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### NEARBY



Cong. seeks NHRC action on 'U.P. police atrocities'

NEW DELHI The Congress on Monday approached the National Human Rights Commission to demand action against Uttar Pradesh police officers who allegedly committed atrocities on people protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

SC to hear Nirbhaya convict's plea today

NEW DELHI A three-judge Bench led by Justice R. Banumathi is scheduled to hear on Tuesday a plea by Nirbhaya case convict Mukesh Singh challenging the President's rejection of his mercy petition on January 17. Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on Monday asked Mukesh's counsel to approach the apex court registry for urgent listing of the condemned man's plea

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

PRELIMS COMPLETE PACK 921-7070707

# Govt. sweetens Air India offer, puts 100% stake on the table

Reprieve of ₹40,000 crore in liabilities to buyer; second attempt in as many years

It holds 50% of

the market share

operations served

by Indian carriers

■ There are 4,400

and 3,300 in 42

at least 6 months

■ The brand has

three logos -

airport slots in India

foreign countries for

of international

JAGRITI CHANDRA

The Union government on Monday invited bids for a 100% stake sale of Air India (AI) and transfer of management control along with its complete share in two subsidiaries - low-cost international carrier Air India Express and ground-handling arm AISATS.

The government has offered to hive off liabilities worth nearly ₹40,000 crore to sweeten the deal.

This is the second attempt in two years by the Narendra Modi-led government at privatising the national carrier. On May 31, 2018, when the deadline for bids closed, not even a single private player had shown interest.

On the table is a 100% stake in AI, 100% stake in AI Express Limited (AIXL) and all of the government's 50% stake in AISATS, which is a joint venture with the Singapore-based ground handling company SATS Limited.

### Up for grabs

The buyer will get a total of 146 aircraft, 56% of which are owned by the airline group, while the remaining are on lease. It will also be-

### **New deal**

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In its new announcement. the government has eased the conditions for prospective buyers compared to its proposal in 2018. A look at what the national carrier has

Air India's fleet consists of 146 aircraft, 56% of which are owned by it while the others are leased

has 9.617

permanent

employees

**Waiver of** liabilities of ₹40,000 crore

Maharaja, Flying Swan and Sun

Waiver of debt Waiver of debt of ₹40,000 crore of **₹15,000 cr.** Lack of clarity Employee perks like free travel and medical on employee facilities specified, along entitlements with annual estimate of the expenses incurred on them Data room to be Data room and draft opened during share purchase financial bids agreement can be accessed in the first round itself

2020

Air India

100% stake sale in

76% stake sale

in Air India

nefit from as much as 50% of the international market share held by Indian airlines as well as the airline's 4,400 slots at airports in the country and 3,300 slots in 42 countries, which will be available at least for six months after the sale is com-

As many as 9,617 permanent employees, including pilots and cabin crew with deep technical and operational expertise, will be up for grabs along with the airline's brand as well as the famous "Maharaja" and "Flying swan" logos.

Any private or public limited company, a corporate body and a fund with a net value of ₹3,500 crore will be eligible to bid. The last date for submit-

ting interest to the transaction adviser is March 17 and the outcome of this round will be known by March 31, following which qualified bidders will be given two months to submit financial

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri said at a press conference, "There is a lot of interest [in Air India's sale]. Today's attempt is qualitatively different from the previous attempt. Air India and Air India Express are a great asset."

But the private player keen to buy Air India will also have to take on liabilities of ₹32,474 crore, which includes the airline's debt of ₹23,286 crore. The government will ab-

sorb ₹56,334 crore in liabilities, including ₹36,670 crore of debt.

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12

# CAA rules expected to seek 'proof of religion'

Government documents could be sought from applicants

VIJAITA SINGH NEW DELHI

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 rules are expected to seek "proof of religion" as mentioned in government records, a senior official of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said on Monday.

The draft CAA rules are likely to seek documents from applicants that they entered India before December 31, 2014, and that they belong to the six religions exempted under the Act. The Assam government had asked MHA to impose a three-month time limit to apply under the CAA and not keep it "open-ended".

"Any of the applicants living in India before 2014 will have some government document or the other where they would have mentioned their religion and they will have to submit this as proof," said the official.

