

# **NEWS ALERT**

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## **LIST OF NEWSPAPERS COVERED**

**BUSINESS LINE**

**DECCAN HERALD**

**ECONOMIC TIMES**

**HINDU**

**HINDUSTAN TIMES**

**INDIAN EXPRESS**

**PIONEER**

**STATESMAN**

**TELEGRAPH**

**TIMES OF INDIA**

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## **AGRICULTURE**

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 19, 2018

### **Govt staff, income tax payees not eligible for farm loans waiver in Madhya Pradesh**



Government employees, public representatives from panch-sarpanch to members of Parliament and income tax payees cannot avail the crop loan waiver scheme announced by chief minister Kamal Nath on Monday in his first decision after assuming office, officials familiar with the matter have confirmed.

Also, farmers selling their agriculture produce to others by forming a registered company will also not be eligible for the loan waiver. Even those getting a pension of Rs 15,000 and above will not be covered under the scheme. However, retired army men have been exempted from the pension criterion, as per these sources.

Also, if a farmer has taken loans from multiple agencies, he can apply for waiver of loan taken from only one of the agencies, the sources added. The state government, meanwhile, has constituted a 22-member committee to monitor the implementation of the CM's loan waiver scheme.

Day 2 of the new Congress government saw hectic activities in the state secretariat with officials concerned holding a series of meetings to fix the criteria to weed out ineligible farmers from the list of beneficiaries.

On Monday, the CM through an order waived outstanding short-term crop loans of farmers up to Rs 2 lakh per head. According to officials familiar with the matter, as many as 3.4 million farmers are expected to benefit from the scheme, while the state will have to incur an additional financial burden of approximately Rs 38,000 crore.

Officials said linking of Aadhaar numbers with bank accounts of the farmers will be mandatory for availing the loan waiver.

“The Aadhaar Card linking with bank accounts is made compulsory to maintain transparency in the process. There are many farmers who have taken loan from multiple banks but the government will waive off loan up to ~2 lakh from one bank only. The Aadhaar card will play an

important role in this,” said Rajesh Rajora, principal secretary, farmer welfare and agriculture development department.

A draft on the loan waiver will be presented to the state cabinet which will have its maiden meeting on December 26, as per official sources.

Meanwhile, a group of farmers from Sehore, the native district of former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, reached the secretariat to thank Kamal Nath for his decision on loan waiver.

Former Madhya Pradesh finance minister Jayant Malaiya on Tuesday said CM Nath announced the farm loan waiver in a “haste” and without planning, as he was under “pressure” to keep the poll promise.

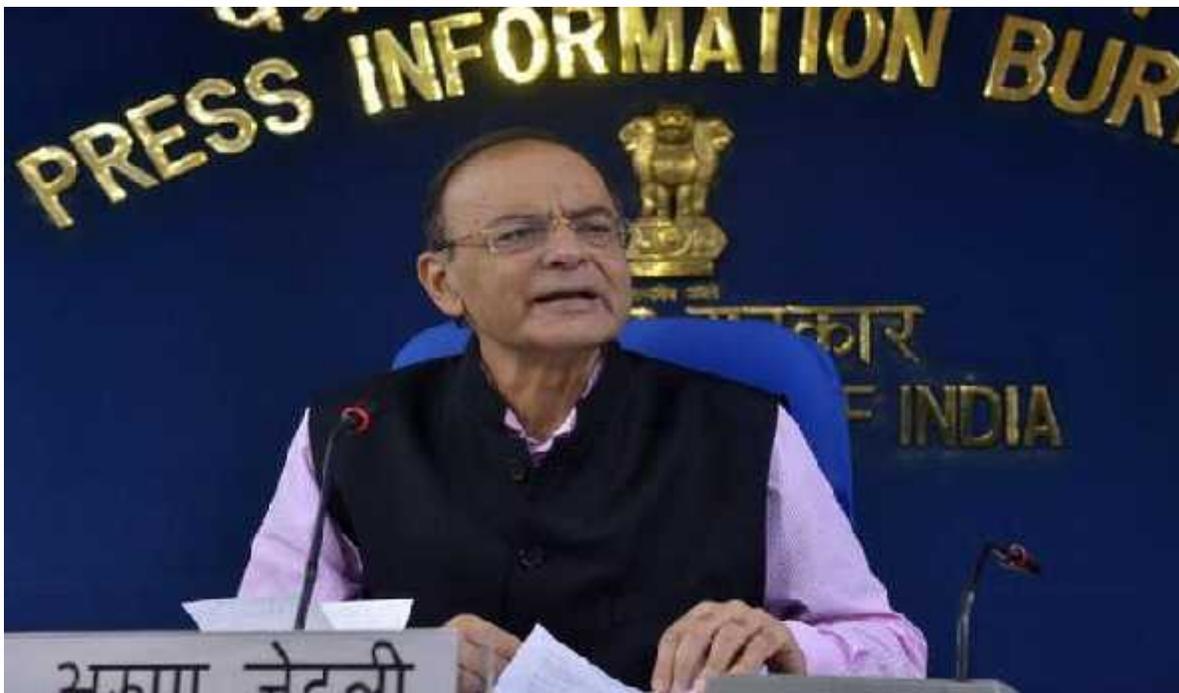
Speaking to media persons Malaiya also dismissed the Congress’ charge that the erstwhile BJP government was responsible for the “fiscal mess” in Madhya Pradesh.

Reacting to the BJP leader’s charges, state Congress spokesperson Bhupendra Gupta said nothing more could be expected from the BJP leaders. “The BJP government failed to address farmer’s grievances, but when the Congress government had done this they were having a problems with it,” he added.

## BANKING AND FINANCE

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

### Centre seeks 41,000 crore more to recapitalise public sector banks



Tables proposal in Parliament, says recovery process of NPAs progressing strongly

The government on Thursday moved a proposal in Parliament for an additional 41,000 crore to recapitalise public sector banks, over and

above the already budgeted 65,000 crore, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said at a press conference.

