the state government said Rs 1.3 crore would be given for

settling a suit Narayanan had filed at the sub-court in Thiruvananthapuram in 2003. The recommendation was made by former chief secretary K Jayakumar, who was assigned by the government to look into the issue and suggest remedies. The cabinet on Thursday gave its approval for the recommendation.

In 1994, Narayanan was accused of selling vital secrets associated with Indian space technology to Pakistan. Though he was later acquitted by a CBI court and the Supreme Court in 1998, he spent a total of 50 days in jail along with fellow scientist D Sasikumar and four others.

In 2018, he was compensated Rs 50 lakh by the Supreme Court for “unnecessary arrest, harassment and mental cruelty”.

Oppn leaders slam Army chief remark: Undermines civil-military relations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

ARMY CHIEF General Bipin Rawat on Thursday came under fire from Opposition leaders after he criticised people leading protests against the new citizenship law. While Congress leaders accused him of undermining civil-military relations, the CPM asked whether India is going the Pakistan way of “politicising the military”.

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury tweeted, “Army Chief’s remark on CAA is highly objectionable, unethical and beyond his remit, he is appeared to be a BJP leader who is going to be promoted or rewarded as cds. Rawat needs to

be restrained to maintain the impartiality of our army”.

“Since when have Army Chiefs started commenting about internal affairs? It undermines civil-military relations whose cornerstone is that Armed Forces neither comment or interfere in domestic politics. This has been our singular success going back to 1947,” former Union minister and senior Congress leader Manish Tewari said.

Former Union minister Yashwant Sinha said, “There are many ways in which democratic norms are being destroyed in India. But Army Chief Bipin Rawat wading into the current political controversy is a new low. Must be nipped in the bud.”

Referring to General Rawat’s

remarks that leaders are not those who lead masses to carry out arson, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh tweeted, “I agree General Saheb but also leaders are not those who allow their followers to indulge in genocide...Do you agree with me General Saheb?”

The Congress did not make an official statement. Asked about the Army Chief’s remark, party spokesperson Ajay Maken, who was addressing a press meet at AICC headquarters, said, “Well, he is Army chief and we would desist from making any comments on his statement.”

The CPM was scathing. In a statement, the party said the “Army Chief’s statement underlines as to how the situation has degenerated under the Modi gov-

ernment where the highest officer in uniform can so brazenly breach the limits of his institutional role”.

“It is, therefore, necessary to raise the question as to whether we are going the Pakistan way of politicising the military. Such obnoxious interference in matters of democratic struggles from top-ranking military professionals is unheard of in the history of independent India,” the CPM said and demanded that the Army Chief apologise to the nation “for his indiscretion which has extremely adverse ramifications for the Constitutional arrangement in the country”.

It also demanded that “the government takes note of such a breach and censures the General”.



Mamata Banerjee at a protest march against the new citizenship law and NRC. *Express*

Mamata: BJP playing with fire, even I don’t know father’s birth date

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 26

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday warned the BJP against “playing with fire”, asking students to carry on with their movement against the new citizenship law and proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC). The TMC supremo alleged the BJP was creating confusion over citizenship with “the CAA, NRC and now National Population Register (NPR)”.

“This government is afraid of the movement. I warn the BJP not to play with fire,” Banerjee said, asking students not to be scared. “This government is even persecuting the students... They (students) are the voters of the country. It is their right to protest. No one can stop them...,” she said.

Asserting that she herself doesn’t know the birth date or place of her father, she said, “They (BJP) are lying and creating confusion. Now for NPR, people are being asked about the date of birth of their parents, especially their father. I don’t know the date of birth of my father. I can tell when my father died. But in those days (when her father was born), people hardly kept records of date of birth. When I can’t say it, how will you?” Banerjee said.

It is to be noted that the West

Bengal government has already stayed NPR work in the state.

Banerjee also warned BJP of “dire consequences” if it continues to take action against people protesting against the new citizenship law in BJP-ruled states. “They are saying they will take action against people who are protesting. We also have laws. We are warning them. In many states, other parties are in power. If they start doing the same against the BJP, they will be in problem,” she said.

She also accused the BJP of not keeping its promises, referring to her Karnataka counterpart B S Yediyurappa’s remark about putting on hold compensation to families of two people killed in police firing on anti-CAA protesters in Mangaluru.

