

## **Business and Politics in Muslim World**

**India**  
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## **National Summary:**

BJP is not happy with government's policies to improve minorities' status in the country as BJP president Nitin Gadkari criticized the Congress for its "minority appeasement" policy saying this is a threat to the country's unity and will create a divide between the so called majority and minority. The BJP leader also hit out at the Congress for "sheltering" infiltrators from neighboring Bangladesh rising inflation.

The SP and the RJD are committed to oppose the Women's Reservation Bill in its present form at an all-party meeting convened by the government and stick to their demand for quota for Muslim women and backward classes.

Home minister P Chidambaram accepted "full responsibility" for the Dantewada massacre of a CRPF contingent by Naxalites, while all political parties condemned the incident and killing.

The VHP once again wants to disturb communal harmony by raising Ram temple issue as the verdict is expected by year-end from the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court in the main title deed case related to the disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid complex. Muslim community is not interested in any clash and determined to accept the court verdict.

Maoist rebels killed 74 members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and two policemen from the Chhattisgarh police, and destroyed an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) in Dantewada district. The attack took place in the Mukrana forest, about 540 km southeast of the State (Chhattisgarh) capital Raipur when the force was returning to base camp after a three-day area domination exercise.

It is revealed by Special Investigation Team interrogation of suspected Naxalites in Gujarat that international Maoist groups are involved in the arms training of Indian Mao rebels and one such session was held in the forests of Kerala. Surat Range IGP A K Singh told that interrogation of Bharat Puwar and Sulat Puwar, who were allegedly involved in Naxal activity in Dangs district, has revealed that members of the Communist Party of Philippines (CPP) had trained a batch of 25 tribals from various parts of the country in guerrilla warfare and the use of arms, ammunition and explosives.

Qatar is interested to invest in Indian energy sector. According to the report, a delegation from India will soon visit Qatar to discuss prospects for investment.

Salman Khurshid, Minister of State for Corporate and Minority Affairs has said reverse brain drain to country has begun and it is a great sign of the world's confidence in India and its recognition of India's potential. Many second-generation Indians are coming back to the country. Top multinationals are sending their top Indian minds to head their companies in India.

After the February 25 fruitless Foreign Secretary-level talks, India is willing to have the second round of talks but is yet to get any response from Pakistan's side. Water issue is getting critical as India refused to accept that it is violating Indus Water Treaty by constructing illegal

water reservoirs on Pakistan's share of water resources. Indian authorities claim that fault lies with Pakistan's poor management of water resources as it has very short water storage dams and reservoirs.

India wants to join Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as it is an important regional organization. The government had asked the missions in four central Asian countries, Russia and China to explore the nature of rule changes for joining the SCO that are under way. India's inclination comes amid the SCO's plan to take into its fold more countries from the near neighbourhood, including Pakistan and possibly Iran.

India seeks China's support for permanent membership of Security Council. External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna's visit to China is focused on two issues; China's investment in Azad Kashmir and improvement of ties with China to increase cooperation in different fields.

A railway track was blown up in Indian held Kashmir. . An Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was triggered, probably using a remote-control device, which left a three-foot crater on the tracks, police said.

Separatist leaders of Indian held Kashmir advised people to participate in census. In a shift from their past stand, separatists have not asked people to boycott the Census. On the contrary, they have asked them to actively participate in the exercise. The reason for this shift is the separatists' concern that the Muslim majority status of J&K is being eroded. Chairman of Hurriyat's hard-line faction Syed Ali Shah Geelani hinted he wasn't opposed to the exercise by saying, "There are concerted efforts under a pre-planned conspiracy to reduce the Muslim majority status of the state. The Census is being carried out by the employees from outside the state and they have been tasked to erode the Muslim majority status of the state." Geelani said Muslims were 85 per cent of J&K's population before 1947 "but in the subsequent censuses of 1961 and 1981, it (Muslim population) was put at 69 per cent and 64.5 per cent respectively."

