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THE EDITORIAL PAGE
EC CAN DO MORE ON HATE SPEECH
BY SY QURAISHI
PAGE 14

DECEMBER 16
Sinful to hang convicts when law lets them live: court

PRITAMPAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 7

A DELHI court Friday dismissed a fresh plea by the Delhi government and Tihar jail authorities seeking to fix a date of execution of the death warrants issued against the four Death Row convicts in the December 16, 2012, gangrape-murder case.

Citing the Delhi High Court's February 5 order, which permitted the convicts, in the interest of justice, to exercise their legal remedies within one week of the order, Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender Rana said, "It is criminally sinful to execute the condemned convicts when the law permits them to live."

"I concur with the amicus for the convict Mukesh that the date of execution of death warrant cannot be fixed merely on the basis of surmises and conjectures...Applications at hand are premature and thus deserve to be dismissed. However, the State is at liberty to move appropriate application as and when required," the judge said.

Last week, the trial court had stayed "till further orders" the execution of the four convicts, Mukesh Singh (32), Pawan Gupta (25), Vinay Sharma (26) and Akshay Kumar Singh (31), who are in Tihar jail.

It had postponed the execution of the death warrants, saying the country cannot afford to discriminate against a death row convict in pursuit of legal remedies.

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'WORKING ON FRDI BILL'

Expect 80% of individual taxpayers to move to new slab regime, says Govt

On LTCG, FM wants to wait for one year to assess response

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 7

THE GOVERNMENT said Friday that its estimates show that about 80 per cent of individual taxpayers would switch to the new tax regime announced in the Union Budget last week and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the new tax regime is the first step towards a no-exemption lower tax system in India.

Revenue Secretary Ajay



Nirmala Sitharaman in Mumbai, Friday. PTI

Bhushan Pandey said that the Income Tax department had run a simulation on about 5.8 crore tax returns. It showed that 69 per cent of existing tax payers will benefit from the new slabs while 11 per cent would see no change in their tax outgo by switching to the new system. Thus, the government's expectation is that 80 per cent will switch to the new system, which some experts had criticised as being too complicated since it had more income slabs.

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EXPLAINED
E. Govt hopes more money to spend, savings can be hit

THE GOVERNMENT expects the bulk of those who file I-T returns to shift to the new simplified tax regime which does away with exemptions for long-term savings. More disposable income is expected to boost demand, and give an immediate fillip to growth. But lower savings will affect growth in the long-term, since less savings would mean less funds available for investments by businesses.



The rally on Friday in Kokrajhar to celebrate the signing of a peace accord with National Democratic Front of Bodoland. AP

I assure you CAA won't lead to outsider influx: PM in Assam

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 7

ASSURING THE people of Assam that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act will not lead to outsiders settling in the state, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Friday that "certain forces" were spreading misinformation on the CAA and that the country will "neither tolerate nor forgive" them.

The Prime Minister was in Assam for the first time after the violent protests in December against the new citizenship law that left six people dead.

Amidst loud cheers, and fluttering Tricolours and All Bodo Students Union flags, Modi asked the gathering in Kokrajhar in Bodoland Territorial Region — he called it the largest rally in independent India — to celebrate the government's accord with Bodo groups signed last month.

Following the signing, over 1,600 members of the Bodo militant outfit NDFB laid down their weapons.

"I have come to assure the people of Assam that the country will neither tolerate nor forgive anti-Assam and anti-India mentality and its supporters. These are the same forces that are spreading rumours in Assam and Northeast that through CAA people from outside will come to Assam and they will be settled here. I want to assure that nothing of that sort will happen," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said that a mentality has emerged to block roads, put barricades and create problems. He said the politics that encourages such mentality does "not know India nor do they understand Assam". "Assam and India are connected by heart and soul," Modi said.

He said that just like Bodo groups have come together to join the mainstream, others' "misconceptions too will get cleared soon".

Modi began his speech with lines in Bodo and Assamese, and by invoking Vaishnavite spiritual reformer Srimanta Sankardev.

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Officials enter Diamond Princess to transfer a patient to hospital in Yokohama, Japan. Reuters

61 coronavirus cases on ship, Indian crew in quarantine: 'We are in fear...we want to leave'

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 7

A RESIDENT of West Bengal who is among several Indian crew members on board a luxury cruise currently quarantined near Yokohama port, Japan, with 61 confirmed cases of coronavirus cases, has appealed to Indian authorities for help, saying the infection on board the ship is spreading.

The 30-year-old belonging to Hatipa village in Uttar Dinajpur district has also put up videos on

social media, reaching out to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, urging them to get the Japanese government to separately quarantine those infected and uninfected on board the Diamond Princess.

