

'Lakshman Rekha In Constitution For States': MP Heads For Governor-Government Conflict Over CAA



BHOPAL: The Congress-ruled Madhya Pradesh might be headed towards a possible conflict-like situation between the state government and the Raj Bhawan if Chief Minister Kamal Nath goes ahead with his decision not to implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in the state.

The state's Governor Lalji Tandon has made it clear that no state in the country can refuse to implement a law which has been enacted after being passed by Parliament and subsequent Presidential assent.

"There is a Lakshman Rekha (restriction) in the Constitution for state governments. Any bill passed by the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and thereafter given the Presidential assent becomes a law. So which state in the country can deny implementing it," said Tandon.

The Governor's statement is being seen as an indication about a possible conflict-like situation between the Raj Bhawan and the state government if the Congress government stuck to its present stand on the CAA.

Non-BJP ruled states, including Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala

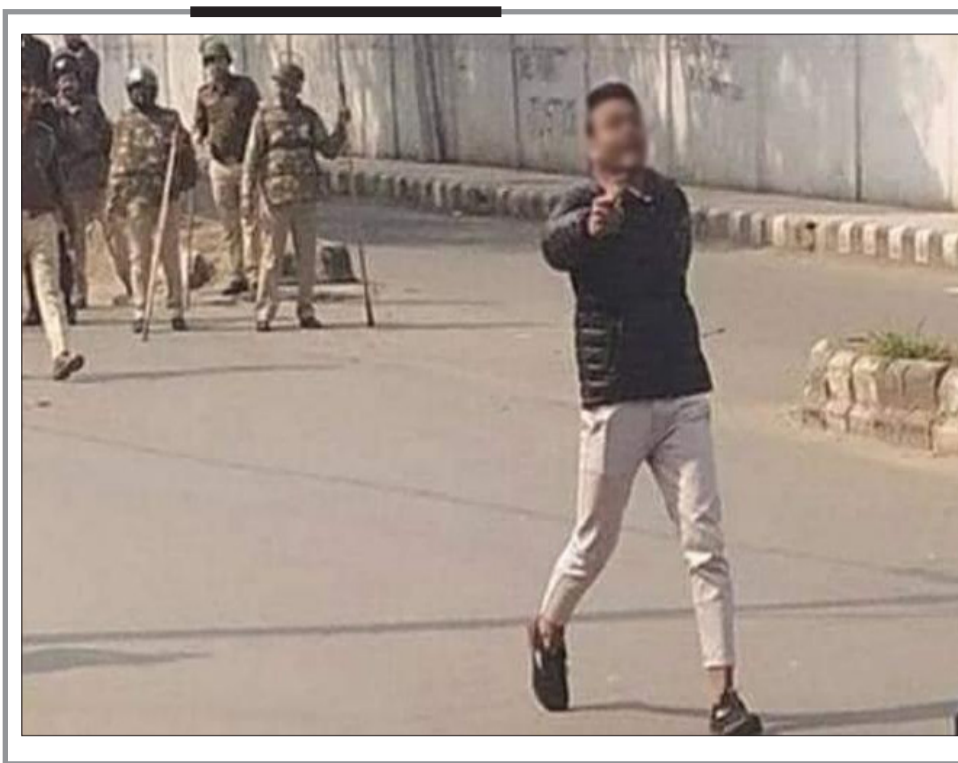
and Chhattisgarh, have either passed resolutions via the state assemblies or via the cabinet against the CAA.

In MP, where the Congress returned to power in the state after 15 years in December 2018, CM Kamal Nath too has made it clear that the CAA won't be implemented. The CM had even led a rally on the streets of Bhopal against the CAA in December 2019.

Talking to journalists on Friday evening after the inauguration of a media room at the Raj Bhawan, the Governor, however, lauded the state's CM for decisions like building Ram Van Gaman Path in the state, announcing to build the Sita Temple in Sri Lanka and Hanuman Chalisa Path at Bhopal's Minto Hall on Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary on Thursday.

"The CM is upholding the Sanatan culture, I like him for that," the Governor said.

The Governor's appreciation of Kamal Nath gave Congress leader Narendra Saluja (also the media coordinator to the CM) ammo to mock the BJP for opposing the CM's decisions.



Jamia Firing: Accused Considered Anti-CAA Protests To Be Anti-National Activities

NEW DELHI: Anger had been building up inside the youth who fired on anti-CAA protesters in Jamia Nagar as he used to watch videos and read content on social media about the killing of two men belonging to right-wing outfits in Uttar Pradesh, a police official said on Friday.

He also used to read reports of protests against the amendment law and considered these protests to be "anti-national activities", the official said.

On Thursday, the accused fired a pistol at a group of anti-CAA protesters, injuring Jamia student Shadab Farooq, before walking away while waving the firearm above his head and shouting "Yeh lo aazadi" amid heavy police presence.