If approved by the House, this would take the total recapitalisation package for the current financial year to 1,06,000 crore, of which the government plans to utilize 83,000 crore over the remaining portion of the year.

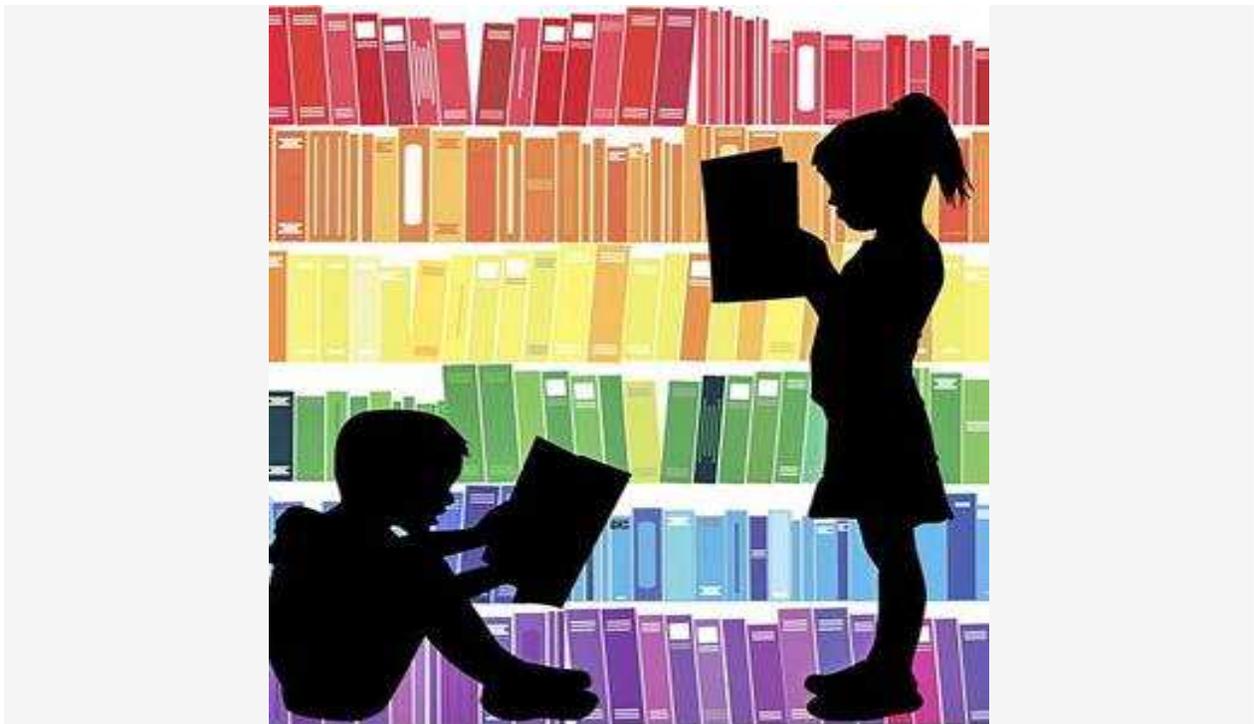
The government also said the recognition of loans that are non-performing assets (NPAs) was nearly complete and the recovery process was progressing strongly, with 60,726 crore recovered in the first half of this financial year.

“At the beginning of this year, a total amount of 65,000 crore was still remaining to be used,” Mr. Jaitley said. “As of today, of that 65,000 crore, 42,000 crore is still remaining. And therefore, with this additional 41,000 crore, this year’s recapitalisation will be 1,06,000 crore.”

# CHILD WELFARE

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

## Centre drafts child protection policy



The policy will apply to all organisations, both public and private | Photo Credit: [syntika](#)

### *Move comes in the wake of Muzaffarpur home case*

A code of conduct for employees of all organisations and a declaration signed by them agreeing to ensure the safety of **children** are some of the provisions included in the Centre's draft national child protection

policy, prepared on the prodding of the Supreme Court in the wake of the Muzaffarpur shelter abuse case.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has placed the draft policy on its website and invited comments from stakeholders until January 4. This will be the first policy dedicated to the protection of children, an area that until now was only a part of the broader National Child Policy, 2013.

The Supreme Court had earlier directed the CBI to investigate allegations involving 17 shelter homes for children, destitute women, beggars and senior citizens in Bihar following the case of sexual abuse of more than 30 girls in a shelter home in Muzaffarpur in the State. The apex court had also asked the Centre to consider framing a national policy on protection of children.

As per the draft, the policy will apply to “all institutions, and organisations (including corporate and media houses), government or private sector”.

The draft policy recommends that all organisations must have a code of conduct based on “zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation”. It requires organisations to lie down that employees don’t use language or behavior that is “inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate”.

Institutions should also designate a staff member to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure the protection of children as well as to report any abuse. Any individual who suspects physical, sexual or

emotional abuse must report it to the helpline number 1098, police or a child welfare committee.

Unlike the National Child Policy, 2013, the latest document doesn't talk about children who may need additional special protection measures: including those affected by migration, communal or sectarian violence, children forced into begging or in conflict with the law, and those infected with HIV/AIDS. It also doesn't talk about the role of the state for ensuring the protection of child rights or addressing local grievances.

“We welcome the decision to bring a national policy, but its subsequent versions will need to go into a greater detail,” said Priti Mahara, Director (Policy, Advocacy and Research) CRY. “The document needs to define what child protection is as well as what it means by institutions or organisations.”

Ms. Mahara added that the norms should be designed in such a way that organisations can customise their policies according to the nature of their work, thereby, giving them a sense of ownership on safeguarding children's rights.

“A policy has four aspects — creating awareness, prevention, reporting and responding,” said Prabhat Kumar, Technical Advisor, Child Protection, Save The Children. “This document needs to go into all these aspects, especially a reporting structure involving various nodal bodies and a monitoring mechanism for implementation of the guidelines. Moreover, while it talks about organisations laying down a code of conduct, it doesn't explain what is acceptable behaviour such as conduct of teachers in schools,” he observed.

