

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

FAIZ AND A DYING PLURALISM

BY KHALED AHMED

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BUSINESS AS USUAL



Govt readies provisions to protect jobs and land rights in J&K

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 3

FIVE MONTHS after the scrapping of Article 370 and bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, the Ministry of Home Affairs is likely to finalise provisions to protect jobs and land ownership of people in J&K in the next few days.

"It is almost finalised, we are just discussing the procedure: whether the state administration alone can notify it or we need to approve it," a top official in the Ministry said.

For protection of jobs in the new UT, a provision to make domicile of at least 15 years in the erstwhile state will be introduced. "Several states have such provisions for protection of jobs for 'locals,'" the official said, adding this provision will also be applicable for admission to educational institutions in J&K.

For protection of land ownership in J&K, a handful of provisions, the official said, are being considered which include land ownership protection regimes in force in states such as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

"There are provisions in several states that agricultural land cannot be acquired. Similarly, there is protection provided for people in Himachal and Uttarakhand. All of these are under consideration," the official said.

The government had stripped the state of its special status on August 5. The decision abrogated Article 370 and Article 35A — the latter reserved jobs in Jammu and Kashmir for

No to CAA: Pinarayi asks 11 CMs to go Kerala way, Captain flags security risk

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

KOCHI, CHANDIGARH, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 3

THREE DAYS after the Kerala Assembly passed a resolution demanding scrapping of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act that will provide citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote letters

TARGETED AT BAGHDAD AIRPORT

US drone strike kills Iran's top General, tremors across world



Photo released by the Iraqi Prime Minister's press office shows a burning vehicle at Baghdad airport, where Soleimani was killed in an airstrike early Friday. AP

Tehran promises 'harsh retaliation', US and Israel brace for revenge attacks

QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA & ZEINA KARAM

BAGHDAD, JANUARY 3

IRAN VOWED "harsh retaliation" for a US drone strike near Baghdad's airport that killed a top Iranian general who had been the architect of its interventions across the Middle East, and the US announced Friday it was sending more troops to the region as tensions soared in the wake of the targeted killing.

The killing of General Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force, marks a major escalation in the standoff between Washington and Iran, which has careened from one crisis to another since President

Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal and imposed crippling sanctions.

The United States said it was sending nearly 3,000 more Army troops to the Middle East and urged American citizens to leave Iraq "immediately" following the early morning airstrike at Baghdad's international airport that Iran's state TV said killed Soleimani and nine others.

The US State Department said the embassy in Baghdad, which was attacked by Iran-backed militiamen and their supporters earlier this week, is closed and all consular services have been suspended. US embassies also issued a security alert for Americans in Lebanon,

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HE WAS IRAN'S UNOFFICIAL NO. 2

■ Gen Soleimani, 62, was the second most powerful figure in Iran behind Ayatollah Khamenei.

■ He was the architect of Iran's policy in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, where it supported Bashar al-Assad against rebels backed by the US and Saudi Arabia.

EXPLAINED

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Unease in New Delhi over fallout, relations with Washington and Tehran

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN

MUMBAI, JANUARY 3

HOURS AFTER the killing of Iran's top military commander, General Qassem Soleimani, in an American drone strike in Baghdad Friday, India said it had "noted that a senior Iranian leader had been killed by the US", urged restraint and called for de-escalation.

The terse statement masked the deep unease about how far the ripples from this sharp spike in US-Iran tensions will extend across the region, and impact India.

One part of that question was answered after Iran warned of

retaliation, with jitters on Dalal Street over the potential for an oil shock. The stock market fell by over a hundred points, but more telling was the rupee's 38-paise drop around the same time to Rs 71.74 to the US dollar.

India's oil import bill in 2018-19 was \$111.9 billion. And the new geopolitical tensions could not have come at a worse time, when the economy is crawling at 4.5 per cent GDP growth in Q2 this fiscal year.

