

Sonowal Vows to Safeguard Indigenous People, Rights



Guwahati: The government will ensure that language, culture, identity, land and homeland of the indigenous people will be protected in the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said. He said the current government had assumed office with support of all indigenous people and it was fully committed to protect their traditions. He also said state will carry out eviction drive to free the land under tribal belt from encroachment. He said government believes in equity and gives equal importance to all communities for their all-round development.—OPB

India, Turkey Plan to Jointly Fight Terror Across World



New Delhi: Turkey and India has sought each other assistance in fight against international terrorism amid both PM Narendra Modi and Turkish President Erdogan narratives against international extremism affecting the two countries. Senior Turkish Minister Lufti Elvan who holds Development portfolio met Home Minister Rajnath Singh and apprised him of presence of schools here funded by Gulen blamed by the Erdogan government for aborted July coup. "India is very sensitive to terrorism. India has suffered from terror and understands our pain. We sympathise with India. We hope India also supports our position. Indian PM has assured that his government will keep an eye on Gulen schools. I discussed the matter with Minister Singh," Elvan told ET.—OPB

Pak to Skip WTO Meet in India Due to Tension



Islamabad: Pakistan on Thursday announced that it will skip an international anti-tobacco conference in India next week amidst "ongoing tensions" between the two nations. Delegates from about 180 countries are expected to attend the biennial conference of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in India from November 7 to 12. Pakistan's State Minister of Health Sciences Regulation and Coordination, Saira Afzal Tajar, said that Pakistan cannot attend the conference.—OPB



SIMI Activists Encounter: MP CM Gives into Oppn Demand for Judicial Probe

NEW DELHI: Days after eight SIMI undertrials were killed in an encounter after their escape from Bhopal prison, a judicial probe has been ordered by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, giving into the demand by Opposition, which has raised questions on claims by police about the Monday encounter. An official release issued on late Thursday night here stated that the judicial probe will be conducted by retired High Court Judge Justice S K Pandey.—OPB

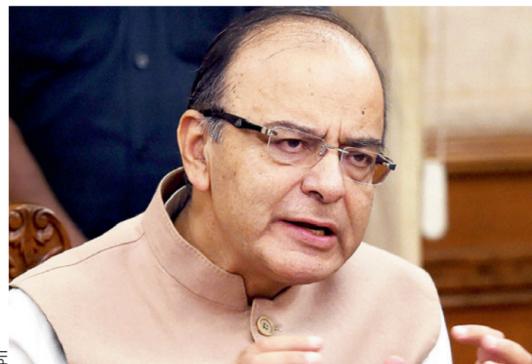
They (Congress & AAP) have nothing else (no issues) to do politics on. That is why they do politics over corpses. Go and ask them whether they have attended the funeral of any other soldier. Their talk makes no sense

V K SINGH Union Minister



AT LOGGERHEADS Taking a dig at Rahul's remarks, Jaitley says that it doesn't behove senior national leaders to exploit tragedy, but Rahul says govt has not given due respect to soldiers

Congress Politicising Orop Suicide: Jaitley



Our Bureau

New Delhi: Finance minister Arun Jaitley blasted the Congress for playing politics over an ex-soldier's suicide saying that the party did not even implement the one rank one pension (Orop) when it was in the government for 10 years. "For 10 years, Orop was not implemented by the Congress...It is equally important that nobody tries to convert a personal tragedy of an individual into a political gain for a party whose fortunes are otherwise sinking...It doesn't behove senior national leaders to exploit a tragedy of this kind, particularly in intensive care units of the hospitals. A more responsible behaviour is expected of them," he said taking on Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi. The UPA government, he said, had not taken any meaningful step towards implementing Orop for defence personnel in its 10 years of rule as was evident from a meagre ₹500 crore allocation it made for the purpose. "This Orop has remained a demand for decades. And during the 10 years of UPA government between 2004 and 2014, there was this demand but no meaningful step was taken," he said, adding that it was only dur-