In one of his social media posts, the 30-year-old said, "We are in fear. We are nearly 200 Indian crew on board. We have not tested positive. We want to disembark and be properly quarantined." He said he was speaking directly, breaking protocol, because he was scared. "If I do

not speak out, tomorrow I don't know if I will be alive or dead," he said in Hindi.

He told *The Indian Express* over WhatsApp, "Plz help us. All crew r waiting for our Govt response. They have rescued Indian citizens from Wuhan city in China, then why not rescue us from Japan? We can be kept in quarantine in India. India and Japan have good relations."

The Japanese government said Friday that 61 people on board the ship, with more than 3,700 passengers, had tested

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In season of protests, BJP MP ducks out of tabling civil code Bill

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 7

AS THE government battles street protests across the country against the new citizenship law and changes in the National Population Register, a BJP member in Rajya Sabha on Friday appeared to abandon at the last moment his plan to introduce a private member's Bill on the Uniform Civil Code — an issue that has long been high on the party's agenda, but which would likely have only inflamed further the ongoing agitation.

A private member's Bill is sep-



Kirodi Lal Meena

arate from a government Bill, and is piloted by an MP who is not a Minister. Individual MPs may introduce private member's Bills to draw the government's attention to what they see as issues that require legislative intervention.

The Bill on Uniform Civil Code was listed on the agenda of the House, and was circulated to

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Bidar school sedition case: Panel tells cops to stop questioning kids

JOHNSONTA
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 7

FOLLOWING AN inquiry into the questioning of children by police and the arrest of the widowed mother of a nine-year-old student in a sedition case against a school in Bidar over an anti-CAA play, Karnataka's child rights commission has pulled up the district police for a number of violations, including of norms under the Juvenile Justice Act.

Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSPCR) chairman Dr Antony



Shaheen Primary School in Bidar. File

Sebastian has sent a letter to Bidar officials, the SP and the deputy commissioner, with copies marked to the Karnataka

DGP, stating that an "atmosphere of fear" was created at the Shaheen Primary School by the police probe. It has asked police to stop questioning the school-children.

The KSPCR found that officials violated norms by sending the nine-year-old to be looked after by a neighbour without informing the local child welfare committee after the child's single mother was arrested along with the school's headmistress on January 30.

The KSPCR chairman's communication, sent Thursday,

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WORLD



TRUMP CONFIRMS KILLING OF AL QAEDA LEADER IN YEMEN

AFTER IOWA, MUDDLED RACE TO NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR DEMOCRATS
PAGE 17

Delhi decides today: In EC-silent zone, phones buzz with bulk text messages

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 7

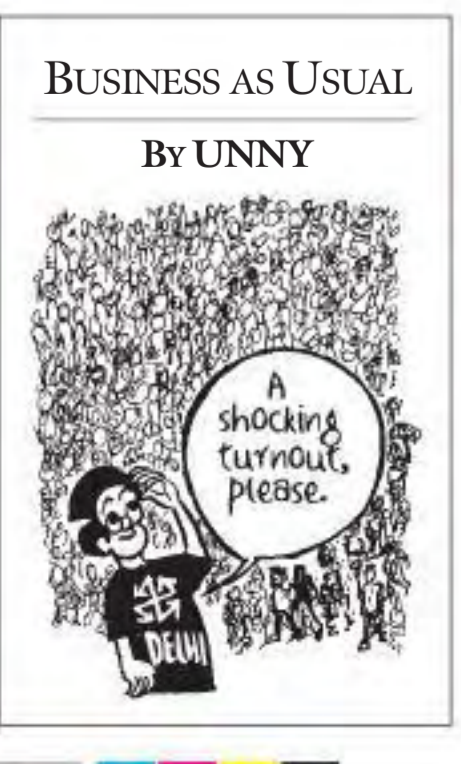
EVEN AS campaigning for the Delhi Assembly polls officially ended at 6 pm on Thursday, B-tech graduate Jitesh Bhardwaj (27) said the silent period doesn't affect his "business" with candidates from all three parties.

Equipped with booth-wise electoral rolls and phone numbers which, he said, are easily



Poll officials with EVMs at Gole Market in New Delhi, Friday. Praveen Khanna

available in the market, he acts as a middleman between telecom operators and candidates.



DECISION 2020
DELHI

He sends an average of 1 lakh SMSes or voice-recorded messages per candidate, at a price tag of 9-11 paise per message.

On Thursday, as CM Arvind Kejriwal's now-recognisable jingle played nearby, Bhardwaj picked up his phone and said: "That won't ring after today, but this will."

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