

## Dalit Leaders Contemplating Filing PIL On Ram Mandir Trust



**NEW DELHI:-** Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the 15 member trust for the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya in Parliament on Wednesday but a controversy has erupted about the representation of the committee.

Some BJP leaders have raised exclusion of OBC members in the trust. Two former party Chief Ministers, Kalyan Singh and Uma Bharti, who were in forefront in the Ram Mandir agitation and have been facing cases in the CBI court, have sought reservations for them on the committee.

"Not just Dalits but backwards too should get representation in the Ram Mandir Trust as they are as staunch Ram Bhakts," said Kalyan Singh, who was Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister when the Babri Masjid was razed in 1992.

Now sources close to Dalit leaders have said that they are contemplating the matter to

challenge in the court as the "government body should adhere to the policy of reservation" in which adequate representation of SCs, STs and OBCs is required.

But they are talking to legal experts if the constitution of a trust can be challenged or not, said a source. The Dalit leaders have been affirmative after the court order on rebuilding of Ravidas Temple in Delhi.

There also have been spats between Congress leaders also on the members of the trust. While Congress leader Udit Raj questioned why only one person of the Dalit community have been given representation, other leaders objected to it. Party leader Jitin Prasada said: "Whatever the subject, the Congress tradition is not to attack any caste or community. I believe that Congress policy for scheduled caste with positive provisions and equal opportunity to all."

## JNUSU Slams VC Over 'Whatsapp' Exam Model



**NEW DELHI:-** In the latest face-off with the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) authorities, the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (JNUSU) has termed as 'undemocratic and illegal' the academic council meeting that was held on Friday morning.

In its statement, the JNUSU attacked the administration and vice chancellor of unilaterally deciding on conducting examinations via WhatsApp and email, in the face of boycott by some sections of students.

"May we remind Mr. Jagadesh

Kumar that legitimising WhatsApp exams which are detrimental to the academic future of students is not pro student. However, this move is certainly pro ABVP. The ABVP activists are being appointed to teaching posts in JNU irrespective of their qualification and hence it is no surprise that ABVP is fully backing the process of WhatsApp exams," the statement read.

The JNUSU has warned that it would give a call for a larger movement, legally as well as politically, if the administration continues its 'dictatorial' attempts.



## Plea In HC Challenges Police Requisition For Temporary Jail To Detain Anti-CAA Protestors

**NEW DELHI:-** A plea was moved in the Delhi High Court on Friday challenging the police's letter seeking permission from the government to turn Jangli Ram Pahalwan Stadium here into a "temporary jail" for anti-CAA protestors on the assembly election day.

The petition was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar and it agreed to list the matter for hearing on February 10.

The plea by a social activist apprehended that his voting right as well as that of other protestors will be curbed in the wake of Delhi Police's requisition given to the Principal Secretary (Home) for setting up a temporary jail at the stadium in Kanjhawala for accommodating those who may be detained enmass without any reasonable basis.

Petitioner Jafar Ahsan Karimi sought direction to the Principal Secretary (Home) to recall the letter or the approval order, if any, for the requisition given by the police on January 29 as it

is arbitrary.

The petition, filed through advocates Rahul Yadav, Rashid N Azam and Mujeeb Ur Rehman, said setting up of a mass detention centre especially during the polls and on the voting day would adversely affect the conduct of free and fair elections.

The plea claimed that the peaceful protests are being carried out for over 50 days and there has been no violence from the side of protestors except a few incidents where people have tried to attack the protestors using fire arms.

"It is alarming in a democracy that the protestors are agitating against a policy decision of framework of citizenship to be granted to foreigners under the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 which is ex facie discriminatory and designed to facilitate certain religious communities while excluding others," the petition said.

It said the "ire of protestors is mainly against the current government at the Centre which is largely a party also contesting the elections in Delhi".

It said the establishment of a temporary jail for detention of protestors is against the spirit of Constitution under Article 19 which guarantees the right to organise peaceful protest.