Mr. Kumar suggested that the government could use the opportunity to go beyond the role of institutions and look at the role of individuals. “Perhaps the government could look at ensuring that all officials in public service give an undertaking that they will not exploit children,” Mr. Kumar said.

## CIVIL SERVICE

HINDUSTAN TIMES, DEC 19, 2018

### **On Day 2, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot shakes up bureaucracy with 40 transfers**



The Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan on Tuesday carried out its first reshuffle of the state bureaucracy, transferring 40 IAS officers. Principal secretary, forest and environment Kuldeep Ranka has been appointed as the principal secretary to the chief Minister.

Revenue secretary Ajitabh Sharma has been appointed secretary to the CM, and Ajmer collector Aarti Dogra and additional mission director,

National Health Mission (NHM) Rajan Vishal as joint secretary to the Chief Minister.

Six Rajasthan Administrative Service (RAS) officers have been appointed as the joint secretaries to the CM - Antar Singh Nehra, Shaheen Ali Khan, Har Sahay Meena, Lalit Kumar, Gaurav Bajad and Laxman Singh Shekhawat. Two RAS officers have been made officer on special duty – Deva Ram Saini and Dinesh Kumar Sharma.

Kota collector Gaurav Goyal has been appointed as managing director, Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO) and Churu collector Muktanand Agarwal takes over his post in Kota.

Principal secretary to former CM Vasundhara Raje has been transferred to commissioner, command area development, Bikaner and Naveen Jain transferred to Labour and Employment department as commissioner.

Additional chief secretary (ACS) Finance, Excise and Taxation department, Mukesh Sharma has been transferred to Revenue Board, Ajmer as chairman, while commissioner, Departmental Enquiries, Niranjana Kumar Arya has been appointed as principal secretary, Finance.

ACS Industries Rajeeva Swarup has been made ACS, Home; ACS, Tribal Area Development Sudhanshu Sethi has been made ACS Forest and Environment, and Mines and Minerals, ACS Medical and Health Veenu Gupta has been transferred to Public Works Department, and ACS Subodh Agarwal transferred to Industries from Higher and technical education department.

IAS officer Rohit Kumar Singh was transferred to Medical and Health department, Dr R Venkateshwaran to Horticulture, Akhil Arora to social justice and empowerment, Alok to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Aparna Arora to Minority Affairs and Waqf department, Shikhar Agarwal as member Revenue Board, Shreya Guha to Tourism, Art and Culture, Naresh Pal Gangwar to Planning; Roli Singh to Higher and Technical Education, Praveen Gupta as Member Revenue Board, Bhaskar A Sawant to School Education, Naveen Mahajan to Water Resources, Gayatri Rathore to Women and Child Development, KK Pathak to commissioner Industries, Ashutosh AT Pednekar to Disaster Management and Relief, Prithvi Raj to Finance (revenue), Krishna Kunal to Commissioner Devsthan, Samit Sharma as additional mission director, NHM, and Pradeep Kumar Borad to commissioner, College education.

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# CONSUMERS

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

## **Lok Sabha clears amended Consumer Protection Bill**

Sabha on December 20, 2018. Photo: PTI/LSTV

For the second consecutive day on Thursday, the Lok Sabha passed two Bills amid protests by members of the Congress, the TDP and the AIADMK.

Besides the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018, which seeks to replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities (Amendment) Bill, 2018, was passed.

The Consumer Protection Bill will become law once it goes through the Rajya Sabha. It is meant to protect those who use new technologies such as e-commerce and online shopping. The financial jurisdiction of the District Consumers Courts has been increased: they can deal with complaints involving 1 crore as against the 20 lakh earlier. Under the clause of product liability, a manufacturer will be liable to compensation for products with defects.

The Bill was passed after a very short discussion as members of the Congress and the AIADMK intensified their slogan-shouting. While the Congress demanded a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Rafale deal, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka members were protesting over the Cauvery issue. TDP MPs were demanding the special category status for Andhra Pradesh and a steel plant.

Determined to run the House, Speaker Sumitra Mahajan was keen on taking up the Triple Talaq Bill. However, it was postponed till December 27 after Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge assured her that the Opposition would participate in the debate next week.

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

## **Delhi High Court orders National Herald publishers to vacate Herald House**

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed Associated Journals Limited (AJL), publishers of *National Herald* newspaper, to vacate the Herald House in Delhi as per an eviction order of the Centre.

Justice Sunil Gaur gave two week times to AJL to vacate the premise Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg failing which proceedings under Public Premise Act could be initiated.

The High Court, which was hearing a petition filed by AJL challenging the October 30 order of the the Land and Development Office (L&DO) ending its 56-year-old lease and asking it to vacate the premises in the press enclave at ITO here, reserved it verdict on the case.

During the hearing, Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ministry, had argued that no publication of newspaper was taking place at Herald House since 2008.

The SG had said that it was only after inspection notice was issued in 2016 that National Herald commenced operation.

The High Court had earlier asked the government to maintain status quo with regard to enforcement of the October 30 order.

In its petition, the AJL has alleged that the proceedings by the ministry were being initiated for the purposes of “scuttling the voices of dissent” and the voice of the largest opposition party in the country, a reference to the Congress.

## **CYBER CRIME**

PIONEER, DEC 23, 2018

### **Prime Minister launched website of Cyber Coordination Centre**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched the website of the Cyber Coordination Centre as a one-stop shop on all cyber related issues, whether it is cyber crime or cyber security. The portal launched at the conclusion of the DGPs conference would also act as a bridge between law enforcement agencies on the one hand, and academia and private cyber security professionals on the other.

The PM also announced the institution of a new national honour for National Unity on the pattern of Padma Awards, the Government said in a statement.

The annual award would be given to any Indian who has contributed to national unity in any manner, it said, adding that the PM drew inspiration from iconic Congress leader Sardar Patel's contribution towards unification of the country.

The three-day Conference also focused on improving cyber security in the country and on preparing the Police forces to prevent and investigate cyber crimes and financial frauds.