“If you make a promise, you should keep it. A TMC delegation will be sent to Karnataka to meet the families of the victims allegedly killed in police firing there. We have decided the TMC trade union will hand over cheques of Rs 5 lakh each to the families,” said Banerjee.

Her announcement came a day after the Karnataka CM told reporters that his government would not give a single rupee to the families of the two persons, if investigation proved their involvement in violence during the December 19 anti-CAA protests.

Narayanasamy says will not implement new citizenship law in Puducherry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, PUDUCHERRY, DECEMBER 26

PUDUCHERRY CHIEF Minister V Narayanasamy on Thursday claimed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act “ignores” Muslims and that he will not implement the newly enacted law, as well as the NRC, in the Union Territory “come what may”. The Congress Chief Minister alleged that the new citizenship law and the NRC were aimed at achieving the goal of “Hindutva, as championed by the BJP”.

“Even Tamils from Sri Lanka residing in India as refugees were persecuted in the Island country. Why you have left them out? Similar is the case with the Rohingya,” he told PTI over phone.

Saying that the new law “ignores” Indian Muslims, he said, “It cannot be done in a partisan way. You have to include people of all the religions. You can’t do it selectively for the people of some religions. Come what may, I will not implement CAA and NRC in Puducherry.”

Narayanasamy, who addressed participants at the end of a rally, condemned the new law and reiterated his stand that Puducherry government would not implement the Act.

Cong alleges ‘more sinister agenda’ behind NPR exercise

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

THE CONGRESS on Thursday accused the Central government of bringing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the garb of the National Population Register (NPR), arguing that the pre-test of the NPR had questions that are required for the NRC.

However, the Opposition party was silent on whether the Congress governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Punjab would stop the NPR exercise.

The Congress said the party will not have any objection to the NPR exercise if the Central government reverts to the questionnaire used by the UPA government. It asserted that the NPR exercise conducted by the UPA government in 2010 was not linked to the NRC.

The ruling BJP hit back, putting out an old video clip of former Home Minister P Chidambaram in which he said “...the NPR process is for the purpose of issuing the resident card which eventually will lead to a citizenship card later”.

Reacting to this, Chidambaram tweeted, “I am happy that the BJP has released a

Cong slams JD(U)’s Kishor

New Delhi: JD(U) leader Prashant Kishor came in for attack from the Congress for his remarks that the party should ask its Chief Ministers to declare that they will not implement NRC in their respective states. “Beats the life out of me, on how Mr Prashant Kishor goes about preaching how the Congress and Rahul Gandhi should ensure opposing CAA-NRC in Congress ruled states, but does not offer the same advice to his own clients?! Hypocrisy or strategy? Your call!” senior Congress leader Manish Tewari said. **ENS**

video clip of the launch of NPR in 2010. Please listen to the video. We were enumerating the ‘usual residents’ of the country. The emphasis is on residency not citizenship. Every usual resident was to be enumerated irrespective of his or her religion or place of birth. The NPR aided the preparation of the Census of 2011. There was no mention of NRC.”

BJP: Congress, Communists speaking language of Jinnah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

BJP MP Virendra Singh Mast on Thursday slammed the Opposition “Congress and Communist party”, saying they were speaking the language of Mohammed Ali Jinnah on the new citizenship law.

Mast, who heads the party’s farmers’ wing BJP Kisan Morcha, said Jinnah used to call the Congress the party of Hindus and addressed Mahatma Gandhi as the leader only of Hindus even though the Congress during those times had all kinds of leaders and never claimed to represent only Hindus.

Now, the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi represent the whole country and never said they represent only Hindus, but the Congress and Communists are saying that the party and leaders like Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah only represent Hindus, Mast said.

When the government announced policies for farmers, it never said these would only benefit one particular section. They were for all sections, he said, adding that the PM’s slogan ‘sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka viswas’ showed that the government stood for all. Farmers across the country were angry with the Opposition for speaking the language of Jinnah, he said, adding

Dushyant says JJP leaders will talk to rebel MLA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 26

A DAY after Narnaund MLA Ram Kumar Gautam quit as JJP’s national vice president, Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala said that “senior leaders of the party would speak to him to look into his grievances”.