According to the Annual Flow Report released by the US Department of Homeland Security the number of Indians receiving the coveted Green Card or the Legal Permanent Residency status in the US has experienced a considerable decline in the past three years. Latest official figures released showed that the number of Indians being granted the Green Card has declined each year since 2007. In 2009, as many as 57,309 Indians received the Green Card, while in 2008 the figure was 63,352 and the previous year in 2007 as many as 65,353 Indians had received the Legal Permanent Residency Status. India was, however, among the top five countries who provided the maximum number of LPRs to the US in 2009.

### **Regional Summary:**

Opposition parties included Congress held protest in Chhattisgarh on Thursday against the massacre of 76 troopers by Maoist guerrillas. The shutdown hit life in the five districts-Dantewada, Bijapur, Narayanpur, Bastar and Kanker. Schools remained closed across the state while shopkeepers downed their shutters as a mark of protest. Chhattisgarh state Congress president Dhanendra Sahu told reporters here that the strike was called to protest the flawed policies of the state's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) that resulted in the the killing of 76

troopers Tuesday in the biggest ever attack carried by Maoists.

Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee announced that the state government will implement 10 per cent Muslim reservation in government jobs at the earliest. He argued that if Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be provided with reservation, why Muslims can't be provided the same as they are equally backward. Stressing on the overall minority development, the CM also announced that in 12 districts of the state, Rs 500 crore would be spent as Multi-Sectoral Development Fund for the overall development of minorities.

The World Bank is ready to give a massive grant to the tune of Rs. 1,000 crore to develop the city traffic and public transportation infrastructure. World Bank team identified measures necessary to improve road network, signages, public transport, pedestrian facilities, multi-level parking et al, senior civic officials concluded that a whopping Rs. 4,128 crore was required for the same. The large-scale perspective plan was prepared for seeking funds under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

Kerala has decided to seek Rs 165 crore as assistance from the Centre to tackle drought conditions. According to Revenue Minister K P Rajendran, the state wanted central support of Rs 115.69 crore for maintaining water supply through short-term schemes in drought-hit areas.

Sudhir Mungantiwar was unanimously elected Maharashtra BJP president at the party's State convention, which began at Jalgaon on Friday.

The relocation of slums from the riverfront development area spanning from Subhash Bridge to Sardar Bridge is expected to adversely impact attendance in at least 10 municipal schools. Nearly 4,000 children will feel the pinch from the coming academic session.

## **National Report**

### **Politics:**

#### **Centre's minority policy threatening India's unity: BJP**

BJP president Nitin Gadkari on Monday criticised the Congress for its "minority appeasement" policy saying this was threatening the country's unity. "The minority appeasement policy has threatened to break the fabric of the nation as well its unity and integrity," Gadkari told a public rally in Guwahati. "What is the necessity of appeasing the minority community and create a divide between the so called majority and minority," he said. Gadkari also charged the Congress with following another policy of appeasement of terrorists. "There has been no terror attack in the US after the 9/11 attack but in our country this has unfortunately become the order of the day thanks to this policy of the ruling party," he said. Gadkari said BJP always stood for nationalism and the erstwhile NDA regime dealt sternly with any attempt to divide the country. The BJP leader also hit out at the Congress for "sheltering" infiltrators from neighbouring Bangladesh. "No other country in the world allows infiltrators to settle down and make it their home. This is only seen in our country where thousands and thousands of Bangladeshi infiltrators are residing." He said Congress was doing it in the interest of protecting its vote bank, adding the problem of infiltrators has assumed dangerous proportion in Assam. He also said the wrong economic policies of the Congress and the UPA and bad governance have given rise to price rise. Gadkari said India had the highest rate of 11 per cent inflation. He also gave comparative figures of prices of essential commodities during the NDA and the UPA regimes and claimed that the stable political situation during NDA did not allow prices to rise. (The Indian Express)

