

News

Delhi Election: Mosques On Govt Land To Be Razed If BJP Wins, Says Party MP



NEW DELHI: BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma on Saturday said government land in the city encroached by religious structures will be freed if the BJP comes to power in Delhi. The West Delhi MP had earlier this week said mosques constructed on encroached government land here are certain to be demolished.

The Delhi Assembly elections will be held on February 8 and results for the 70 Assembly seats declared on February 11.

"The government land on which religious places are constructed will be vacated after BJP forms government in Delhi. Complaints have come regarding more than 54 mosques and madrasas on government land in Delhi. The list has already been given to the Lt Governor," Verma tweeted in Hindi.

On Monday, he had said if

anyone complains to him about encroachment of government land in Delhi by any temple or gurudwara, he will take up the matter with authorities.

"But no temple or gurudwara are found on government land, only mosques are found on government land," he had said at a press conference.

In June last year, Verma had written to Lt Governor Anil Bajjal seeking action against mosques and graveyards allegedly constructed on government land.

He had also furnished a list of 50 such encroachments to the LG for action.

Taking note of Verma's claim, the Delhi Minorities Commission formed a fact-finding committee that termed his claim as "false" after probing records of 68 mosques, graveyards, madrasas and imambaras in the city.

CDS To Oversee All Border Matters With China, Pakistan



New Delhi: India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Bipin Rawat will oversee key matters relating to India's neighbouring countries including border disputes and incidents, development of infrastructure in forward areas and deployment of forces.

The newly-created department of military affairs (DMA), headed by chief of defence staff General Bipin Rawat, will oversee key matters relating to India's neighbouring countries including border disputes and incidents, development of infrastructure in forward areas and deployment of forces, according to new defence ministry order.

These countries include China, Pakistan and Bhutan.

Supply of arms and ammunition to friendly neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Maldives will also come under the purview of the DMA, states the order published on Friday. It gives out details of work transferred from the ministry's department of defence (DoD) to the DMA.

The new department is an addition to the four existing verticals in the defence ministry --- the departments of defence research and development and ex-service welfare.

The DMA will be staffed with two joint secretaries, 13 deputy secretaries, 25 under secretaries and 22 section officers.

Monitoring developments in the Indian Ocean region, Af-

ghanistan, West Asia and South East Asia will also be the responsibility of the DMA, according to the order. It clarified that notwithstanding the distribution of work, "any matter that has an import on the defence policy" will be dealt by the DoD, headed by the defence secretary.

General Rawat, who took over as India's first CDS on December 31, is the principal military adviser to the defence minister on all matters related to the tri-services.

Issues related to counter-insurgency operations and Siachen glacier will be dealt by the DMA.

Some of the other significant responsibilities assigned to the DMA include restructuring of the army, operational matters of the Indian Air Force, overseas deployment of warships, coastal security, revenue procurements and war wastage reserves (WWR) of the three services and.

The armed forces are authorised to stockpile ammunition for a specified period of intense fighting, known as WWR in military parlance.

Experts said the vast mandate of the DMA will bring about greater jointmanship in the military, accelerate decision making and avoid duplication of efforts. Jointmanship refers to a degree of co-ordination and integration in terms of strategy, capabilities and execution across the three services.



Arbitrary Internet Shutdowns Violate Fundamental Rights, Says Plea In SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Arbitrary and unreasonable Internet shutdowns by the government is a violation of the fundamental rights to information, education and free speech protected by the Constitution, said a petition filed in the Supreme Court on Friday. The petition filed by Ehtesham Hashmi, a Supreme Court advocate, said that access to Internet should be a fundamental right.

The petition said there were more than 100 instances of Internet shutdowns in 2019.

"Right to access internet is a fundamental right under right to education and the right to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution. Suspension and shutdown of the Internet and communication services is an infringement of the freedom and rights guaranteed and safeguarded under Articles 19 and 21,"

the petition filed by Ehtesham Hashmi, a Supreme Court advocate, contended.

Mr. Hashmi's petition comes shortly after the Supreme Court declared in a judgment in the Anuradha Bhasin case challenging the Jammu and Kashmir restrictions that free speech and expression on the Internet was a fundamental right and constitutionally protected under Article 19.

However, the judgment authored by Justice Ramana, restrained from delving into the question whether right to access Internet is a fundamental right under the Constitution.