The CAA has the provision to grant citizenship to members of six undocumented minority communities - Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Parsi from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh - who entered India before De-

### On the **anvil**

A look at the some aspects of the Citizenship Amendment Act, which came into force on January 10

The rules that will govern the Act are still under construction and are yet to be notified by the MHA The CAA was passed by Parliament on December

11, 2019. The MHA notified that the provisions would come into force from January 10

The Assam government had requested the Ministry of Home Affairs to impose

A protest against CAA and NRC at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on

the Citizenship (Amendment) Act,

2019, and not keep it "open ended"

ly hiccup will come during cember 31, 2014. Though the Act does not mention "persecuted minorities", the term was included in the

Parliament. Many Opposition members had raised objections to the means to prove that an applicant indeed was persecuted on religious grounds in the neighbour-

statement of objects when

the Bill was introduced in

a time limit to apply under

'No role for States'

ing countries.

The official said the States would have no role in the implementation of the CAA, as citizenship was the domain of the Centre, "The on-

the verification stage when the role of local police comes into play; even that can be conducted by Central agencies," added the official. Punjab Chief Minister

Captain Amarinder Singh had, in an open letter on January 3, said the CAA could be misused for infiltration in the country as "any person claiming to be of the six religions could simply apply in terms of the amended law, prove entry on/before the cut off date and be eligible for citizenship."

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12

### West Bengal passes anti-CAA resolution

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The West Bengal Assembly on Monday passed a resolution urging the Union government to repeal the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), making the State the fourth, after Kerala, Punjab and Rajasthan, to confront the Centre on the issue.

The resolution said since the Act was passed, there was violence in "almost every State."

It said that in the CAA. "religion has been used as a yardstick to measure eligibility to apply for citizenship" and "the ruling party in the Centre has been driving a wedge among the people using religion [thus] damaging human rights".

SLAMS NPR-NRC ▶ PAGE 12

## Centre, Assam govt. sign accord with Bodo groups to redraw, rename territory

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Assam government and Bodo groups on Monday signed an agreement to redraw and rename the District (BTAD) in Assam, currently spread over the four districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri.

As per the agreement, villages dominated by Bodos that were presently outside the BTAD would be included Bodoland Territorial Area and those with non-Bodo population would be excluded, Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Bodos living in the hills would be granted Scheduled Hill Tribe status.

Mr. Sarma said as of now, the agreement had not addressed the issue of "citizenship or work permit" for nondomiciles in the BTAD, to be renamed as the Bodoland Territorial Region.

Several Bodo groups, led by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), have been demanding a separate land for the ethnic community since 1972, a movement that has claimed nearly 4,000 lives. Union Home Minister Amit

Shah, who presided over the event, said the signing of the agreement would "end the 50-year-old Bodo crisis".

Today, Assam is united. Around 1,500 cadres of NDFB (P), NDFB (RD) and

NDFB (S) will be rehabilitated by Centre and Assam Government. They will be assimilated in the mainstream and will surrender on January 30 on Bapu's death anniversary," he said.

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12

## Amnesty for obscure outfit raises eyebrows

RAHUL KARMAKAR GUWAHATI

More than 600 members of eight extremist groups in Assam gave up arms at an official programme on January 23, but eyebrows have been raised with regard to one of them – the National Liberation Front of Bengalis (NLFB).

Reports quoting people in districts such as Baksa and Chirang said many of the 301 surrendered members of the "little-known" NLFB were petty traders or minor craftsmen, such as carpenters.

This has led to questions regarding the socalled "surrender drama" and of the members of "equally obscure" outfits such as the National Santhal Liberation Army and the Adivashi Dragon Fighters, who allegedly laid down arms.

However, Assam police officials claimed that there was nothing fishy about these organisations and questions regarding their existence could be attributed to the general tendency of downplaying militancy associated with certain communities.

Officials admitted that

CM YK



NLFB chairman Amarjit Paul, in white, with cadres after giving up their arms.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bengali militancy has not been as intense or violent as that of other ethnic groups in Assam. "What can we do if a

few choose to ignore or belittle us? It is true that most of us are into petty trade, farming, carpentry, masonry and other activities. But we underwent training for these under a rehabilitation package in 2018, four years after initiating talks with former Director General of Police Khagen Sarma and even meeting former Home Minister Rajnath Singh in Delhi. Isn't it better to work for a living honourably than resorting to extortion and burglary?" Amarjit Paul, chairman of the now-disbanded NLFB told The *Hindu* in Chirang district.

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12

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