#### **SP, RJD to oppose Women's Bill at all-party meet**

The SP and the RJD on Monday said they would oppose the Women's Reservation Bill in its present form at an all-party meeting convened by the government and stick to their demand for quota for Muslim women and backward classes. Ahead of the meeting convened by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, who is Leader of Lok Sabha, to find a way out of the impasse on the bill in the Lower House, SP leader Mulayam Singh Yadav and RJD chief Lalu Prasad said while they were not against reservation for women, they would insist on their stand of "reservation within reservation". Rajya Sabha had last month passed the Constitution amendment bill providing for 33 per cent reservation for women in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. "We have opposed the Bill in its present form. We are not opposed to reservation for women," the SP supremo said. Mulayam said that the bill envisaged rotation of the seats reserved for women and it is possible that in a House with 543 seats, women will fight in over 181 seats. In such a scenario, it is possible that just around 50 of seats could be contested by men in the elections, he said. Lalu Prasad said, "We will not oppose reservation. We will stick to our old stand of reservation within reservation. The bill must include reservation for Muslim women, women from backward classes and dalits." CPI (M) leader Brinda Karat, however, made it clear that her party will press for the passage of the bill in the present session itself. Congress spokesman Abhishek Manu Singhvi said that in a matter where there is such a large volume of bipartisan support, the strategy should be discussed. The bill is expected to be taken up for consideration in Lok Sabha when it resumes the budget session on April 15. Singhvi said while the strategy to be adopted in Lok Sabha should be fine-tuned, there was no reason why there should be any problem on the issue of the fundamental principle. "If you don't have such strategy meetings,

then you are accused of not carrying other parties with you. And if you do have them, questions start arising," he said, adding that the approach is to find a constructive solution to ensure the bottom line result which is to get the bill passed. The government is keen on pushing ahead with the bill but is said to be averse to using force for the purpose because of the stature of the opponents. In the Rajya Sabha, marshals were used to remove obstructing members but the decision came in for severe attack later. Law Minister M Veerappa Moily said last week that the government is going ahead with the bill in its present form in Lok Sabha in the second phase of the Budget session beginning April 15. He denied that there would be any changes in the bill. (The Indian Express)

### **Naxal attack a challenge to democratic system: Congress**

The Maoist attack at Dantewada saw the two main political parties – the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party – in a role reversal of sorts. While the Congress wondered whether a political solution was not the better option, the BJP said the attack was nothing short of a declaration of war against the nation and must be dealt with as such. Congress media in-charge Janardan Dwivedi said: "Whatever happened is most inhuman, condemnable and an attack on India's civil society ... it is a challenge to our democratic system. All State governments must tackle the problem with all the seriousness it deserves and cooperate with the Centre." However, privately, senior Congressmen felt that Home Minister P. Chidambaram had unnecessarily used provocative language like "we will wipe them out" when talking about Naxals. It was pointed out that the Congress Working Committee resolution on the subject speaks of a political solution as also an option. One leader said terrorism and Naxalism could not be dealt alike. Negotiation was an option in dealing with Naxals and one cannot forget that they enjoyed some support from people. The BJP, on the other hand, made it clear it stood solidly with the Home Minister and the State governments fighting Naxalism. It was a war which "we must fight to the finish," party spokesperson Rajiv Pratap Rudy said, echoing what the Home Minister has been saying. The BJP did not see the issue politically, but wanted the government to take every step possible to end the continuing deadly attacks by Naxals bleeding the country internally. "We are fighting on our borders, and inside the country we are fighting Naxalism. It is a war, which must be fought and won. The country is under threat. Naxal attacks were not a string of separate incidents," Mr. Rudy said. Acutely conscious of the fact that the latest deadly attack occurred in Chhattisgarh, ruled by the BJP, Mr. Rudy was not for debate and discussion with Naxal leaders. That time was over, he said. He did not want to discuss the 'salwa judum' experiment in Chhattisgarh that has been criticised by many civil rights groups. Of the 230 districts in the country affected by Naxalism, as many as 90 were seriously affected, Mr. Rudy pointed out. "We have to learn to hit them hard. The country is angry, very angry. We have to finish them and stop the loss of innocent lives." Mr. Rudy did not want to be drawn into commenting on the recent exchange of words between Home Minister P. Chidambaram and the West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya on where the "buck" stops on this question. However, late in the evening, senior BJP leader Arun Jaitley took on Mr. Chidambaram, saying the "buck" definitely stops on the Home Minister's table. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) chose to remain silent on Tuesday while indicating that it would find out more about what had happened and then react. (The Hindu)