ing the Lok Sabha elections in April the UPA government had said a committee will be set up to work out the functional modalities of Orop. "So the sympathy that has risen today is politically motivated and the NDA is the first government which has not only accepted Orop demand, but implemented it," he said. He said the government was fully sympathetic towards the defence personnel's suicide. He said there was some lapse in communication with the bank and it was not a case of the person not being given Orop. "It is a very sensitive case because the government has allocated all the money. Now obviously, (as for) the communication at the bank level, there seems to have been some problem in calculating his entire service, which was divided into two parts. This was a procedural problem, which could have been resolved at the level of the bank or the department dealing with it," Jaitley said. The finance minister made a reference to efforts to create "meaningless conflict" over Orop applicable on defence services.

PCC DEMONSTRATIONS ACROSS INDIA SOON

PM Modi Must 'Stop Lying', Says Rahul

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: Congress Vice-President Rahul Gandhi has stepped up the agitation over the One-Rank-One-Pension issue by asking the Prime Minister to "stop lying" about Orop implementation and alleged that the government had only done "a pension enhancement." During a meeting with a group of ex-servicemen at the Congress office in New Delhi on Friday, Gandhi pointed to one of them standing next to him and said, "when these ex-servicemen explained the whole issue, they said Orop is not about money, it is about honour and justice." Even as Gandhi held a meeting, the AICC is learnt to have directed all Pradesh Congress Committees to organise agitations and hold candle-light demonstrations across states, demanding Orop implementation. The Opposition will also raise the issue, if not resolved soon, during the upcoming Parliament session.



NOT THE SAME

What the Prime Minister says is One Rank-One Pension is actually pension enhancement & not Orop

forces personnel and the government will have to give it...The government has also done things like reducing the disability pension." Gandhi who was detained thrice during the past two days, said: "I was detained. It does not matter. But how does one justify the police dragging and beating up family members of a deceased ex-servicemen when his body was still in hospital?" Flanking Gandhi, former defence minister A K Antony said the UPA regime had accepted and ordered Orop and demanded that the Modi government must immediately implement it "without any dilution."

STUDY ON 16 INFO COMMISSIONS, SC & HIGH COURTS

Waiting Period at RTI Commissions Ranges Between 2 months & 30 Yrs

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New Delhi: If you file a Right to Information (RTI) appeal before Assam Information Commission today, you will have to wait for 30 years to get heard. A study has found that the waiting time at information commissions, the final appellate authority, ranges between two months and 30 years with almost 2 lakh RTI appeals pending across India.

The study conducted by Research, Assessment and Analysis Group (RaaG) and Satark Nagrik Sangathan, on the working of 16 information commissions and Supreme Court and high courts, reveals that the number of RTI appeals pending has seen a whopping increase ranging between 40 and 240% in two years. The pendency in Assam state information commission has gone up to 240% between January 2014 and January 2016, West Bengal and Odisha over 60%, Kerala 49% and Central Information Commission 43%. The study reveals that overall 1,87,974 RTI cases are pending across India in 16 information commissions. The study observes, "The huge backlog in the disposal of appeals and complaints by the commissions is one of the most serious problems being faced by the transparency regime in India. The high levels of pendency in information commissions result in applicants having to wait for many months, even years, for their appeals and complaints to be heard."

| STATE | Time before new appeal is heard |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Assam | 30 years |
| West Bengal | 11 years and 3 months |
| Kerala | 7 years and 4 months |
| Odisha | 2 years and 9 months |
| Rajasthan | 2 years and 3 months |
| Chhattisgarh | 2 years |
| CIC | 1 year and 10 months |
| Karnataka | 1 year and 8 months |
| UP | 1 year and 2 months |
| Maharashtra | 8 months |
| Punjab | 4 months |
| Meghalaya | 2 months |
| Nagaland | no pendency |
| Sikkim | no pendency |

RECORD INCREASE
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TOTAL COUNT
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The findings reveal that if an appeal is filed in Assam on January 1,