"The temporary jails if set up should only be sanctioned after the conduct of elections and voting," it said, adding that if it is done earlier, every detainee who has a valid vote should be allowed to cast the vote.

The plea said a letter was written by the additional commissioner of police (Rohini district) to the Principal Secretary (Home) saying that in view of passing of CAA bill, a number of protests are being held across Delhi.

It said the letter stated that the police has been informed through various agencies that some of the protestors may deliberately resort to unconstitutional/ violent means and try to disturb the law and order situation in view of the forthcoming assembly elections.

The plea said the police requested for approval for setting up of temporary jail at the stadium for detention of warrants.

## Word From Modi's Speech In Rajya Sabha Expunged

**NEW DELHI:-** In a rare move, a word from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in Rajya Sabha was expunged from records.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu expunged the word used by Modi on Thursday during his reply to the discussion on a motion thanking the President for his address to the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament at the start of the Budget session.

"Chairman was pleased to direct expunction of a certain portion of the proceedings of Rajya Sabha dated February 6 at about 6.20 and 6.30 pm," a statement issued by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat said.

Naidu routinely expunges any remark found unsuitable from Rajya Sabha's records after going through the proceedings of the day. This has been done on several occasions but rarely was any remark of Modi expunged.

Modi had made the remark as he launched a strong defence of the NPR saying the country's population register was being updated with demographic information for better targeting of government's welfare schemes.

He had targeted the oppo-



sition Congress for making a U-turn, saying the party had brought the NPR in 2010 and was later updated in 2015 by adding photographs and some biometric information.

Naidu also expunged a word from Leader of the Opposition and senior Congress leader Gh-

ulam Nabi Azad's statement made after Modi had finished his speech.

Azad had stated that the Congress was in favour of giving citizenship to persecuted migrants from Pakistan but was against framing of a law based on religion.

## Nirbhaya Case: Court Dismisses Tihar's Plea Seeking Fresh Warrant For Execution



**NEW DELHI:-** A Delhi court on Friday dismissed a petition filed by Tihar jail authorities seeking issuance of fresh death warrants against the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case, observing that it was "bereft of merit".

"The applications are bereft of merit and are dismissed. The state is permitted to file applications as and when required. The matter is disposed of for being premature," Additional Sessions Judge Dharmendra Rana observed.

The judge further said that it was "criminally sinful to condemn the convicts when the law permits them to live".

"Admittedly the Delhi High Court has permitted the convicts to exercise their legal remedies within one week of the said order. I concur with the learned Amicus of Mukesh that death warrants cannot be executed on the basis of conjectures," Rana said.

During the course of proceedings on Friday, victim's counsel Jitendra Kumar Jha requested the court to issue fresh death warrants against the convicts, claiming that none of their petitions is pending before the court of law or any other constitutional authority.

"The convicts are resting to

tactics to unnecessarily delay the hanging and earn brownie points," said another counsel representing the victim's family.

Vrinda Grover, who represented convict Mukesh, vehemently opposed the contentions and said that the application deserved to be dismissed.

The jail authorities had moved the Patiala House Court on Thursday, a day after President Ram Nath Kovind dismissed the mercy petition of one of the convicts, Akshay.

Besides Akshay, two other convicts, namely Mukesh and Vinay, have exhausted their legal remedies.

The fourth convict, Pawan, has not yet availed the remedy of curative and mercy petitions, which will be the last judicial and constitutional resort for him, respectively.

The case pertains to the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old girl in the national capital in December 2012.

The execution of the four convicts, originally scheduled for January 22, was postponed to February 1. But it was deferred again on January 31 after Mukesh filed an application before a Delhi court contending that other convicts are yet to avail the legal remedies and they cannot be hanged separately.

## 2020 Delhi Polls See Highest Percentage Of Women In Fray



**NEW DELHI:-** The percentage of women contesting the Delhi Assembly polls will be the highest in the 2020 Assembly polls, at over 11 per cent. This is the first time that this percentage has reached the double digits.