He was apprehended from the spot and taken into police custody.

During interrogation, it was revealed that he boarded a bus from his hometown in UP's Jewar and took an auto to the protest site at Jamia after reaching Delhi.

He had planned to go to Shaheen Bagh from there.

He carried a country-made pistol in his bag and went live on Facebook five times from the protest site and the cover picture of his profile showed him brandishing a sword, a police official said.

He was angry with the protests happening at Jamia and Shaheen Bagh and considered them "anti-national activities" and believed that such protests caused inconvenience, the official said.

In his Facebook profile which has now been deleted, he mentioned that he was taking revenge for "Chandan Bhai", apparently referring to a Chandan Gupta who died after being shot at a motorcycle rally taken out to celebrate Republic Day in 2018 in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj area.

The shooter was also angry with the killing of Hindu Samaj Party leader Kamlesh Tiwari.

Tiwari was killed at his house in Lucknow on October 18, 2019 allegedly because of certain

provocative statements he had made in the past, the officer said.

On Friday afternoon, the accused was presented before the Juvenile Justice Board and sent to a 14-day protective custody, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Rajesh Deo said.

The police said they have urged the board to form a medical panel to conduct a bone ossification test to verify his age.

Another official, who did not wish to be identified, said the accused will be given counselling on regular basis to ascertain the circumstances under which he committed the act and if he is suffering from any kind of mental illness or if he was manipulated or influenced by someone which led him to commit the offence.

The counselling by psychiatrists will also help to understand if he is addicted to any drugs.

Since he is a student, textbooks will also be given to him and in case he requires a tuition facility, the same will be offered, he said.

Ready To Talk To Shaheen Bagh Protesters, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad Says



NEW DELHI: Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday said the government is ready to talk to the protesters at Shaheen Bagh to clear their doubts over the amended Citizenship law, but it should be in a "structured form".

This is perhaps for the first time a Union minister has expressed willingness to communicate with the Shaheen Bagh protesters who have been staging a sit-in since last 40 days to protest the Citizenship Amendment Act.

"Government is ready to talk to protesters of Shaheen Bagh but then it should be in a structured form and the @narendramodi govt is ready to communicate with them and clear all their doubts they have against CAA," he tweeted.

Prasad also shared a link of a TV debate in which he participated.

In the debate, a person associated with the protest asked the minister why the central government was not trying to communicate with the protesters at Shaheen Bagh.

Prasad said it was a "good thing" that people were protesting for days but some people were heard saying on television that there would not be dialogue until the CAA was rolled back.

"If you want a government representative to talk, then there should be a structured request from Shaheen Bagh which says all the people there want to talk on the subject," Prasad said.

He made it clear that Shaheen Bagh was not the place to hold talks. "What if someone goes there and is mistreated," he said.

The Shaheen Bagh protest site in southeast Delhi is at the centre-stage of BJP's polls campaign.

Kafeel Khan Remanded To Judicial Custody, Transferred To Mathura Jail



ALIGARH: Child specialist Kafeel Khan who was accused of making an inflammatory speech at AMU was remanded to judicial custody and later transferred to Mathura jail, officials said on Saturday.

Circle Officer (Civil Lines) Anil Samania said Khan was brought here late Friday evening and was produced before

the remand magistrate who remanded him to judicial custody.

He was sent to the Aligarh jail, but within an hour, he was transferred to Mathura jail, the official said.

He was accused of making an inflammatory speech at the university during anti-CAA protests on December 14.

Coronavirus: Air India Evacuates 324 Indians From Wuhan, 6 Stopped From Boarding

Air India's jumbo B747 plane, evacuating 324 Indian nationals from the coronavirus-hit Wuhan in China, landed on Saturday morning, officials said.

The plane reached Delhi around 7:30 am, they said. "With 324 passengers, the special flight has taken off for India from Wuhan. It may reach Delhi at 7:30 am," said an Air India spokesperson at 1:19 am on Saturday. There are five doctors from Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital and one paramedical staff on board, said the Air India spokesperson. The flight had departed from Delhi airport at 1:17 pm on Friday to evacuate Indian nationals from China, where more than 200 people - none of them Indian - have died due to novel coronavirus. The departure of the

flight was, however, delayed from Wuhan airport as immigration and Chinese authorities did not allow six Indians on board after they reported high temperatures during screening. "Six passengers were offloaded as they had high temperatures," a passenger told ANI. On Friday evening, the Air India spokesperson had stated that another special flight may take off from Delhi airport on Saturday to evacuate Indians from Wuhan. The death toll from the novel coronavirus outbreak in China has risen to 259 with total confirmed cases surging to 11,791 amid stepped-up efforts by a number of countries to evacuate their nationals from Hubei province, the epicentre of the virus, officials said on Saturday.