It is this question which Mr. Hashmi's petition brings to fore when he argues that access to Internet is merged with manifold fundamental rights like education, information, communication, free speech and expression, health among others.

He referred to how the country saw such shutdowns during the CAA protests.

Maximum shutdowns

Mr. Hashmi said the court should clearly declare arbitrary Internet shutdowns by the State as illegal. The court should also issue guidelines to prevent unreasonable and arbitrary shutdowns under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.

The petition said India has the maximum number of Internet shutdowns in the world. Between January 2012 and April 2018, the country has recorded 172 shutdowns across 19 States. The duration of the shutdowns vary from less than 24 hours to more than 72 hours, mode of restriction included restrictions on mobile, fixed line both the modes of connecting to Internet services.

Advocate Urges Nirbhaya's Mother To pardon the rapists



NEW DELHI: Senior advocate Indira Jaising has urged Nirbhaya's mother to "follow the example" of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, suggesting that she pardon the four men sentenced to death for raping her daughter in 2012.

The four convicts are scheduled to be hanged at 6 a.m. on February 1 in the gangrape and murder case.

Jaising should be 'ashamed', we aren't as 'large-hearted' as Sonia, says Nirbhaya's father.

Ms. Jaising, in a tweet on Friday, said while she fully identifies with the pain of Nirbhaya's mother, she urges her "to follow the example of Sonia Gandhi who forgave Nalini and said she didn't not (did not) want the death penalty for her."

"We are with you but against death penalty," she said.

Nalini Sriharan was sentenced to death in former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case. Her death penalty was commuted to life term after the intervention of his wife Sonia Gandhi, who urged for clemency on account of the fact that Nalini had a young daughter who was born in jail.

"Family's views irrelevant"

However, legal experts say the views of victim's family on whether to forgive or not the convicts in a criminal offence like the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case have no "legal value" as such offences are against the State.

Senior advocates Rakesh Dwivedi and Vikas Singh said the views of family members of a victim in a criminal case on grant or denial of pardon to convicts cannot be considered in a court of law.

"No. No. They (views of family member) have no value actually and the courts have to go by the law. The prosecution is always

done by the State and that is why it is always the State versus so and so. The criminal offence is always against the State," Mr. Dwivedi said.

Mr. Dwivedi said moreover "the fact is that the complainant (Nirbhaya's mother) is not agreeing to Indira Jaising's view that she should pardon the convicts like Sonia Gandhi."

Mr. Singh, a former Supreme Court Bar Association President, said, "Such views of the family members have no value. Absolutely no legal value. It cannot be used in any court of law."

He, however, said the convicts may use the favourable views, if any, in their mercy pleas before the president.

On January 17, a Delhi court issued fresh death warrants for February 1 against the four convicts — Vinay Sharma (26), Mukesh Kumar (32), Akshay Kumar Singh (31) and Pawan (25) — in the Nirbhaya case.

Earlier in the day, President Ram Nath Kovind had rejected the mercy petition of Mukesh.

The other three condemned convicts have not yet availed of the constitutional remedy of filing mercy petitions.

The Supreme Court had on January 14 dismissed the curative petitions of Vinay and Mukesh against their conviction and capital punishment. The other two convicts have not yet filed curative petitions in the apex court.

Nirbhaya, a 23-year-old paramedic student, was gangraped and brutally assaulted on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012, in a moving bus in south Delhi by six persons, including the four death row convicts, before she was thrown out on the road.

She died on December 29, 2012, at a hospital in Singapore.

JNUTA Demands Judicial Inquiry Into JNU Violence

NEW DELHI: The Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers Association (JNUTA) on January 18 demanded a judicial inquiry into the January 5 violence on the campus. The teachers of JNU cannot cooperate with the "efforts of JNU administration for restoration of normalcy in the campus and resumption of academic activities" because there is no such effort to be seen, it said.

"Restoration of normalcy requires the sacking of this VC and this is the necessary, though not sufficient, condition for teachers to feel secure," the JNUTA said.

The general body meeting of the teachers' body reiterated its demand for the removal of the vice chancellor.

The JNUTA also insisted that the Cyclops Security Agency must be held accountable for its "gross failure" on January 5 and be replaced immediately.

They also demanded an urgent thorough review of security arrangements, which must include the participation of teachers, students, staff and residents.

