Goondas can't claim human rights, public parade justified: MP CM

BHOPAL, MARCH 30 /--/ Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today sought to justify instances of public parade of criminals by the police, asserting "goondas" have no human rights and that the state government had zero tolerance for crimes against women.

Chouhan said that those who eve-tease and harass girls and women and make it difficult for them to step out of their homes cannot claim human rights. "There are no human rights of goondas (anti-social elements)," he told newspersons here. "The state government has zero tolerance for crimes against women." On March 25, the police had arrested and publicly paraded four men for allegedly raping a collegian here and several women bystanders had also slapped the accused. The chief minister today said that 92 per cent of rape cases had involvement of relatives, family members or acquaintances. Replying to a query on implementing a commissionerate system of policing for Bhopal and Indore, Chouhan said all steps would be taken to ensure public safety and security.

On the death of journalist Sandeep Sharma, who was run over by a truck at the Ater Road in Bhind on March 26, Chouhan said, "If required, we will enact a law to ensure the safety of journalists," he said. The MP CM announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh to Sharma's family. Sharma had complained about a threat to his life after he conducted a sting operation against sand mafia. Asked about the police allegedly dilly-dallying a case related to the suicide of a woman, whose kin had claimed she was married to the son of PWD minister Rampal Singh, Chouhan said: "Law will take its own course." He also announced the state government would set up an agency to promote the export of farm produce. "Agricultural production has gone up in the state and the government is now making efforts to provide beneficial prices to farmers. We are planning to set up an agency to explore the export of agricultural produce."

He said there was no anti-incumbency against the government in the state and that recent defeats of the BJP in bypolls could not be taken as an indicator of it. "But we have taken the outcome of these polls seriously." "Wherever I visit, I see the response of the people. They love me and appreciate the state government. There is no anti-incumbency," he claimed. Earlier in the day, the chief minister participated in a police event on women's safety and security.

MP Guv calls for CCTV surveillance for varsity exams

INDORE, MARCH 30 /--/ Madhya Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel today said the coming examinations of government-run universities in the state should be conducted under the surveillance of CCTV cameras.

Being the governor, Patel is the Chancellor of all the universities run by the state government. Speaking at the convocation of Devi Ahilya University here, she said, "CCTV cameras should be installed in all buildings of the state-run universities where written or oral examinations will be conducted in the coming days."

This would ensure a transparent examination system, Patel said. Vice chancellors of all the universities have been asked to visit Bhopal on April 6 and present annual calendars of their respective institutions, Patel said.

The calendar is supposed to have the schedule of examinations, deadline for declaration of results and details of academic and cultural activities planned for the coming year. Universities should change the curriculum according to the need of the times and also introduce new courses, the governor said. Hailing the Union government's campaigns to promote cleanliness and water conservation, the former Gujarat chief minister said that research for PhD should be encouraged in these areas.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Minister for Defence Nirmala Sitharaman,Minister of State for Defence Dr. Subhash Ramrao Bhamre and other dignitaries, at the Defence Investiture Ceremony–I, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi

CAG slams Gujarat govt over salinity control measures

AHMEDABAD, MARCH 30 /--/ The CAG has expressed dissatisfaction over the Gujarat government's efforts to control salinity ingress in coastal areas, saying the delay in implementing various works has escalated the project cost by 455 per cent.

A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on the Salinity Ingress Prevention Scheme (SIPS) was tabled in the state Legislative Assembly on Wednesday. The government has not enacted a law in this regard despite being recommended by a high-level committee (HLC) almost 40 years ago, it pointed out. The CAG noted that the state government had appointed two HLCs in 1976 and 1978 to study the problem and suggest appropriate measures to save ground water in coastal areas from getting affected by the ingress of sea water towards land.

Both these HLCs submitted their reports, having various recommendations, between 1978 and 1984, the CAG said, adding all these reports were accepted by the Gujarat government in the subsequent years. The recommendations included construction of tidal regulators or "bandharas", check dams, recharge wells and reservoirs, tidal-cum-demonstration (TCD) farms, afforestation and coastal land reclamation.

But, when the CAG conducted its audit on the status of the implementation of recommendations under SIPS, it found that "except in case of check dams and recharge wells, the progress of works was very slow even after lapse of 25 to 39 years since the acceptance of reports of HLCs".

The CAG said, "No or limited action was taken for the establishment of tidal-cum-demonstration farms, coastal land reclamation, gully plugging and afforestation." "Even the plan document, detailed project report and budget estimates were not prepared for these activities," it said.