Out of the total 672 candidates in the fray in these Assembly polls, 79 are women -- over 11 per cent of the total contestants.

In 2015, 66 of the 673 contestants, or over 9 per cent, were women, but only six of them were elected to the house.

In 2013, when three MLAs were women, the number of women in the fray was 71 out of the total of 810 contestants.

The number of women in the fray was highest in 2008 at 81 out of 875, a little below 10 per cent. Only three were elected.

Seven women MLAs were elected to Delhi's third Assembly in 2003. Women comprised 78 out of the total 817 candidates in the fray, or over nine per cent.

During the 1998 assembly elections, when the Congress

wrested power and Sheila Dikshit became the Chief Minister for the first time, there were 57 females in the fray. This time, the highest number of women MLAs - nine - were elected to the House.

In its first Assembly election in 1993, Delhi saw 59 women in the fray out of record total of 1,316 candidates, but only three were elected.

Delhi is going for polls again on Saturday with a total of 79 women in the fray with the top political parties -- the Aam Aadmi Party, BJP and Congress -- fielding 24 female candidates.

The results on February 11 will decide how many of them make it to the Assembly.

While the Congress is aiming to come back to the helm after ruling the city for 15 years in a stretch, the AAP is aiming to retain power and is trying for a hat-trick, and the BJP, which has been out of power in Delhi for more than two decades, is also aiming to form a government.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Turkish Helicopter For Pakistan On Posters Showcasing Make In India

**LUCKNOW:** In an embarrassment for the Yogi Adityanath government, its posters welcoming delegates to the five-day DefExpo 2020 in Lucknow feature as a 'Make in India' showcase a helicopter that Turkey has made for its close ally Pakistan.

The Uttar Pradesh capital is hosting India's biennial defence exhibition starting Wednesday.

The pictures are of the T-129 two-seater attack helicopter -- manufactured by Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) in collaboration with Italian-British AgustaWestland. To make matters worse for the

UP government, the helicopter in the picture even has a Turkish flag on it.

Asked about the gaffe, an official said on condition of anonymity, "The poster has not been put by the Ministry of Defence but by the UP government."

Lucknow, which is the constituency of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, is set to host Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union ministers, CEOs of defence companies, diplomats, among others, for the event.

**T-129 choppers and Pakistan**

In response to India's purchase of the Apache attack helicopters from the US, Pakistan

had signed a \$1.5-billion contract with Turkey in 2018 for buying 30 T-129 choppers.

However, the deal flew into rough weather after the US refused to give a technology export licence to Turkey for the sale to Islamabad. Since the engines of the choppers are jointly manufactured by the US firm Honeywell and British company Rolls-Royce, US' permission was needed for the helicopter to be exported to a third country.

The Turkish government has now tasked Tusas Engine Industries, TAI's sister company, with developing an indigenous engine for the T-129. Defence

News said in a report last month.

India and Turkey's relations have nosedived over the Kashmir issue since the Modi government scrapped Article 370 in August and bifurcated the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories. Turkey has issued multiple statements criticising the move.

**Tent city - bathrooms have nails on floor but no hot water**

The Uttar Pradesh government's embarrassment at the DefExpo didn't end at the chopper blunder.

Its much-publicised tent city, set up to cater to the large number of visitors to Lucknow, also proved to be a flop Tuesday. Sev-

eral visitors, including foreign diplomats, are facing issues at the temporary city, where prices for tents were initially kept at over Rs 20,000 per night.

"Despite paying such high cost, hot water is supplied for specific hours. And yesterday, there was no hot water in the morning during the specified hours," a diplomat staying at the tent city told ThePrint Wednesday.

Another foreign visitor said he had a narrow escape from a nail protruding from the bathroom floor in his VIP tent.

"The MoD was very keen that we take the tent city and that is exactly what we have done. We were told it



would be a Kumbh experience but has not been any good experience at all," said a second diplomat who didn't wish to be named.

The Adityanath government

came up with the tent city due to the limited number of hotels in Lucknow to cater to thousands of diplomats, officials and top executives of defence firms.