With Iran vowing revenge, a possible widening of the US-Iran conflict, from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan and Pakistan, will not leave India unaffected. "We have to see what Iran's options are. There will be enormous rage

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Fears of surge in oil price, Govt looks outside Gulf

| INDIA'S CRUDE OIL IMPORT (MMT) |         |         |         |           |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| COUNTRY                        | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20** |
| Iraq                           | 37.5    | 46.9    | 46.1    | 26.0      |
| Saudi Arabia                   | 39.5    | 36.9    | 39.8    | 20.7      |
| Iran                           | 27.2    | 22.6    | 23.9    | 1.7       |
| UAE                            | 17.6    | 14.0    | 17.7    | 8.9       |
| Nigeria                        | 18.1    | 17.8    | 17.0    | 9.9       |
| Venezuela                      | 22.6    | 17.9    | 17.8    | 8.0       |
| Russia                         | 0.6     | 3.2     | 1.4     | 1.5       |
| USA                            | 0.0     | 1.9     | 6.2     | 5.4       |
| TOTAL*                         | 213.9   | 220.4   | 226.5   | 111.4     |

\*for 39 countries \*\* (April- September); MMT: Million Metric Tons  
Source: Oil companies/Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

AANCHAL MAGAZINE & ANIL SASI

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 3

AS OIL prices surged after the killing of Iranian commander, General Qassem Soleimani, in a US drone strike in Baghdad, senior officials of the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas held a high-level meeting Friday to assess the impact and review contingency measures.

Officials in the Petroleum

Ministry are learnt to have held an internal meeting, following which they were called to the Finance Ministry for discussions, given the possibility of a disruption to oil supplies impacting India's external debt situation and restricting the headroom to counter the slowdown.

A government official said that both short-term and long-term diversification measures to reduce dependence on the West Asian region, especially in the wake of a protracted escalation

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WORLD



IRAN IN MOURNING, U.S. SENDS MORE TROOPS TO GULF

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RUN-UP TO BUDGET 2020-21

On Govt table: Do away with or prune tax on long term capital gains

SUNNY VERMA & SANDEEP SINGH

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 3

TO PROMOTE long-term flows into equities, the Finance Ministry is considering a partial or complete rollback of the long term capital gains (LTCG) tax on shares of listed companies. The Prime Minister's Office and the Finance Ministry have held a series of discussions on the issue in the run-up to the Budget, two senior government officials told *The Indian Express*.

Sections within the government as well as leading market players have noted that LTCG has not yielded much in terms of revenue. The tax was imposed after direct intervention by Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking financial market players to make a fair contribution for nation building. It was reintroduced after a gap of 14 years and the Finance Minister had proposed that all gains up to January-end 2018 would be grandfathered.

If not a complete rollback, it was possible that the tax on LTCG on sale of equity shares could be reduced to 5 per cent from 10 per cent now. An announcement is expected in the Budget for 2020-21. In the Budget announced on February 1, 2018, then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley imposed the 10 per cent tax on capital gains exceeding Rs 1 lakh per year arising from transfer of listed shares without any indexation benefit.

EXPLAINED

Will promote equity culture

AFTER A gap of 14 years, the government decided to impose a 10 per cent tax on long-term capital gains arising from sale of shares in listed companies and equity-oriented mutual funds. It has not yielded much in revenues, but has instead reduced the incentive for holding stocks over longer periods. Doing away with the tax will give an impetus to the equity investment culture in the country.

Market players say the re-introduction of the tax is "an avoidable irritant" in the structural growth of the Indian equities market. While it did not contribute much to the exchequer, it led to hot money flows into the market. "As of today, there is not much incentive to hold equities for the long term, as the LTCG is 10 per cent, while the tax on short term capital gains (STCG) is 15 per cent. This needs to be corrected to promote long term equity culture and prevent money chasing short-term

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Storm in UP after SSP's report says top officers in transfer-for-cash nexus, DGP seeks explanation

AMIL BHATNAGAR & MANISH SAHU

FIROZABAD, LUCKNOW, JANUARY 3

THE UTTAR Pradesh Police finds itself at the centre of a storm with the Director General of Police seeking an explanation Friday from Gautam Buddha Nagar SSP Vaibhav Krishna for allegedly leaking details of a report that levels serious allegations, including bribery for postings, against top police officers of the state.

The details of the report prepared by Krishna were made public after a purported video sex chat featuring him began doing the rounds. Krishna said the video was morphed and was an attempt to tarnish his credibility since he had sought to expose a criminal nexus involving top officers and arrested journalists.