The announcement of the new awards came at the conclusion of the annual conference of Director Generals of Police and Inspector Generals of Police held at Kevadiya in Narmada district of Gujarat, near the statue

of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, country's first Union Home Minister who is dubbed to have unified close to 600 princely States into the Indian Union.

Modi also released a commemorative postal stamp on the National Police Memorial and a special issue of Indian Police Journal on police martyrdom, published by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D).

The PM also advised the top police brass that a national level parade may be organised by police forces of about three to four states near Patel's statue at Kevadiya every year on Patel's birthday on October 31, observed as National Unity Day.

It was Patel, who, as the home minister of the country, had inaugurated the first conference of Inspector Generals of Police in Delhi in 1948. For this reason, Patel's message of national unity was the underlying theme of this year's conference, it said.

At the conclusion of the conference, Modi lauded the contribution of the police forces in maintaining internal security and directed the heads of police forces to take steps towards creating a more responsive and sensitive police force, the statement said.

The PM further stressed on the need for coordination of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and Central agencies with the state police forces and amongst neighbouring states was absolutely essential for successfully dealing with complex issues of crime prevention and management of law and order in the country, it said.

Modi advised the DGPs to make imaginative use of information technology to reach out to all sections of society through websites and apps to provide various police related services and safety advisories.

He highlighted the misuse of social media by anti-national forces for creating mass unrest and for radicalising vulnerable youth in this context.

A large number of issues concerning internal security, criminal justice system, terrorism, left wing extremism and bridging the gap between police and public were discussed at the conference.

## DEFENCE

HINDU, DEC 23, 2018

### **Nuclear-capable Agni-IV missile successfully test-fired**



*Describing the trial as a “complete success”, defence sources said all mission objectives were met during the Agni-IV test-fire*

India on Sunday successfully test-fired its nuclear-capable long-range ballistic missile Agni-IV, with a strike range of 4,000 km, as part of a user trial by the Army.

The strategic surface-to-surface missile was flight tested from launch complex-4 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Dr. Abdul Kalam Island, earlier known as Wheeler Island, at 8.35 a.m., [defence](#) sources said.

Describing the trial as a “complete success”, they said all mission objectives were met during the test-fire. All radars, tracking systems and range stations tracked and monitored the flight performance of the missile, which was launched with support of a mobile launcher.

Radars and electro-optical systems had been positioned along the coast of Odisha for tracking and monitoring all parameters of the missile, the sources said, adding two naval ships were anchored near the target area to witness the final event.

This was the 7th trial of Agni-IV missile. The last trial conducted by the strategic force command (SFC) of the Indian Army from the same base on January 2, 2018 was successful.

The indigenously developed sophisticated Agni-IV having 4,000-km strike range is a two-stage missile. It is 20 metre long with a weight of 17 tonnes, they said.

“The state-of-the-art missile is equipped with modern and compact avionics to provide high level of reliability and precision,” Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) sources said.

Agni-IV missile is equipped with advanced Avionics, 5th generation On Board Computer and distributed architecture.

It has the latest features to correct and guide itself for in-flight disturbances, they said.

The accurate Ring Laser Gyro-based Inertial Navigation System (RINS), supported by highly reliable redundant Micro Navigation System (MINGS), ensures the vehicle reaches the target with accuracy.

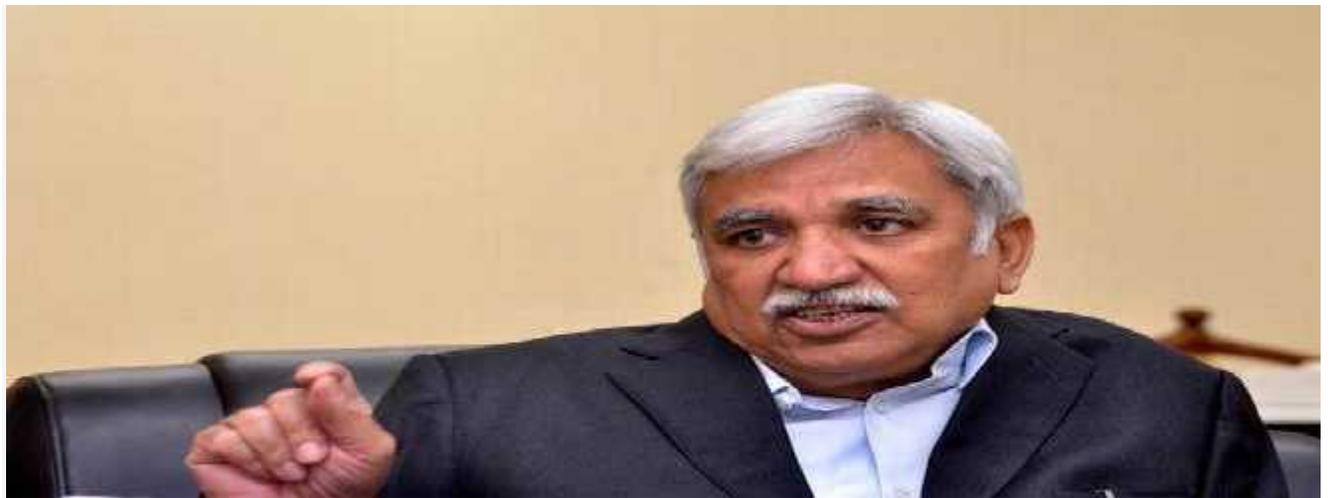
The re-entry heat shield can withstand temperatures in the range of 4,000 degrees centigrade and makes sure avionics function normally with inside temperature remaining less than 50 degrees centigrade.

Ballistic missiles like Agni-I, II and III and Prithvi have been included in the arsenal of the armed forces, giving India an effective deterrence capability.

