



Draft Bill proposes raising abortion upper limit to 24 weeks

Contraceptive-failure provision to end pregnancy to cover unmarried women

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

MOVING TO ease abortion laws in the country, the Union Cabinet is set to consider a host of changes to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 to increase the upper limit for termination of a pregnancy from 20 weeks to 24 weeks, and extending the contraceptive-failure clause for termination to include "any woman or her partner" from the present provision for "only married woman or her husband".

Sources said the draft MTP Bill has been circulated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Cabinet has to take a decision on its approval.

The present abortion law, which is about five decades old, permits abortion up to a maximum foetal gestation period of 20 weeks. Section 3 (2) of the MTP Act, 1971 states "a pregnancy may be terminated by a registered medical practitioner, (a) where the length of the pregnancy does not exceed twelve weeks, if such medical practitioner is, or (b) where the length

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SC grants bail to 14 Gujarat riot convicts: Do spiritual work

ANANTHAKRISHNAN & PARIMAL DABHI
NEW DELHI, AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 28

GRANTING CONDITIONAL bail to 14 men convicted in a 2002 Gujarat riots case in which 23 people were burnt alive in Ode in Anand district, the Supreme Court Tuesday ordered their relocation to Madhya Pradesh with the direction that they do social, spiritual and community work till a final decision is taken on their appeal against the conviction. The men were told not to enter Gujarat.

The Ode massacre was one of

the nine most gruesome cases of the post-Godhra riots investigated by the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team. Among the 23 dead were eight children and six women.

On learning of the Supreme Court direction to relocate the convicts on conditional bail, Malek Mohammed Miyan Kasam Miyan (48), one of the witnesses in the case who lost 22 relatives in the Ode massacre, said he was disappointed and this was a "bad precedent".

"They should not be released on bail. Those who have committed a crime must get punishment. Only then there can be

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Kamra heckles Arnab on board IndiGo, put on no-fly list; A-I follows suit

PRANAV MUKUL & TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, JANUARY 28

STAND-UP COMEDIAN Kunal Kamra was banned from flying for six months by India's largest airline IndiGo for heckling television news anchor Arnab Goswami on the airline's flight from Mumbai to Lucknow. State-owned Air India said it has also suspended

Kamra from flying on any of its flights until further notice.

Other airlines are expected to follow suit after Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the government would advise them to impose similar restrictions on Kamra.

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Govt ringfences 'prudent commercial decisions' of top public sector bankers

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, JANUARY 28

CITING THE need to protect prudent commercial decisions of bankers, the Finance Ministry said Tuesday it has "done away with" holding MDs and CEOs of public sector banks personally responsible for compliance in dealing with large-value frauds committed by bank officials.

In a statement, the Ministry said that it has delegated powers to the boards of state-owned lenders to put in place a "suitable mechanism" for ensuring "compliance with the various timelines laid down in RBI (Reserve Bank of India) and CVC (Central Vigilance Commission)

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WILL BE DONE OVER NEXT 18-24 MONTHS: GEN NARAVANE

Plan to cut Army from internal security duties in N-E: Chief

'LoC incidents have increased as (Pak) under pressure, they have lost Kashmir'

SUSHANT SINGH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

THE ARMY plans to draw down all its regular forces deployed in counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism and internal security duties from the North-East in the next 18-24 months, to focus on conventional warfare, said Army Chief General M M Naravane.

He said that two battalions have already been taken off from such duties and the next draw-



Army Chief General M M Naravane

down will happen after the Bodoland elections in Assam are completed in June-July this year.

"The North-East is going through a very transitional phase, for the good. The security situation is improving as shown by the

recent surrender of 600 members of National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and other groups. We are working on a plan for the next 18-24 months on how to draw down regular forces from CI/CT/ internal security duties there," General Naravane told *The Indian Express*.

"Two battalions have already been taken off. Once Bodoland elections are done in June-July and situation stabilises, we will release more troops," he said.

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GOVT & POLITICS



"The Indian armed forces won't take more than a week-10 days to defeat Pakistan."

NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER
PAGE 7



BAIL FOR TWO IN ANTI-CAA VIOLENCE CASE

Judge shreds Bijnor police claims: No proof of protesters firing or bullet injuries to cops

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
BIJNOR, JANUARY 28

GRANTING BAIL to two persons accused of rioting and attempt to murder during the anti-CAA protests last month, a sessions court in Bijnor, one of the worst affected districts in Uttar Pradesh, has torn into police claims, saying they produced no evidence to show that the accused indulged in firing and arson, that weapons were seized from the accused, or that police personnel sustained any bullet injury.

Court records accessed by

The Indian Express show that Additional Sessions Judge Sanjiv Pandey, in the bail order on January 24, pointed out these glaring discrepancies in the police version. "Without making any observation on the merits of the case, in my view, looking at the circumstances and the natures of offences, bail has to be granted to the accused," he said. The observations made in the bail order are significant. Bijnor police arrested over 100 people and lodged multiple FIRs, claiming they indulged in violence at Nahtaur, Najibabad

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INDIA PLANS WUHAN AIRLIFT

A central team at a special isolation ward in Hyderabad on Tuesday. India has asked China to allow the evacuation of its nationals from Wuhan, the coronavirus epicentre. **PTI P 3, 9, 15**

Sedition charge against Karnataka school for anti-CAA play by kids

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, JANUARY 28

A SCHOOL in Karnataka's Bidar, and the management of an education group that runs it, have been booked in a case of sedition and breach of peace based on a complaint, which alleged that the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was tarnished in

EXPRESS NETWORK



SHARJEEL IMAM HELD IN BIHAR **PAGE 8**

a play staged by children against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The New Town police station registered the case under IPC sections 124A and 504 against Shaheen School and its management on January 26 following a complaint filed by local social activist Neelesh Rakshyal. No arrest has been made so far.

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BUSINESS AS USUAL



EXPRESS NETWORK

NITISH, BJD WANT NPR QUESTION ON PARENTS' BIRTH DROPPED, **PAGE 8**

Pawar kin's firm at centre of police probe into sugar factory purchase

KHUSHBOO NARAYAN
MUMBAI, JANUARY 28

AN INVESTIGATION by Mumbai Police into loans sanctioned by Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSC Bank) to sugar factories and subsequent auction of sick factories, has found irregularities in the auction and sale of one such sugar factory to Baramati Agro Ltd, a company



NCP MLA Rohit Pawar is CEO of Baramati Agro

owned by NCP MLA Rohit Pawar, a nephew of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

Ajit Pawar was a director in MSC Bank from 2007 till the

board was dissolved by the Reserve Bank of India in May 2011. Both the Economic Offences Wing of Mumbai Police and the Enforcement Directorate have named Ajit Pawar as an accused in cases registered in August and November last year, respectively, in connection with loan irregularities in MSC Bank.

According to sources, Kannad Sahakari Shakar Kharkhana Ltd

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KASHMIRI PANDITS' RIGHT TO RETURN
BY SUVIR KAUL
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