"The GBM makes it clear that no teaching for the winter semester can commence before the academic activi-



ties of the Monsoon Semester are completed, and completed in a manner consistent with statutory provisions and the maintenance of academic standards," the JNUTA said.

Teachers will assert their autonomy in such academic matters and find ways to engage with their students towards the end, it said.

To press for its demands, the JNUTA said the teachers will not commence winter semester classes examination and also refrain from undertaking other regular activities of the semester like preparing time-tables organising presentations of research students.

The general body meeting (GBM) will review this decision after two weeks.

The JNUTA said it will continue its pursuit of the objective of initiating an appropriate judicial inquiry into the January 5 incident.

Thirty-four people, including students and faculty, were injured on January 5 when a masked mob entered the campus and attacked them with rods and sledgehammers.

Jaising Should Be 'Ashamed', Says Nirbhaya's Family



NEW DELHI: Nirbhaya's father on Saturday said senior lawyer Indira Jaising should be "ashamed" of suggesting pardon for the four death row convicts in his daughter's gangrape case and said his family isn't as "large-hearted" as Congress leader Sonia Gandhi.

He also demanded an apology from Ms. Jaising, who is known for her stand against capital punishment.

In a tweet on Friday, Jaising said while she fully identifies with the pain of Nirbhaya's mother, she urges her "to follow the example of Sonia Gandhi who forgave Nalini and said she didn't not (did not) want the death penalty for her".

Nirbhaya's father said this is a "wrong message."

"She (Indira Jaising) is a woman herself. She should be ashamed of her comments and apologise to Nirbhaya's mother," he told PTI.

"We have been fighting the case for seven years. We are common people and not politicians. Humara dil Sonia Gandhi ji jitna bada nahi hai (We are not as large-hearted as Sonia Gandhi)," he said.

"Such mentality is responsible for the rising number of rapes," he added.

Nirbhaya's father said his wife held similar views.

He said they had seen Ms. Jaising in court but never interacted with her.

"Why did she have to say something and face insult when she has nothing to do with the case," he asked.

Citizens Can Skip Question On Place Of Birth Of Parents In NPR Form, Says Centre

Officials of non-BJP-ruled States on Friday asked the Registrar General of India (RGI) to remove the column on "place of birth of mother and father" in the proposed National Population Register (NPR) to be updated simultaneously with the Census exercise in April-September.

The RGI and the Home Ministry had convened a day-long conference to discuss the modalities to be adopted during the house-listing phase of Census 2021 and the NPR.

During the meeting, presentations were given on the objectives of the Census and the

NPR exercises and their benefits and on the use of mobile app, which will be used in the Census for the first time.

RGI and other Home Ministry officials told the State representatives that respondents could skip the questions in NPR if they wanted and answering them was not mandatory but 'voluntary', a senior government official said.

West Bengal and Kerala, citing maintenance of 'public order' had earlier told the RGI that the NPR exercise should be halted.

Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy said no one will be pressured to collect

details for the NPR.

"No documents are required to be shown by people during the NPR and Census exercise. People can give the details they want to, NPR should not be linked to the National Register of Citizens (NRC)," Mr. Reddy said.

The conference was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai.

Rajasthan Chief Secretary D.B. Gupta who attended the meeting said, "Many State governments objected to the new fields (in NPR) particularly the place of birth of parents. This is impractical. Some-

Lt Gen SK Saini To Take Over As Vice Chief Of Army Staff



NEW DELHI: Southern Army Commander Lieutenant General SK Saini will take over as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff on January 25.

This is also the first order of a senior military appointment issued through the Department of Military Affairs headed by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat.

The post of Vice Chief of Army Staff fell vacant after Lieutenant General MM Naravane, then vice chief, was elevated as the Chief of Army Staff.

General Saini is an alumnus of Sainik School in Punjab's Kapurthala, National Defence Academy in Pune, and the Indian Military Academy in

Dehradun.

He was commissioned into the Jat Regiment in June 1981.

He has also served on international deputations including as the Deputy Chief Military Personnel Officer in the Iraq-Kuwait UN Mission, Global Peace Operations Initiative's peacekeeping exercise in Mongolia, and a counter-terrorism exercise in Australia.

General Saini has been bestowed with Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, the Yudh Seva Medal, the Vishisht Seva Medal, the Chief of Army Staff Commendation and the Army Commander Commendation for his service.