## ELECTION

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

### **EVMs are tamper-proof; EC working to minimise incidents of machine malfunction: CEC**



Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora, File | Photo Credit: R.V. Moorthy

*Sunil Arora says tampering and malfunctioning are two separate things. “Tampering shows mala fide [intention]. Malfunction can happen,” he points out.*

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora on Thursday lamented that electronic voting machines (EVMs) were being “tossed like a football” in political discourse. The Election Commission of India (ECI), he said, was striving to ensure that incidents of EVM malfunctions were reduced to a minimum.

“We are not satisfied. We are moving forward to ensure that there are not even a few incidents [of malfunction],” Mr. Arora, a former bureaucrat, told *PTI* in an interview.

Mr. Arora was appointed as an Election Commissioner on August 31, 2017. He succeeded Om Prakash Rawat as the Chief Election Commissioner On December 1 this year after he retired.

Mr. Arora said tampering and malfunctioning were two separate things. “Tampering shows mala fide [intention]. Malfunction can happen,” he said.

There were 1.76 lakh polling booths in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Telangana, where Assembly elections were held recently, Mr. Arora said.

There were very few incidents of EVM malfunctioning (less than 1%) of the total machines deployed, he said.

A total of 1.76 lakh EVMs were deployed — one machine per booth — during the elections.

The ECI was continuously working to ensure that there were not even a few incidents of malfunction. “EVM is only a machine which records votes. Can it be programmed? No. A polite but emphatic ‘no’,” he asserted.

While the 2014 Lok Sabha elections had one result, the Assembly elections in Delhi held soon after had an entirely different result.

The recent Assembly polls in five States had different results and even the bypolls held earlier had different results, he pointed out.

“If the result is ‘X’, it is okay. But if it is ‘Y’ then the EVM is faulty,” he said, responding to allegations by political parties on the reliability of EVMs.

While political parties were free to target the ECI and question its impartiality, as it was their “right” as an important stakeholder, he said, he was “hurt” that the EVM was being “tossed like a football”.

Political parties were important stakeholders after voters, he said.

It was the stand of the ECI that the country would not go back to the ballot paper. “I am reiterating the stand today,” he said.

The Commission will hold the 2019 general election under Mr. Arora.

Besides the Lok Sabha polls, Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Maharashtra, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim are scheduled to be held next year.

Mr. Arora said that everyone in the Commission would continue to put their best foot forward to meet the expectations of all the stakeholders strictly in consonance and in conformity with the vision and ideals of the Constitution.

“We are also aware that elections to the Lok Sabha are in the offing. The internal preparations for this actually started sometime back. We will try to meticulously prepare on all fronts...

“All my colleagues in the ECI, we will elicit and want to solicit cooperation of all the stakeholders, including political parties, members of the civil society, NGOs, media and all those who have a stake in the crucial events like elections to the Lok Sabha of India,” he said.

PIONEER, DEC 23, 2018

## **CEC Sunil Arora bats for constitutional protection for fellow commissioners**

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora has batted for equal constitutional protection to all members of the Election Commission with regard to their removal. The CEC said he “fully endorses” a recommendation of the Law Commission to extend constitutional protection, on the line of Chief Election Commissioner. In its report on electoral reforms submitted in March, 2015, the Law Commission had proposed extending constitutional protection to the two ECs.

“I endorse it. I fully endorse it,” Arora told PTI in response to a question. He said it was up to the Government to decide on the issue.

The President appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners after the Law Ministry initiates the file for their appointment.

A Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from the office only through impeachment by Parliament. The President can remove the ECs based on the recommendation of the CEC.

The EC had been pushing to extend constitutional protection to the election commissioners.

The Law Ministry has maintained that the granting equal protection to the two ECs needed amendment to Constitution for which political unanimity was required.

The EC is a permanent Constitutional body which was established in accordance with the Constitution on January 25, 1950. Originally, the EC had only a Chief Election Commissioner. It currently consists of Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.

For the first time, two additional Commissioners were appointed on October 16, 1989 but they had a very short tenure, till January 1, 1990.

Later, on October 1, 1993 two additional Election Commissioners were appointed. The concept of multi-member Commission has been in operation since then, with decision-making power by majority vote.

HINDU, DEC 23, 2018

## **Election Commission makes fresh push for poll reforms**

### ***Seeks disqualification for false declaration***

The Election Commission is set to make a fresh push for electoral reforms with the government, including making filing of false declaration a ground for disqualification and putting a cap on expenditure by candidates in Legislative Council polls.

Highly placed sources in the commission said its officials would raise the subject of making bribery during the election period a cognisable offence at the meeting planned with Legislative Secretary G. Narayana Raju after the winter session of Parliament ends on January 8.

While the Law Ministry is the administrative Ministry for the EC, the Legislative Department is the nodal unit for issues related to the panel.

The sources said the Commission would ask the Ministry to take a call on its demand to extend constitutional protection to the two Election Commissioners on the lines of the provision given to the Chief Election Commissioner.

A Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through impeachment by Parliament. The President can remove the Election Commissioners based on the recommendation of the CEC.

Referring to the issue of false declarations, the sources said that, as of now, the penalty was a jail term of six months. But the EC wants to make it into an “electoral offence”.

Conviction in an electoral offence is a ground for disqualification. “Jail term of six months does not instil fear. Disqualification would,” another official said.

As of now, candidates contesting the Legislative Council elections do not have a bar on expenses.

# GST

HINDU, DEC 23, 2018

## **GST Council meeting witnesses heated exchanges**

*Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on rate cuts questioned.*

The effect of BJP's loss in three States in the Hindi heartland was visible at the GST Council meeting held on Saturday in New Delhi, with the famous accord of the Council across party lines disrupted by a heated exchange among members.

As the meeting got under way, Ministers representing various States ruled by the Congress and other Opposition parties led by Puducherry Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy said the failure of an upward trend in revenue collection under GST should be taken into account before suggesting rate cuts.

This was contradictory to the political stance taken by the Congress party which has batted for rates to be capped at 18%.

### **Two-hour debate**

There was a nearly two-hour debate on the issue with other State governments led by Opposition parties supporting this view. Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has time and again remarked that the strength of the decisions taken by the GST Council over its numerous

meetings was that none of the items came to a vote and that all were agreed to unanimously.