### **This is no time for blame, offer full support: Buddhadeb**

Within hours of home minister P Chidambaram accepting "full responsibility" for the Dantewada Maoist massacre, a mollified West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee on Friday extended his full support to the central government to deal with the rebels, saying this was not the time for a blame game. "This is not a time to blame any one. It is the time to work together. We must work collectively," said Bhattacharjee, addressing reporters at the Banga Bhavan in the capital. He was answering questions by reporters asking for his reaction to Chidambaram's remark accepting "full responsibility" for the Maoist massacre of 76 security personnel in Chhattisgarh and that the "buck stops at my desk". Bhattacharjee said he had discussed the issue of Maoist violence with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and would speak with him again after the prime minister returns from his visit to the US and Brazil. "Until and unless we work collectively, it will be very difficult to deal with Maoist violence," the chief minister told reporters here. On Monday, Bhattacharjee had slammed Chidambaram for saying that the "buck should stop at the chief minister's table" on checking inter-party clashes in West Bengal. An angry Bhattacharjee had said Chidambaram's remark was not the "language of politicians". He had even asked the home minister to mind his words. "What is the situation in the country now? He should perform his own duty. I am carrying out my responsibilities," the chief minister had said. "I know the responsibility is mine no doubt, but the language is not good. It (buck) is slang. Such language is not used by politicians," Bhattacharjee had told reporters. (Times of India)

### **I accept full responsibility for Dantewada: Chidambaram**

Home minister P Chidambaram on Friday accepted "full responsibility" for the Dantewada massacre of a CRPF contingent by Naxalites and said the "buck stops at my desk". "I have been asked directly or indirectly where the buck stops after the attack. The buck stops at my desk," he said at a CRPF function. Chidambaram said after his return from Dantewada in Chhattisgarh on Wednesday, a day after the massacre of 75 CRPF men and a state policeman in the Naxal strike, he had given it in writing to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that "I accept full responsibility". He did not go any further, saying, "Let me not elaborate." Addressing the 'Shourya Diwas' (valour day) of CRPF, Chidambaram lauded the sacrifices of the paramilitary force and said the government was trying to ensure that personnel from it were well-paid, well-housed and well-equipped. He also said his Ministry will ensure that the families of slain jawans received compensation by the end of this month and one member from each of them got a job. Noting that the government will always stand by the security forces, the Home Minister said they performed duties so that people could live in freedom, liberty and democracy. "I am proud of the innumerable duties the CRPF is called upon to perform. I salute all those who laid down their lives and my heart goes out to their families," Chidambaram said. (Times of India)

### **Cabinet clears anti-torture bill**

The Cabinet on Thursday cleared the long-pending Prevention of Torture Bill for introduction in Parliament with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh strongly backing the proposed law despite some misgivings that such a law could demoralize security forces after the Dantewada killings. Though enacting the law is a step towards ratification of the UN convention against other cruel, inhuman punishment and degrading treatment, and has been pending for some time now, the

timing of the bill gave rise to a question or two at the Cabinet meeting. The argument was clinched as the PM pointed to the need for a law that underscored India's respect for human rights even as the government had promised to bring to book those guilty of killing 76 security personnel in a ruthless ambush on Tuesday. Singh has been particular that a detailed law be enacted to define torture, both physical and mental, that would attract penal action. The proposed law has been hanging fire as over the past year, it was first suggested by home ministry that some changes in IPC would suffice. It was then argued that changes in the Evidence Act would also be needed. As it was felt that no less than three-four laws would have to be altered, the PM went along with a new law being framed. The prevention of torture law is intended to align Indian law with the UN convention and India is now only one of a handful of signatory nations not to do so. The ratification of the convention will enable provisions in the convention to be part of Indian law. Though some of these exist in Indian law, they do not define "torture" as closely as the convention does. The Cabinet decision is significant as government is keen to counter allegations that counter-insurgency operations can target innocent villagers in remote tribal areas and that the heavy hand of the state was responsible for the growth of Naxalism. The PM has stressed zero tolerance for human rights violations in all insurgency-hit areas including Jammu and Kashmir. Keen to make sure that Maoists, who display no compunctions in killing security personnel or even tribals — whose rights they claim to represent — on the suspicion of being informers, do not gain propaganda advantage, the PM wants Indian agencies to run a tight ship. The prevention of torture law is a much-needed step to embellish India's credentials as a country with a sound criminal justice system. The need to ensure respect for the law by the law enforcers themselves and the bill has been brought to the Cabinet after lengthy examination by the law commission of India and the attorney general, said an official statement. With a lot of deliberation preceding the proposed legislation, the PM felt that it should not be shelved due to the violent actions of insurgents who in any case do not believe in democratic practices. (Times of India)