DGP O P Singh told reporters in Lucknow: "Inspector General, Meerut Range has been instructed to seek explanation from Gautam Buddha Nagar SSP for unauthorised communication... (this) is against the All India Service Rules."

Alok Singh, IG, Meerut Range, said: "SSP Gautam Buddha Nagar will be responding to the DGP's



Noida SSP Vaibhav Krishna

order with regards to the contents of the secret document that were made public recently. ADG Meerut Zone and I will be overlooking an enquiry into the allegations made in the paper, while a separate investigation is being made into the alleged morphed video of the SSP that surfaced a few days ago. More answers will be provided once investigations are included."

A month before the video surfaced, a confidential report had been sent by Krishna to the offices of the Chief Minister and DGP, highlighting an alleged nexus between senior IPS officers and journalists to influence transfer postings, even cases and arrests in exchange for money.

The report had been prepared by Krishna following the arrest of journalists Sushil Pandit, Udit Goyal, Chandan Rai and Nitesh Pandey by Gautam Buddha Nagar police for alleged publication of fake news about police officers, involvement in

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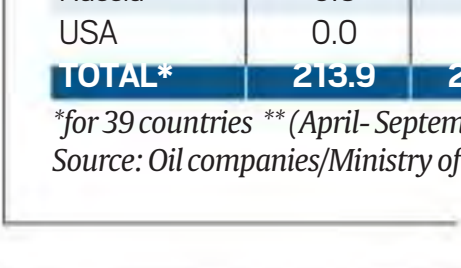
PAGE 1 ANCHOR

DEEP MUKHERJEE

KOTA, JANUARY 3

OF THE 100 children who died at the J K Lon government hospital in Kota in December, 10 died within 48 hours — between December 23 and 24. Many of them had been referred from smaller hospitals in the area.

Some of their parents work as labourers, others have marginal land holdings; some are from Kota, others are from neighbouring districts like Bundi and Baran. United in their grief and poverty, they say they had no alternative as they cannot



Pinarayi Vijayan and Amarinder Singh

Friday to 11 non-BJP Chief Ministers, including Nitish

IMRAN KHAN POSTS WRONG VIDEO ON TWITTER, DELETES

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Kumar of Bihar who heads a government with the BJP as partner, urging them to consider similar steps against the citizenship law and the National Population Register exercise.

Coming out in support of the

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NAVJEEVANGOPAL

CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 3

TENSION MOUNTED in Nankana Sahib in Pakistan and there was outrage in India after a mob, led by the family of a Muslim man who had married a Sikh teenage girl, hurled stones at Gurdwara Janam Asthan, the birth place of Guru Nanak Dev, and threatened to convert it into a mosque.

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Outrage over stoning at Nankana Sahib gurdwara, India asks Pak to act



The crowd outside the gurdwara in Pakistan on Friday. ANI



Outside the J K Lon government hospital, Kota. Deep Mukherjee

NAND BIHARI MEENA,

FATHER OF JOGENDRA (7)

Jogendra died on December 23 at 12:15 am, about 12 hours after he was admitted to the hospital. Hospital records show the cause of death as acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS).

"My son suddenly fell ill. The government hospital in Kapren (in Bundi district) referred him to Kota... We couldn't afford a private hospital, so we admitted him at the J K Lon Hospital, hoping that he would get better treatment, since it is the biggest government hospital in the area. But the ventilators didn't work properly," said Meena (25), a resident of Keshorai

Patan in Bundi district.

In its report on December 27, the hospital's paediatrics department mentioned that of the 19 ventilators, 13 were not working.

"We cannot afford a private hospital... If they die after being taken to a government hospital, what choice do we have," he said. Meena, who has a younger son, said besides growing wheat on his small plot of land, he earns about Rs 3,000 per month by working as a labourer.

NEERU DEVI, GRANDMOTHER OF DAY-OLD INFANT

The infant girl died on

December 23 at 5:40 am, a day after she was born at the J K Lon Hospital. She hadn't even been named yet. According to hospital records, the infant was put on ventilator after birth. The hospital records show the cause of death as "SBA (severe birth asphyxia) with HIE-3 (hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy)".

"The hospital staff didn't cooperate. They didn't answer our questions and, at times, even misbehaved with my son. The doctors didn't come on time," alleged Devi, a resident of Rajgarh village in Kota district.

"The hospitals and health

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