President Ram Nath Kovind Rejects Second Nirbhaya Convict's Mercy Plea



NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday rejected the mercy petition of second death row convict -- Vinay Sharma -- in Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case.

Recently, Vinay Sharma had filed a mercy petition in the matter.

The President had, on January 17, rejected the mercy petition of another convict -- Mukesh Singh -- in the matter.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court on Friday stayed till further orders the execution, which was earlier scheduled to take place on February 1, of the four convicts in the case.

A Delhi court had earlier issued a death warrant for convicts -- Akshay Thakur, Mukesh Singh, Pawan Gupta, and Vinay Sharma -- for their execution on February 1.

The case pertains to the

gang-rape and brutalising of a 23-year-old paramedical student in a moving bus on the night of December 16, 2012, by six people including a juvenile in Delhi. The woman had died at a Singapore hospital a few days later.

One of the five adults accused, Ram Singh, had allegedly committed suicide in the Tihar Jail during the trial of the case.

JIH Welcomes Govt Talk Offer To Shaheen Bagh Protesters



NEW DELHI: Within hours of the Union government's "structured talk" offer to Shaheen Bagh protesters, the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) said on Saturday that it welcomed the government's willingness to hold a dialogue with those protesting against the CAA and NRC.

JIH chief Syed Sadatullah Husaini said: "If somebody is sitting on a protest against any law got passed by the government, it's the government's duty to talk to the people who are expressing their dissent; if the government is willing to talk to them, it's a welcome step."

His response came after Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad's statement that the government is willing to hold "structured talk" with those protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens.

Prasad had tweeted: "Government is ready to talk to protesters of Shaheen Bagh but then it

should be in a structured form and the @narendramodi govt is ready to communicate with them and clear all their doubts they have against the CAA."

The JIH has condemned what it calls the government's continued disregard of the country-wide protests against the CAA, NRC, and the National Population Register.

"The government's dogged persistence on the CAA and execute the NPR -- despite the poor state of our economy and faltering GDP growth, rising unemployment, and weak tax collection -- exposes its incompetence and inability to steer the nation with wisdom and foresight, a JIH statement said.

The Jamaat appeals to the government to announce the withdrawal of CAA, NPR and NRC as the "nation is paying a heavy price for the intransigence of a few at the helm of power", JIH Vice President Muhammad Saif Engineer said.

Bhima-Koregaon Inquiry Panel Tells State To Wind It Up For Lack Of Funds

The two-member inquiry commission set up to investigate the 2018 Bhima-Koregaon riots on Friday wrote to the Maharashtra government, recommending it winds up the commission owing to paucity of funds.

The letter, which HT has a copy of, stated that the superintendent of the commission used to be humiliated by the staff of the Maharashtra home department whenever he came to enquire about pending bills.

Friday's development comes amid the Centre versus state government tussle over the transfer of the Elgar Parishad probe to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

It is alleged that the conclave

was backed by Maoists and the speeches made there triggered caste-based violence near the Bhima-Koregaon war memorial the next day on January 1, 2018, leaving one dead.

On February 9, 2018, the then Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government had ordered the setting up of the commission, which is headed by retired chief justice of Calcutta high court, Jay Narayan Patel, and has Sumit Mullick, former chief secretary and the present chief information officer of Maharashtra, as the other member.

Friday's letter, which was written by the secretary of the commission to the chief secretary and other senior officials, detailed

the poor financial condition of the commission. "Circumstances indicate that the government is not serious about the commission. The commission is unable to function for want of money even for day-to-day expenses. The staff may not be able to continue due to want of salary," read the letter.

Sanjay Kumar, additional chief secretary, home, said he has not received the letter yet. "I will be able to respond to the letter only after going through it," Kumar said.

The letter further revealed that the officials of the commission have not received salaries from November 2019. Salaries and honorarium of all, including the chairman, are due from Decem-

ber 2019. "Peons are required to borrow money for their survival. Most staff members are hired on a contract basis. They would starve for want of salary," the letter claimed.

According to the letter, when the superintendent of the commission had recently been to the home department to ask about pending bills, the undersecretary concerned asked him to wind up the commission. The letter stated that the superintendent has been humiliated on a number of occasions by the staff of the home department.

The letter claimed that after exhausting the initial budget of about Rs52 lakh, the government either delayed in sanctioning a

supplementary budget or sanctioned an amount much less than was required.

According to the letter, when the state government extended the term of the commission in November 2019, the commission had placed a supplementary demand of Rs65 lakh on November 8, 2019. The letter said that according to the directives issued by the finance department, the supplementary demand should have been submitted on or before November 16. "But the home department did not submit the demand before that date. The finance department did not take the supplementary demand for approval in the ensuing budget session," the letter read.