The apex auditor also said that as against the original cost of Rs 789.65 crore, which was estimated for the project by HLCs, an expenditure of Rs 1,045.65 crore was incurred up to March 2017. "For the remaining works, the estimate was revised to Rs 2,544.79 crore. Thus, due to the delay in implementation of the recommended works, cost of scheme escalated by 455 per cent," the CAG said.

The CAG also noted that though the HLCs, way back in 1978, recommended enacting a law "to impose control on the excessive use of ground water", no such legislation was brought by the government as on end of 2017.

The CAG rapped Gujarat for failing to bring such a law and observed that such a legislation had already been enacted and implemented in states like Goa, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal. "But, it was not enacted and implemented by Gujarat.

Thus, the fact remains that no management techniques recommended by the HLCs have been implemented even after a lapse of 25 to 39 years of its acceptance by the state government," the CAG noted.

Villagers tonsure heads of 3 men accused of killing cow in MP

ALIRAJPUR, MARCH 30 /--/ Police in Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh have arrested three men for allegedly killing a cow. Angry locals tonsured the accused's heads before handing them over to police yesterday, said a senior police officer here.

District Superintendent of Police Vipul Khare said that Imran (21), Indu Bhuria (21) and Mangu Bhuria (20) were arrested for allegedly killing a cow at Nehtada village under Jobat police station limits, 38 km from here.

They were arrested under IPC section 379 (theft) and provisions of the Madhya Pradesh Cow Slaughter Prohibition Act.

Imran allegedly slaughtered the animal, belonging to one Nihal Singh, after stealing it, and kept the meat in the houses of Mangu and Indu.

After the alleged theft and slaughter came to light, angry villagers tonsured the three men's heads before handing them over to police, the SP said. "Police have seized the meat and sent samples for testing (to check if it's beef)," said Khare.

The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar at the inauguration of the Smart India Hackathon 2018, in New Delhi

College students bust crackers, offer 'condolence' to woman principal

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 30 /--/ A section of students of an aided college burst crackers and displayed 'condolence' messages in the campus as a farewell to the retiring woman principal in northern Kasaragod district, triggering a controversy.

The incident came to the media limelight after a video of students bursting crackers and the message put at the auditorium of the Nehru Arts and Science College at Kanhangadu in the district, went viral on the social media.

The handwritten message says "condolence to the principal who died in the hearts of students...."Reacting to the incident earlier this week, P V Pushpaja, the principal,said "it is very painful for me in the 40 years of my teaching career to get such a response from the students whom I considered as my children." The principal, who is retiring next month, said she was yet to recover from the shock of the turn of events. Pushpaja alleged that members of the Students Federation of India (SFI), the students wing of the ruling CPI(M), was behind the act.

There were differences of opinion between the principal and the members of the outfit on various issues. "I am sure SFI activists were behind the act. I will decide the legal steps against this after consulting with the college management," she told TV channels. However, the SFI leadership said the outfit would not agree with such kind of acts by its members and would take stringent measures if anybody in the outfit were found to be guilty.

Opposition leader in the Assembly Ramesh Chennithala and KPCC president M M Hassan condemned the incident.

Chennithala, in a Facebook post, said the act was a "disgrace to the literate Kerala." In 2016, members of SFI had courted controversy after allegedly preparing a symbolic 'grave' for the woman principal as a 'retirement gift' at the Government Victoria College, Palakkad. (PTI)

Private medical colleges asked to roll back fee in Uttarakhand

DEHRADUN, MARCH 30 /--/ Private medical colleges in Uttarakhand have been asked to rollback the manifold hike in their annual fees, chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said.

He told reporters here that the decision was taken in the interest of medical students who found it hard to meet the expenses. "A direction to this effect was issued after students of private medical colleges here and their guardians approached me with a request citing ill-affordability of the raised fees," he said. However, the chief minister said the recent hike was effected by the administration of private medical colleges as they had to spend a lot over strengthening their infrastructure.

The students of the private medical colleges in the state, including those of the SGRR Medical College, were up in arms against the authorities for the hike staging dharnas to demand a rollback. Rawat also warned that arbitrary action by any institutions in the state will not be tolerated. "If any of them act arbitrarily they will be sternly dealt with," he said.

Four Keralites suspected to have joined IS reportedly killed

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 30 /--/ A family of three and another person from Kasaragod district of Kerala, suspected to have joined terror outfit Islamic State, have been reportedly killed, according to information reaching one of the relatives of the deceased.