### **Minorities' Issues:**

#### **Hindu Fundamentalism:**

#### **VHP gets ready to hype Ram temple issue**

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad is getting ready to once again raise the Ram temple issue to fever pitch against the backdrop of an expected verdict by year-end from the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court in the main title deed case related to the disputed Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid complex. Champak Rai, RSS point man for overseeing the legal battle, confirmed that at a scheduled meeting in Haridwar in July a decision could be taken to revive the temple issue. Muslim parties to the dispute have already completed their arguments before a three-judge Bench. The other parties are expected to conclude their arguments by July. And a judge has already announced that the ruling could come within three-four months of the conclusion of arguments. Zafaryab Jilani, one of the prominent lawyers fighting the case on behalf of Muslims, told The Hindu: "We expect a verdict by year-end. We expect and hope it would be unbiased, based on evidence and according to law." As for the VHP trying to whip up religious sentiments all over again, he said that since 2002 the BJP and the rest of the sangh parivar have not been able to get any response from Hindus. "The response they expect will come only if we [the

Muslims] react. And we are determined not to react.” The case before the Lucknow Bench is moving apace even as witnesses are being examined in the related case of Babri Masjid demolition, which is also showing signs of movement after stagnating over technical wrangles for more than 15 years. The parties to the main Ayodhya dispute know and acknowledge that as and when the verdict comes, whatever it is, the aggrieved party will approach the Supreme Court. That process could take several years more. While Muslims have already announced that they would abide by the court verdict, which would be binding on all concerned, Mr. Champak Rai said it was not a simple matter of title deed. “A plot of land can be bought or sold, but Ram Janmabhoomi is sacred and nothing can change its status as Lord Ram's birthplace.” Over the years, the Bharatiya Janata Party has changed its stance from “the Ram temple issue is a matter of faith and therefore above law.” It prefers a consensual agreement between the two main parties or legislation for resolving the dispute to getting it sorted through a court verdict. It has argued that no government would be able to implement a court verdict because religious sentiments and emotions of crores of people are involved. But some of its prominent political allies in the National Democratic Alliance are committed to go with the court verdict. (The Hindu)

### **Warrant against Raj Thackeray**

A Bihar court on Wednesday issued a non-bailable warrant against Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray for his alleged utterances against Biharis. First Class Judicial Magistrate Reshma Verma ordered the issue of the body warrant against Thackeray after he failed to appear before the court in compliance with its earlier order on December 4, 2009. (The Hindu)