Speaking to the journalists at JJP’s office here, Dushyant said that the state party chief was authorised to take action if any loss was caused to the party by his grievances (actions).

Upset with the denial of a cabinet berth in the BJP-JJP alliance, Gautam had announced that he was quitting from the senior party post. He had taken on Dushyant for keeping all the ten portfolios with him stating that “he did not share power with anybody else”.

“The BJP-led government has a larger and more sinister agenda and that is why the NPR approved by them Tuesday is very dangerous and different in terms of the TEXT as well as the CONTEXT of NPR 2010. If the BJP’s motives are bonafide, let the Government unconditionally state that they support the NPR form and design of 2010 and have no intention of linking it to the controversial NRC,” he added.

Addressing a press conference, senior Congress leader Ajay Maken said nobody will have any objection if the government does not ask questions for the NRC. “We are asking the government what exactly is the questionnaire... If any of these things is something which is linked to the NRC which is not required as per the NPR, that is objectionable to us... We will see how to go about it... but first we are asking the government to come clear on what exactly the NPR schedule is and how they are going to canvas the NPR,” Maken said.

Meanwhile, the Left parties — CPM, CPI, CPI(M), Liberation, Forward Bloc and the RSP — announced a week-long protest programme from January 1 against the new citizenship law, NRC and NPR, which they called an assault on the Constitution.

the Morcha would speak to farmers on the issue.

Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra hit out at senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his liar jibe at the PM. Calling him “*jhoothon ka sardar*” (master of lies), Patra said that detention camps in Assam were set up when the Congress headed governments in the state and Centre. He was referring to a tweet by Rahul alleging that Modi was lying to the country on the issue of detention camps in Assam.

He also highlighted the “white paper” issued by the Assam government on illegal migrants and said it had spoken about setting up detention centres.

— WITH PTI INPUTS

GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX RELEASED BY CENTRAL GOVT

TN tops among big states, Puducherry best-governed UT

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 26

TAMIL NADU has topped the Good Governance Index released by the Centre on Wednesday, followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

The government celebrates December 25 as Good Governance Day to mark the birthday of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Odisha, Bihar, Goa, and Uttar Pradesh did not fare well in the Big States category and Jharkhand was at the bottom of the list.

The other two classifications are North-East and Hill States, and Union Territories.

HOW THE STATES RANKED			
BIG STATES	SCORE	N-E AND HILL STATES	SCORE
Tamil Nadu	5.62	Himachal Pradesh	5.22
Maharashtra	5.40	Uttarakhand	4.87
Karnataka	5.10	Tripura	4.50
Chhattisgarh	5.05	Mizoram	4.41
Andhra Pradesh	5.05	Sikkim	4.21

In the North-East and Hill States category, Himachal Pradesh ranked first, followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim. Jammu and Kashmir is at the sixth place, followed by Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Among the Union Territories, Puducherry emerged as the best-governed, ahead of

Chandigarh and Delhi. Lakshwadeep was found to be the worst-performing.

The rankings were launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Centre for Good Governance. A government statement said the index is a uniform tool to assess the status of governance and the im-

pact of various interventions by state governments and Union Territories.

“The Index was designed scientifically based on various parameters of governance,” said Jitendra Singh, Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office, while releasing the index on Wednesday.

As per the methodology of

the index, states are assessed on their performance in 10 sectors — agriculture and allied sectors, commerce and industries, human resource development, public health, public infrastructure and utilities, economic governance, social welfare and development, judicial and public security, environment and citizen-centric governance.

In the agriculture and allied sector, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Daman and Diu are the best performing states in their respective classifications, taking into account the growth rate of agriculture and allied sector, foodgrain production, horticulture produce, milk and meat production, and crop insurance. In the category of commerce and industries, Jharkhand was at the top among big states,

Uttarakhand among hill states and Delhi among Union Territories.

West Bengal emerged as the topper in the Environment category among the big states and Jammu and Kashmir has topped among the North-East and Hill States. Chhattisgarh has topped the Social Welfare and Development Sector ranking among big states and Meghalaya is on the top in its category.

In Economic Governance, Karnataka has emerged at the top among big states and Uttarakhand has topped among North-East and Hill States. In terms of Public Infrastructure and Utilities, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh have topped their respective categories. Kerala is on top in terms of Public Health.