The deceased were among the 21 persons from Kasaragod district who went missing and later reportedly joined the ISIS in 2016. One of the relatives of the deceased has received a message that that they have been killed, Kasaragod district panchayat member V P P Mustafa said. But there were no details about how it happened, source of the information or from where it came, he told PTI. When contacted, police also confirmed that such a message had been received three days ago.

As per the information, the deceased were Shihas, his wife Ajmala and their child, all hailing from Padana, and Muhammed Mansad from Thrikaripur in Kasaragod district. The National Investigation Agency has been probing the case of the missing Keralites, suspected to have joined the terror group. Among them, 17 were from Kasaragod and four from Palakkad.They include four women and three children. As per reports, these people had gone to Syria and Afghanistan and later reached the terror camps.

Sena questions Fadnavis' announcement of 72,000 Maharashtra govt jobs

MUMBAI, MARCH 30 /--/ The Shiv Sena today took a dig at chief minister Devendra Fadnavis over his announcement to provide government jobs to 72,000 people asking him to make public names of those who would get these jobs. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly on the last day of the Budget session, Fadnavis had announced that 72,000 posts in the government would be filled in the next two years. He had added that the induction would be done in two phases, with 36,000 posts being filled in the first year. Fadnavis had said posts will be filled in the Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Development, Home and Urban Development departments. In an editorial in party mouthpiece 'Saamana', the Sena said that the BJP government, when it came to power in 2014, had promised to create 20 lakh jobs in five years. "How many people have actually got jobs before the government announced a lottery to fill up its empty posts? The government had also announced homes for the poor and police personnel. There was also an announcement of a loan waiver. But none of the announcements have been implemented," it said.

"The government should make the list of 36,000 people who will be given jobs in government departments public," the Sena said. It alleged that unemployment numbers in the state were high while businesses were moving out to other states. (PTI)

L-G has 'objected' to Teerth Yatra scheme, claims AAP minister

NEW DELHI, MARCH 30 /--/ Delhi Revenue minister Kailash Gahlot today alleged that the Lt Governor had "objected" to the government's proposed "Teerth Yatra" scheme for the elderly, prompting chief minister Arvind Kejriwal to accuse the L-G of "obstructing" every AAP project. Under the scheme, which was proposed in the 2018-19 Delhi Budget, the Kejriwal government plans to send senior citizens on pilgrimage for free of cost. The chief minister also asked the BJP not to "obstruct" his government's work. "I feel v v sad that LG is practically obstructing every scheme and every project of Del Govt. How do we run govt like this? My appeal to BJP - Don't obstruct our work. I challenge your govts in other states to compete with us in work (sic)," Kejriwal said on Twitter. The Delhi government has proposed to set aside Rs 53 crore for the scheme that aims to send 77,000 elderly people, who are bona-fide residents of Delhi, on religious trips. Gahlot alleged that Lt Governor (L-G) Anil Baijal "objected" to the scheme and said it should be "restricted" to people in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category. Baijal has forgotten that many children do not support their old parents, who will be happy to avail the government's scheme, he said. "Now LG objects to Teerth Yatra Yojana . LG wants it to be restricted to BPL. LG forgets that many children do not support their old parents. "They would be happy to receive govt support. And every govt facility should not be restricted only to BPL (sic)," the minister tweeted.

Chhattisgarh govt not providing security to Baghel: Cong

RAIPUR, MARCH 30 /--/ The opposition Congress in Chhattisgarh today alleged the BJP government was not providing adequate security to the party's state unit chief, Bhupesh Baghel.

No police protection was provided to Baghel during his recent visits to Mahasamund, Bemetara, Balodabazar and Mungeli districts, Congress spokesperson Shailesh Nitin Trivedi said in a statement here.

Trivedi said he had written a letter to the Director General of Police, pointing out this lapse. The Congress leader pointed out that Assembly elections are due in Chhattisgarh this year. In 2013, prior to the last polls, security was provided to the Congress' `Parivartan Yatra' when it passed through Bijapur and Dantewada, but the same was not done in Sukma district, where it faced a major Naxal attack in Jiram Valley, Trivedi recalled.

Even now, Baghel was being provided protection in some areas and denied in others, he said, adding the Congress believes there is a threat to Baghel's life.

Twenty-nine people, including then state Congress chief Nandkumar Patel and former Union minister V C Shukla, were killed in the Jiram Valley attack on May 25, 2013. (PTI)