

DECEMBER DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS - 4th December -2019

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# 1) GST revenues not enough for States' compensation: Centre

## Letter to States flags falling collections

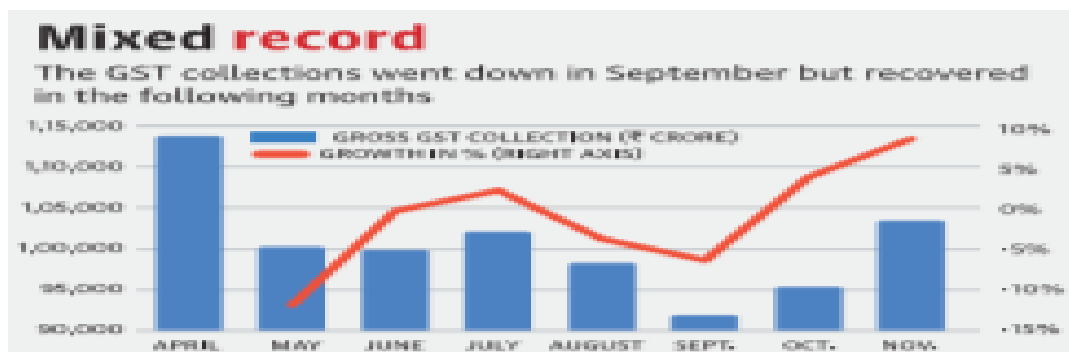
The Centre has written to all States voicing concern that due to the lower Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, the compensation cess might not be enough to pay for losses arising out of the tax system. **The communication comes at a time when several States, including Rajasthan, Kerala, Delhi, Punjab and West Bengal, have publicly urged the Centre to transfer pending compensation payments as they have not received the dues for several months.**

The government of Punjab has even said that it may take the matter to the Supreme Court if the Centre does not release the dues. The issue will be discussed in detail at the next GST Council meeting, scheduled for the second fort

night of December. "Among other issues, the GST revenue position shall be discussed in detail at this meeting," the Centre's letter to the States.

This situation assumes significance because it was the promise of compensation to the States for losses arising out of **GST implementation that convinced a large number of reluctant States to sign on to the new indirect tax regime.** The Centre had promised compensation for any shortfall in tax revenue due to GST implementation for a period of five years.

**The government had budgeted for ₹6,63,343 crore in GST collections for the current financial year 2019-20, out of which it has collected only about 50% in the first eight months. It had targeted ₹1,09,343 crore of compensation cess collections, of which it has so far collected ₹64,528 crore.**



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## 2) Citizenship Bill likely next week

**BJP cracks whip; Rajnath Singh asks MPs to ensure their presence in Parliament & BJP cracks whip ahead of Citizenship bill**

BJP MPs were warned against absenteeism by **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** at the parliamentary party meeting on Tuesday. He said the presence of MPs was to be strictly ensured as the government would be tabling the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) next week. **The Bill is expected to be cleared by the Cabinet on Wednesday.**

A significant portion of Mr Singh's address also referred to cautioning BJP MPs against using unparliamentary language during their intervention in Parliament and said they should be aggressive in countering the Opposition but not go to the extent of what the Congress, the BJP's main rival, does. His remarks came against the backdrop of party MP Pragya Thakur being forced to apologise in the Lok Sabha for her comments on Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse.

**the set of legislation that nullified provisions of Article 370**

the last session. Curbing the use of unparliamentary language was also flagged by Mr. Singh, who said Mr. Modi had expressed dissatisfaction on the lack of attendance by party MPs.

Sources said **Mr. Singh rejected the Opposition's criticism of the CAB, which seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan if they faced religious persecution there.** He asserted that the BJP "has always worked to unite the country and its people". The Minister also made a reference to the charge that the Bill was against secularism as Muslims are not among its beneficiaries. **"The three neighbouring countries are essentially Islamic nations, and so it is non-Muslims and not Muslims who are at the receiving end of religious persecution there,"** sources quoted the Defence Minister as saying, while asking the MPs to be present in full strength when Union Home Minister Amit Shah tables the Bill.