At one point on Saturday, according to sources, West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra also pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent declaration at an event that most goods and services would be removed from the 28% bracket to 18%, and that 99% of the items would be placed at 18% or lower, was unseemly and that Mr. Modi had no locus standi to make such an announcement without the Council's concurrence.

### **Call to order**

At this, Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma intervened and said that in such a scenario it would be better if the remarks were minuted and members be allowed to brief the press fully. This ended the discussion and both sides backed off.

Finally, the GST Council decided to cut rates on 17 items and six services. This left only one common use item, cement, in the 28% category.

Mr. Jaitley said the revenue impact of cutting the tax rate on cement was such that the Council decided to take a call on it only once revenues showed stronger growth.

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

## **All computers can now be monitored by govt. agencies**



***The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order authorising 10 Central agencies to intercept, monitor, and decrypt “any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer.”***

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday issued an order authorising 10 Central agencies to intercept, monitor, and decrypt “any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer.”

The agencies are the Intelligence Bureau, Narcotics Control Bureau, Enforcement Directorate, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Central Bureau of Investigation; National

Investigation Agency, Cabinet Secretariat (R&AW), Directorate of Signal Intelligence (For service areas of Jammu & Kashmir, North-East and Assam only) and Commissioner of Police, Delhi.

According to the order, the subscriber or service provider or any person in charge of the computer resource will be bound to extend all facilities and technical assistance to the agencies and failing to do will invite seven-year imprisonment and fine.

The MHA gave the authorisation under 69 (1) of the Information Technology Act, 2000 which says that the Central government can direct any agency after it is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient to do so in the “interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India, defence of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above or for investigation of any offence.”

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

### India reminds China of peace



*Says it's an important prerequisite for continuous development of bilateral ties.*

Peace and tranquillity are “important prerequisites” of continuous development of bilateral ties between India and China, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said on Friday. She was speaking after a two-hour meeting with Wang Yi, her counterpart from Beijing.

“Our defence forces are trying to firm up bilateral ties and are focussed on implementing confidence-building measures. These steps will help in maintaining peace and tranquillity in our border areas...,” she said.

Ms. Swaraj pointed to the benefit drawn from frequent meetings between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping. The two met earlier this year at Wuhan for an informal summit.

“We have laid out an ambitious agenda for the next year and we are confident that the visit by President Xi Jinping for the second informal summit will add another new facet for our bilateral ties,” the Minister said.

She indicated India’s readiness to host the second edition of the informal summit that was decided in Wuhan.

Ms. Swaraj highlighted the growing trade deficit as a matter of concern for Delhi, and expressed satisfaction at the steps China had taken to reduce the imbalance.

The concerns were raised at the end of bilateral discussion held during the first high-level mechanism for people-to-people exchanges.

Ms. Swaraj said that the parties identified 10 areas such as films, media, sports and tourism that would be in focus to facilitate greater relationship between the people of both countries.

Laying out Beijing’s plans, the Chinese Minister said heritage protection, academic exchanges and language teaching would be among the priority areas.

## **JUDICIARY**

PIONEER, DEC 20, 2018

### **Cabinet OK's permanent posts for Fast Track courts**

The Delhi Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Law Department's proposal for the conversion of temporary posts sanctioned for 'Fast Track Courts' into permanent posts. This further means that 18 posts of additional district judges (ADJs) in Delhi Higher Judicial Services along with 86 posts of ancillary staff (meaning the necessary support staff required for running of courts) have been approved for the conversion.

Citing a letter written by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to Prime Minister of India in 2015, requesting for reconsideration of the Centre's stand so as to strengthen the judicial system in the national capital, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led Delhi Government said that the Government does not receive any financial assistance from the Government of India for these fast track courts.

"This was followed by three more letters to the Government of India; however no funds have been released to the Delhi government for making Fast Track Courts a permanent feature," Sisodia added.

It may be noted that in the year 2005, the Council of Ministers had approved creation of 115 posts (viz. 20 posts of Additional District Judges alongwith 95 ancillary staff) on temporary basis, initially for a period of one year and the arrangement was to be continued on year to

year basis till funds were available or if the Government of India conveyed its approval for continuance of the Fast Track Court Scheme and provided funds for the purpose.

“For further continuation of the aforementioned 115 posts, approval of the Finance Department has been obtained from time to time, and on the last occasion the Finance Department concurred the proposal for continuation of these 115 posts for a further period of one year beyond from April 2014 to March 2015,” Quoted Delhi government statement. It is pertinent to mention here that there are five fast track courts functioning in Delhi to deal with criminal matters.

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

## Be brief, Supreme Court urges courts

A view of the Supreme Court in New Delhi. | Photo Credit: Rajeev Bhatt

***‘Why give a 60-page order for a mere remand?’***

Brevity is a virtue the courts may follow “as far as possible” while writing their decisions, the [Supreme Court](#) has said.

The three-page order containing just five paragraphs, with the last one merely a line, by a Bench of Justices A.M. Sapre and Indu Malhotra was based on a recent Shimla High Court order merely remanding a case to another court — the High Court consumed 60 pages to convey its point.

“We cannot resist observing that having rightly formed an opinion to remand the case to the first appellate court, there was no need for the

High Court to devote 60 pages in writing the impugned order. In our view, it was not required,” Justices Sapre and Malhotra noted in their short order.

However, the apex court decided not to intervene in the High Court’s reasoning to remand the case.

“An order of remand, in our opinion, in the facts of this case, does not call for any interference. It is more so when in the opinion of the High Court a case of remand was made out,” the apex court agreed with the High Court’s finding in the case which is a private civil matter between appellant Surjeet Singh and respondent Sadhu Singh. The first appellate court has been asked to hear the appeal afresh along with any cross-objections as per their merit.

But the apex court could not resist a parting shot at the High Court’s verbosity. The Bench said there was no need for the High Court to cite “several decisions and that too in detail” in a case of mere remand.