### **Insurgency Movements:**

#### **Filipinos trained Naxals in Kerala forest: Gujarat cops**

The Special Investigation Team interrogating suspected Naxalites in Gujarat have made a startling revelation: International Maoist groups are involved in the arms training and one such session was held in the forests of Kerala. Surat Range IGP A K Singh told The Indian Express that interrogation of Bharat Puwar and Sulat Puwar, who were allegedly involved in Naxal activity in Dangs district, has revealed that members of the Communist Party of Philippines (CPP) had trained a batch of 25 tribals from various parts of the country in guerrilla warfare and the use of arms, ammunition and explosives. The Kerala training camp was held nearly 10 years ago. Surat police sources said a team will be sent to Kerala and neighbouring states to verify the findings. The Kerala police, however, said that their Gujarat counterparts have not contacted them on the issue. The CPP, with an armed guerrilla wing — New People's Army — is a Maoist outfit engaged in a violent “people's war” in the Philippines for over 40 years. It figures in the US list of international terror outfits. The arrested duo is under police remand till April 3. The police said they were active members of the CPI ML-Janshakti and close associates of Avinash Kulkarni who headed the outfit in south Gujarat. All the three, according to the police tried to recruit foot soldiers for their ‘cause’ in Dangs, working closely with landless tribal farmers. Police said Kulkarni was staying in Bharat's house posing as a tenant, doing clerical work like helping the landless farmers in writing applications and getting them submitted in government offices. Kulkarni sent both Bharat and Sulat to attend the CPP-managed training camp, which lasted for over 25 days. The two have reportedly told the police that they stayed in a “forest

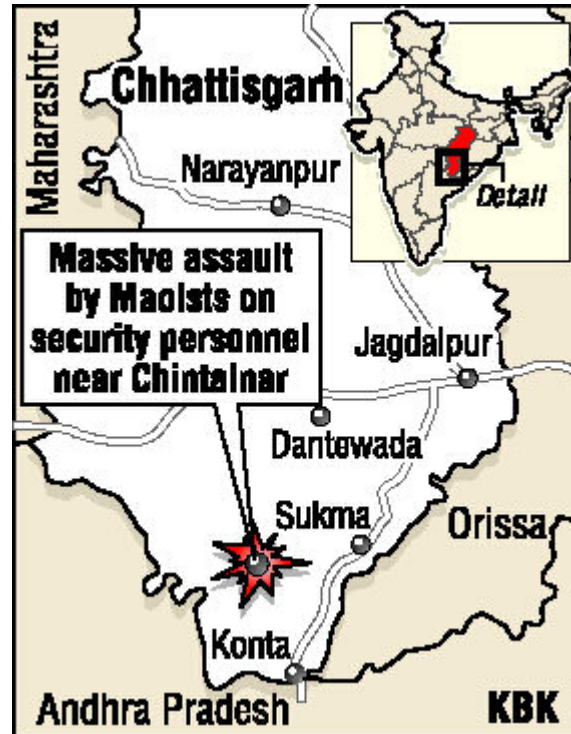
region” in Kerala and were trained to use arms and ammunition, besides planning and managing guerrilla attacks on predetermined targets. Their group of trainees did not know one another. The training which started early morning continued till late evening with only a one-hour lunch break, the police said. (The Indian Express)

### **Railways to strengthen security**

In the wake of the increased threat to railway property by Maoists, militants and insurgent groups, the Railway Board is looking at various options to tighten security to ensure safe running of trains in the affected zones. Reacting to the first militant attack on the railways in Kashmir late on Thursday night, top railway officials stressed that the mission to connect Kashmir with the rest of the country would go on without any break. Earlier, the attack on the railways during a two-day bandh called by the CPI(Maoist) in seven States forced the railways to take a fresh look at its security arrangement. No less than nine incidents within a span of less than 12 hours that time made the Railway Board review the security system. Soon after the blast on a track in Kashmir, senior railway authorities took up the matter with the State government, which assured that adequate security steps were being taken. (The Hindu)

### **Maoists Massacre 74 CRPF Men**

In their deadliest attack on paramilitary forces yet, Maoist rebels killed 74 members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and two policemen from the Chhattisgarh police, and destroyed an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) in the early hours of Tuesday in Dantewada district. The attack took place in the Mukrana forest, about 540 km southeast of the State capital Raipur. Seven injured personnel were evacuated by helicopter to the Maharani Hospital in Jagdalpur. “A joint operation involving one company of the CRPF’s 62nd Battalion and troops from the Chhattisgarh police were ambushed,” confirmed Inspector-General R.K. Vij. “The force was returning to base camp after a three-day area domination exercise.” Apart from the 73 foot soldiers and policemen, Deputy Commandant of the 62nd Battalion Satyavan, Assistant Commandant B.L. Meena and head constable R. Siyaram Dhruv of the Chhattisgarh Police were killed. The following account has been pieced together from press statements issued by the Chhattisgarh police and interviews with sources in the security forces and intelligence sources in Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi. A comprehensive account will be possible only after interviews with the survivors. The ambush occurred at about 5.30 a.m. when one company of the 62nd Battalion, and between 30 and 40 men from the Chhattisgarh police, were returning from the area domination exercise. While the troops were going on foot, the APC was proceeding along a dirt track.