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### 3) India tests Swedish technology to reduce stubble burning

#### Foreign firm launches its first pilot project plant in Punjab

Pollution from stubble burning in winter is the key contributor to the sharp decline in air quality in Delhi. But stubble burning continues unabated. To find a solution to this issue, India is testing a Swedish technology – torrefaction that can convert rice stubble into 'biocoal'. The Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to Government of India has funded a pilot project in Punjab to evaluate the feasibility of the technology. Bioendev, a Swedish company, has set up a pilot plant at the National AgriFood Biotechnology Institute in Mohali.

“We have a very small plant at Mohali but we are hoping to make a plant that can treat 30,000 tons [of residue] per annum,” said Mr.Singh. So far the technology has only been substantially tested in Scandivia as a 16,000 ton/year plant

The Bioendev project was discussed at a gathering on Tuesday, chaired by King Carl Gustaf XVI of Sweden. Swedish and senior Indian government officials, academics and representatives from companies and nongovernmental organisations were also present.



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#### **4) National shame**

**Gender sensitisation and wider societal changes are needed to end sex crimes**

**Last week's brutal rape and murder of a 26yearold veterinarian in Hyderabad has led to an outpouring of anger across the country and in Parliament. Several MPs questioned the adequacy of criminal laws and a judicial system that permits underage convicts to get away with lenient punishment and others sentenced to death to escape the noose through mercy petitions. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the government was "ready to make more stringent provisions in law". After the 2012 Nirbhaya outrage in Delhi, and on the recommendations of the Justice J.S. Verma Committee, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 was passed, by bringing in changes to the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.**

**As protests rocked Hyderabad demanding speedy justice, four lorry workers, arrested on charges of raping and killing the veterinarian returning from work, were kept in solitary confinement. After the Nirbhaya incident, the UN Human Rights chief had called rape and violence against women in India a "national problem" which would need "national solutions". Unfortunately, in the past week, rapes and assault have been reported from Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.**

**National Crime Records Bureau which released its 2017 data this October said a total of 3.59 lakh cases of crimes against women were reported, a 6% rise compared to 2016. Of this, assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty comprised 21.7%, and rape 7%. For every rape reported, there are many which go unrecorded as patriarchal mindsets remain unchanged. A suggestion by an MP that rapists "must be brought out in public and lynched" is hardly the answer. Better policing, fast track courts, quick sentencing are the need of the hour as each can serve as a deterrent. What should be included in every curriculum is gender sensitisation, right from school. Public places must be made safer for all. Boys and girls should be raised right in an atmosphere of freedom and a culture of mutual respect. The cycle of rapes, outrage and amnesia must end.**

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## 5) DRDO to develop naval fighter jet

'It will be a deck based aircraft'



The Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) has offered to develop a **new twinengine deckbased fighter aircraft** for the Navy based on the experience of the naval light combat aircraft (LCA) and **it should be ready by 2026, the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Karambir Singh, said on Tuesday. He said the Navy expected to have the first indigenous aircraft carrier (IACI) Vikrant operational by 2022.**

The naval LCA recently successfully completed the takeoff and landing trials on the shorebased test facility (SBTF) in Goa

current LCA Mk1 was a technology demonstrator and it would further be put to carrier compatibility tests.

**New aircraft carrier-** the case for IAC2 and finalising the requirements. After this, they would go to the government for Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) and it would be followed by design consultancy to decide the exact contours

On the IACI, which is under an advanced stage of construction in Kochi, Adm. Singh said all shipbuild issues "are over" and trials would begin now. "We are almost certain that we will take delivery by FebruaryMarch 2021, he stated and added that aviation trials would take a year after that. "We should have a fully operational carrier by 2022."

**The Navy is scheduled to host its largest multilateral exercise, MILAN off the coast of Visakhapatnam in March 2020, for which 41 countries have been invited. So far, over 15 countries have confirmed their participation. However, China has not been invited.**

