Soniasm&rsquo;s virtual meet with Oppn CMs on NEET, GST today

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CONGRESS PRESIDENT Sonia Gandhi will hold a video conference with Opposition Chief Ministers, including West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray, on Wednesday to mount pressure on the government for postponement of JEE and NEET exams in view of Covid-19.

With the GST council scheduled to meet Thursday, the leaders will also discuss the issue of the Centre reportedly securing the Attorney General&rsquo;s opinion that it is under no obligation to pay the GST compensation shortfall to the states. At a press meet Tuesday, Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Badal said not paying compensation to states is akin to a sovereign default and is in disregard of the Constitution.

Congress Chief Ministers Amarinder Singh, Ashok Gehlot, Bhumesh Baghel and V Narayanasamy, and Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren will attend the virtual meet. It is not known if Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been invited.

Sources in the Congress said the leaders could also discuss “attacks on the federal structure”, the draft Environment Impact Assessment and the National Education Policy.

Addressing a press meet, Badal, former Karnataka finance minister Krishna Byre Gowda and Congress leader Rajeev Gowda raised the issue of financial health of the states and demanded that the Centre share revenues fairly.

“Any borrowing that needs to be done to help tide over the Covid crisis must be done by the central government. It can raise resources at lower cost and can bear the debt burden better than states. Reduce the reliance on cesses and share the revenues fairly. It is high time that the Centre-state fund sharing formula from Finance Commissions becomes a reality,” they said in a statement.