Four kilometres short of the CRPF camp at Chintalnar, a massive Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was detonated under the armoured vehicle, killing the lone driver, even as the troops came under heavy suppressive fire from a raised hillock bordering the path. Troops rushed to take cover behind trees, only to find that the Maoists had booby-trapped the trees with anti-personnel IEDs. Soldiers who stayed in the open were gunned down by Maoists who used automatic weapons. In all, 75 members of the security forces were killed and seven injured. All their weapons were taken away by the Maoists. In the second phase of the incident, reinforcements were rushed from the CRPF camp at Chintalnar, Dornapal and Chintagufa to rescue the survivors. According to a press note circulated by the Superintendent of Police, a vehicle brought to ferry the injured and the dead was also blown up with an IED, killing the driver and pushing the toll up to 76. Sources in Andhra Pradesh told The Hindu that the attack was planned by Kosa, Leader of the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee of the CPI Maoist and was executed by three Maoist companies led by Ganeshanna and Ramanna, two top leaders from the same Committee. The Maoists trailed the security forces for the better part of two days before working out the route of return and laying the ambush. The sources said the CRPF violated two basic doctrines of jungle warfare. "First, never return to the camp along the same route that you left," said a counter-insurgency expert with experience in Chhattisgarh, "Second, if you must, you have to clear and secure all raised terrain and hillocks." Neither of these precautions was followed, said the source. (The Hindu)

#### **Anti-Naxal drive: CRPF, Chhattisgarh police to carry out joint offensive**

With coordination issues between central and state forces being raised in the wake of the Dantewada massacre, the CRPF on Thursday said it is conducting anti-Maoist operations in close consultation with Chhattisgarh police and a joint offensive will be carried out. "We will do our

planning in close consultation with the state DGP and the state officers. We will have good coordination with them and it will be a joint plan," CRPF Director General Vikram Srivastava said referring to the intensification of the anti-Naxal operations. Issues relating to coordination among police forces were at the centre of Union home minister P Chidambaram's discussions with the officials of the Chhattisgarh police and para-military forces during his visit to the state yesterday in the aftermath of the killing of 75 CRPF men and one policeman by the Naxals in Dantewada. While at a press conference, the home minister had maintained there was no lack of coordination, official sources had said that during a closed-door meeting with functionaries of the two forces, Chidambaram had spared none and asked them to show greater coordination and understanding during operations in the thick jungles of Dantewada. On coordination, Srivastava said that there was no difficulty as far as the CRPF was concerned and that it "is as desired." "There is no problem in coordination. The state officers never command the field commanders. They are in touch in a coordinated way," he said. Deputy Inspector General of Police, Dantewada S R P Kalluri had during media interactions on Tuesday claimed that the state police was not aware of CRPF movement in the jungles. Srivastava said the CRPF contingent, which was attacked by the Maoists, was on an area domination duty and the men fought bravely. "We will contain this problem," he said. The CRPF chief said the force was looking into all aspects "very minutely" including operational details. "We will take suitable action," Srivastava said. On if there was some slip-up that led to the killing of the 76 security personnel in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh Director General of Police Viswa Ranjan said that apparently the contingent was not able to anticipate the ambush area. "If they had understood that this can be an ambush point, then obviously their formation would have changed. Even if some people were trapped, others would have reacted. What seems is that they were not able to read that the ambush point and the whole company walked into the (Naxal) trap," he said, claiming that even the world's best forces may not be able to react if caught in such a way. He said in Raipur that the police was trying to reconstruct the scene and a clear picture will emerge only after talking to the injured personnel, who were currently in a state of trauma. Ranjan said more complex operations will be launched and these could be done in various ways including a joint operation with clear demarcation of roles. Maintaining that mistakes in the past have been committed by CRPF, which has a long history of combat, as well as the state police, he said that the unfortunate part was that in this incident, they lost heavily because of a "misreading" of the ground situation. (Times of India)