2016, it would be heard after 30 years. However, this waiting time was just 2 years and 8 months in the last RaaG study in 2014. The waiting time in West Bengal is 11 years and three months (down from 17 years and 10 months in 2014), Kerala seven years and four months, Odisha 2 years and 9 months, Rajasthan 2 years and three months, Chhattisgarh years and CIC one year and 10 months. The research attributes growing pendency at commissions and the resultant waiting time to non-imposition of penalty on errant officers wrongfully denying information under RTI Act. The findings reveal that penalty is imposed in only 1.3% of the cases in which it was imposable. "The non-imposition of penalty has many serious implications as it sends a message that violations of the law will not invite any adverse consequences. This destroys the basic framework of incentives and disincentives built into the RTI law and promotes a culture of impunity. In terms of amount of penalty foregone by ICs, the analysis of 1,469 orders showed that by foregoing penalties in cases where it was imposable, ICs caused a loss of more than ₹2.13 crore. Extrapolating this nationally, an estimated loss of ₹290 crores is being caused annual by ICs not imposing penalties," the study says.

CORRUPTION CHARGES AGAINST IAS OFFICER

Vigilance Nod for Prosecution of Kejriwal's Officer

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New Delhi: Paving the way for prosecution sanction against a senior IAS officer of Delhi government, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has advised the CBI to grant sanction against him. A 1984 batch IAS officer, Sanjay Pratap Singh was posted as the principal secretary in department of SC/ST, minorities. CBI raided him in December last year and seized 31 gold bars, weighing 3.20 kg and cash worth ₹82 lakh, from one of his five lockers. CVC is learnt to have conveyed to the department of personnel and training (DoPT), the cadre controlling authority for IAS officers that the sanction to prosecute Singh shall be cleared. DOPT may hold some more consultations before allowing CBI to prosecute him, said officials familiar with the matter. Earlier, the Home Ministry has given a nod against Singh when the proposal came before them since Singh is UT cadre officer and MHA deals with all matter related to Union Territories. Under section 19 of the prevention of corruption act, CBI needs to have the previous sanction

from the central government for launching prosecution against a public servant from All India Services.

CBI said they are probing two cases against Singh. Singh was arrested following a complaint from Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's office to CBI.

He was also placed under suspension following his arrest and recommendation by Delhi government.

While the first case pertains to demand of bribe of ₹2.20 lakh and was registered on the complaint of the owner of private firm from whom Singh demanded the money for clearing pending bills related to supply of security guards and other manpower, the second FIR is on the allegations of disproportionate assets (DA) to the tune of ₹6.14 crore. Singh is the second IAS officer under CBI scanner after Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's former principal secretary Rajendra Kumar, who is also facing charges of corruption.

STRICT ACTION Another party member Bineesh allegedly involved in the case also suspended; CPM threatens further action if charges are proved
Kerala CPM Suspends Councillor Facing Rape Charges

Our Bureau

Kochi: Stung by the allegations of sexual exploitation and goonda activities by some of its district-level leaders, the ruling CPM decided to wield the sword of discipline against its erring workers. CPM has suspended Jayanthan, the party councillor in Vadakkanchery, who is facing charges of sexual exploitation, from the primary membership. A Thrissur-

NO ESCAPE
Zakkir Hussain accused of kidnapping has also been asked to step aside from post of area secy

based woman had alleged that Jayanthan along with three others had raped her. Another party member Bineesh involved in the case



Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan

has also been suspended. CPM district president Radhakrishnan said if charges are proved at the completion of the inquiry there will be further action against the accused. He said apart from the police inquiry there will be party-level inquiry. He added that there were complaints against the woman who raised the allegations. In Ernakulam, the CPM member Zakkir Hussain, whose alleged involvement in the kidnapping of an industrialist, has been asked to

step aside from the post of area secretary until the investigation against him is over. CPM district secretary P Rajiv said the party will take further disciplinary action against him if the charges against him are proved correct. Meanwhile, the government decided not to support the bail plea of Zakkir Hussain in the court. Earlier in the morning, the Congress-led opposition staged a walkout in the assembly alleging that the ruling party is protecting the accused in the case.

Week's a Long Time

ET takes a look at events that shaped national and state politics over the past seven days

ANIRBAN BORA