“The examination could be confined only to the issue of remand and not beyond it,” the Supreme Court suggested, adding that “brevity being a virtue, it must be observed as far as possible while expressing an opinion”.

## LIBRARIES

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

### **e-library of rare books launched in Pune**



The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

***BORI houses one of South Asia's largest collection of rare manuscripts***

The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), which houses one of South Asia's largest and most invaluable agglomeration of rare

manuscripts, opened its treasure vault digitally by launching an e-library of ancient religious and historical works on Wednesday.

Nearly 1,000 rare books and manuscripts in Sanskrit and its related languages are presently available for readers worldwide to savour in this first phase of digitisation.

The institute, named after legendary Indologist Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, was set up in 1917 and has in its possession nearly two-and-a-half-lakh rare books and manuscripts, some of them in an extremely brittle state. “The rationale behind the e-library is to preserve at least some of these books. Hence, we chose to digitise 20,000 among the rarest-of-the rare books and four to five thousand will be available for readers to read them online for free,” said noted Indologist Prof. Shrikant Bahulkar.

Three fully-automated Zeutschel high-resolution German scanners were specially procured by the institute at a cost of 15 lakh each.

“ We began with screening the two lakh-plus manuscripts to zero down on the ones we would digitise,” said Mithilesh Kulkarni of Nyansa, a firm specialising in heritage digitisation.

Chinmay Bhandari of Nyansa said that the entire process was one of ‘non-destructive’ digitising, which ensured that even books in decrepit condition were preserved while scanning. “For the past two years, our 15-member team was working in three shifts every day and we digitised more than 3 lakh pages each month,” Mr. Bhandari said.

Among the BORI's notable publications are a 19-volume edition of *The Mahabharata*, collated with copious critical material, and legendary Sanskrit scholar P.V. Kane's five-volume History of Dharmashastra (1930). "The work on the Mahabharata, universally acknowledged by scholars and researchers the world, is still on with the Cultural Index to the Mahabharata still being prepared under the guidance of scholar Dr. Ganesh Umakant Thite," said Prof. Bahulkar.

## PARLIAMENT

PIONEER, DEC 21, 2018

### **Self-discipline expected from parliamentarians, says Sumitra Mahajan on disruptions**



*Sumitra Mahajan chaired the Lok Sabha's Rules Committee which deliberated upon smooth functioning of the house.*

Amid continuous disruption of proceedings in the Lok Sabha, Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said on Friday self-discipline is expected from representatives of people and asserted it is responsibility of all to ensure that the House functions.

Ms. Mahajan chaired the Lok Sabha's Rules Committee on Friday which deliberated upon smooth functioning of the house.

The Rules Committee acts as an advisory body to her for framing and amending rules for regulating and conducting the business in the Lok Sabha.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Ms. Mahajan said she is trying to make sure that the House functions smoothly with cooperation of all parties.

“All Parliamentarians have come here after getting mandate from the people. They are representatives of the people. It's everybody's responsibility to ensure that the House functions,” she said.

Asked if there is any need to initiate disciplinary action against the members who disrupt the House, Ms. Mahajan said it was not required in these times.

“There is a need for self- discipline,” she said.

Referring to Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge's remarks that his party is ready to discuss the Triple Talaq Bill on December 27, the Lok Sabha Speaker said,“I believe that on 27th, the House will function smoothly.”

In a meeting with leaders of all parties on Thursday, Ms. Mahajan is said to have conveyed her displeasure over continuous disruptions in functioning of the Lower House of Parliament.

The Lok Sabha proceedings were disrupted for the seventh consecutive working day on Thursday amid sparring between members of various parties and a ruckus being created by various leaders.

On Friday too, the Lok Sabha proceedings were disrupted as AIADMK, TDP and Congress members protested over various issues, with the Speaker adjourning the House for the day.

Lok Sabha sources said Ms. Mahajan told the leaders in Thursday's meeting that the image of the House is taking a hit and it is being seen as a place where only ruckus happens, where nothing can be asked or listened.

## **TOURISM**

PIONEER, DEC 23, 2018

### **Malpractices in overseas Indian tourism offices: PAC**

The Public Accounts Committee of Rajya Sabha has come down hard on the Tourism Ministry for its overseas offices saying they have been involved in malpractices.

It pointed out that the Indian Tourism Office (ITO) Beijing procured goods and services worth Rs 7.17 cr in gross violation of general financial rules while ITO London failed to follow transparent procurement process resulting in award of contract and payments to the tune of Rs 97.44 lakh for the same to non-existent firms.

Similarly, it pointed out anomalies in the tourism offices in Tokyo where lack of monitoring led to losses of at least Rs 62.18 lakh and a loss of Rs 62.18 lakh at the ITO in South Korea for procedural lapses.

“The scale of malpractices in the ITOs indicates connivance of the officials of Ministry and, therefore, desire that the independent inquiry into the same may be conducted and those responsible be brought to book,” the committee led by Mallikarjun Kharge said.

It further said the ministry of tourism had failed to monitor the ITOs adequately and suggested that a robust mechanism for the same be developed to keep a check on such anomalies.

“Regular monitoring including periodical inspections by the Ministry will act as a deterrent for unscrupulous elements,” it said.

India has several tourism offices abroad which are primarily responsible for promoting the country abroad as a tourist destination.

## VIOLENCE

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

### **1984 anti-Sikh riots: Delhi HC dismisses Sajjan Kumar's plea for extension of time to surrender**



The Delhi High Court on Friday dismissed a plea of former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar, sentenced to life term for murder of five Sikhs during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, seeking 30 more days to surrender.

The High Court had earlier this week directed Kumar to surrender by December 31.

73-year-old Kumar, directed to serve the remainder of his life in jail for his involvement in 1984 riots, sought time till January 31 to

surrender saying that he “has a large family, certain properties and family matters to settle”.

However, a bench of Justice S. Muralidhar and Justice Vinod Goel refused to entertain the plea.

In his plea, Kumar said he was “at present under shock and surprise” in view of the High Court’s decision to convict him in a case in which he was acquitted by a trial court here in 2013.

He said he wanted to engage senior advocates in the Supreme Court, where the HC verdict could be appealed. Kumar, who was on bail throughout the span of the case proceeding, said he never flouted the bail condition.

“The applicant (Kumar) is the best person to brief his counsel and inform them about the facts. The applicant prays that he be granted further extension of 30 days so as to enable him to settle his family affairs to meet his close relatives, near and dear ones including friends who have been associated with him over a period of 73 years of his life,” his application said.

#### HC judgment

The case in which Kumar is convicted relates to killing of five Sikhs in Raj Nagar area within the jurisdiction of Police Station, Delhi Cantonment and burning down of a Gurudwara in the area.

The High Court overturned an April 2013 judgment of a trial court that had acquitted Kumar, saying he was the leader of the mob and actively

abetted the commission of crimes by his repeated exhortations to the mob to indulge in the mayhem and kill innocent Sikhs.

The court, in its judgment, had said that the riots were a “crime against humanity” perpetrated by those who enjoyed “political patronage” and aided by an “indifferent” law enforcement agency.

The court had said there has been a familiar pattern of mass killings since the Partition, like in Mumbai in 1993, Gujarat in 2002 and Muzaffarnagar, UP in 2013, and the “common” feature of each was the “targeting of minorities” with the attacks being “spearheaded by the dominant political actors, facilitated by the law enforcement agencies”.

The High Court relied mainly on the depositions of three witnesses — Jagdish Kaur, Jagsher Singh, and Nirpreet Kaur — noting that the accused in this case had been brought to justice primarily on account of their courage and perseverance.

Jagdish Kaur’s husband, son and three cousins were the five killed while Jagsher Singh was another cousin of Jagdish Kaur. Nirpreet Kaur saw the Gurudwara being burnt down and her father being burnt alive by the raging mobs.

## WATER POLLUTION

HINDU, DEC 23, 2018

### **Ganga clean at just one out of 39 locations: CPCB**



*The water quality of the river was either clean or slightly polluted at only four out of 41 locations during the pre-monsoon period and at only one out of 39 locations post-monsoon*

Only one out of 39 locations through which the Ganga river flows had clean water in the post-monsoon period this year, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has said in its latest study.

As many as 37 of the 41 locations through which the Ganga river flows reported moderate to severe **water pollution** in the pre-monsoon period this year, according to the 'Biological Water Quality Assessment

of the River Ganga (2017-18)' report that was recently made public by the CPCB in compliance with a Supreme Court direction.

The water quality of the river was either clean or slightly polluted at only four out of 41 locations during the pre-monsoon period and at only one out of 39 locations post-monsoon, it said, adding that Haridwar is the only location where the river was 'clean' in the post-monsoon period.

In the report, qualitative analysis of samples that were taken during pre- and post-monsoon period were analysed and put under five water quality classes — clean (A), slight pollution (B), moderate pollution (C), heavy pollution (D) and severe pollution (E).

According to the report, 34 areas showed moderate pollution in the river while three areas recorded severe pollution in the pre-monsoon period in 2017-18.

The report also said in Uttar Pradesh, two major tributaries, River Pandu and River Varuna, are increasing pollution load of the Ganga.

“On mainstream of River Ganga, although none of the locations were found to be severely polluted but most are in moderate pollution range,” the study said.

As many as 37 of the 41 locations through which the river flows, reported moderate to severe pollution in the pre-monsoon period this year, it said.

In another study titled Comparison of Biological Water Quality of River Ganga (2014-18), it was found that Ramganga and Garra river water was in heavy pollution range in post-monsoon season during 2017-18.

It showed hardly any improvement at most of the locations in the past four years. Water quality at some locations (Jagjeetpur in Uttarakhand and Kanpur, Allahabad and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh) had deteriorated in 2017-18 as compared to 2014-15, the study said.

In 2017-18, water quality at Haridwar Barrage was cleanest during both pre-and post-monsoon period while it was reported to be severely polluted at different monitoring locations in Kanpur and Varanasi during the pre-monsoon phase, it said.

# WOMEN

HINDU, DEC 21, 2018

## LS passes Bill banning commercial surrogacy



Set of baby and parent icons on textured backgrounds

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a Bill banning commercial surrogacy with penal provisions of jail term of up to 10 years and fine of up to 10 lakh.

The Bill, which will become law once the Rajya Sabha approves it, allows only close Indian relatives to be surrogate mothers and purely for

“altruistic” reasons. It states an Indian infertile couple, married for five years or more, can go in for ‘altruistic surrogacy’ where the surrogate mother will not be paid any compensation except medical expenses and insurance.

## **‘Historic legislation’**

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda termed the proposed legislation historic and thanked the members for a “high-quality” debate, despite noisy protests from the Congress, the TDP and the AIADMK. While the Congress raised the issue of a JPC probe into the Rafale deal, AIADMK members were protesting against the delay in constituting a Cauvery Water Board.

Opening the debate, Mr. Nadda said India had become a hub of commercial surrogacy and surrogate mothers were being exploited. The Minister claimed that the Bill had the support of every section of society, besides political parties, the Supreme Court and the Law Commission.

Dr. Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar of the Trinamool Congress, while supporting the Bill, suggested ways to improve it. “The hon. Supreme Court has recently decriminalised Section 377 and the LGBT community has been accepted to be a part of the mainstream. So, we have same- sex couples now. But, in this Bill, there is no mention of them,” she said.

The Trinamool MP also called for stopping “fashion surrogacy”, alleging that some celebrities were opting for it as they did not want their figures destroyed. Supriya Sule of the NCP urged the government to expand its scope as “the Bill is a good Bill but not modern enough.”

BJD's Bhartruhari Mahtab pointed out that it does not define who is a close relative.

Replying to the debate, Mr. Nadda said the definition of a close relative will be clearly given in the rules of the Bill. He, however, made it clear that only a defined mother and family can avail of surrogacy and it won't be permitted for live-in partners or single parents.

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