### **Govt may have to use air power against Naxals: Chidambaram**

A day after Maoists massacred 76 security personnel in a bloody ambush, home minister P Chidambaram paid homage to the dead and said there was need to "stay calm and hold nerves" in taking on ultras who he said saw the state as an "enemy" and the conflict, a "war". In a significant departure, Chidambaram said while the government had refrained from using air power against Maoists, the situation could change. "At present there is no mandate to use the air force or any aircraft. But, if necessary, we will have to revisit the mandate to make some changes." The use of air power, which in the context of Maoists means choppers, has been limited to rescue and reinforcement missions. Perhaps mindful of the negative connotations over possible use of air force in offensive operations, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, chose his words carefully when asked about Chidambaram's statement. "I think policy has to be reviewed practically from time to time, learning from experience. (But) we are too close to the event to take a view that existing policy needs to be modified," he told reporters on the sidelines of the

Padma award function at Rashtrapati Bhawan on Wednesday. The PM pointed out that "all these options are kept open and continuously reviewed... As of now, we have not taken any view in this direction." The statements indicate that the Maoist strike has certainly set the government thinking about how to regain the initiative. Using air power may not be on the cards, given the risk of collateral damage and the air force's reluctance. Also, using armed forces against citizens will be read as admission of failure. But government seems to be girding up for more clashes with Naxalites. Chidambaram indicated as much when he said there did not seem much scope for talks with Maoists. "To our call for talks after giving up violence, Naxalites have answered by a savage and brutal act of violence, " he said, adding that "To talk of talk now would be to mock the supreme sacrifice made by 76 jawans." At the same time, in what would be a bid to deflect charges of being militaristic, the home minister said, "Nevertheless, as I said, we must remain calm, we must hold our nerves. If a militant group abjures violence, it gives up violence, we will consider talks." But while the time for any "offer" for talks is clearly over, questions over what went so badly wrong in the Dantewada operation that led to the decimation of the CRPF contingent remain unanswered. "As I said yesterday, something went wrong. Only an inquiry will establish what went wrong," he said, pointing out that a probe would establish whether or not 1,000 Maoists were involved in the attack. He did, however, make it amply clear that the operation was a joint exercise of the state police and CRPF coordinated at senior levels and overseen by the Dantewada SP and the commandant of the battalion. The statement would make it clear that it was not a "solo" operation by CRPF in an unchartered area. While the CRPF was on an "area domination" mission to reclaim territory and challenge the Maoists, circumstances of the attack are still not clear. The presence of just one local cop in the contingent and risks in using the only available route to return to the village of Chintalnar are being investigated. Two parties which rushed to rescue the strike force also came under heavy fire. Chidambaram, however, said there was no proposal to deploy Army and maintained that a "war" has been thrust on the government. "If this is war, and I wish to say that we have never used that word, it is a war that has been thrust upon the state by those who do not have a legitimate right to carry weapons or to kill." He stressed that the state had a constitutional and legal duty to protect citizens and pointed to the Naxal goal to overthrow established authority of the government through an armed liberation struggle. He said the operation by the security forces was not intelligence-based but was for area domination in order to understand and familiarize themselves with the terrain. (Times of India)

### **Maoists clear that violence is only way to achieve their goal**

Though the defenders of Maoists have been quick to blame the Centre for the death of 76 security personnel in Chhattisgarh, calling it the result of "oppressive" policies, the Red ultras have never shied from arguing that violence was the only means to overthrow the state. As the Maoists see democracy as a sham and feel government is essentially the exploitative class, leaders like CPI (Maoist) general secretary Ganapathy have made the point that "we are firm in our belief that it is only through struggle that people can solve their problems and parliamentary institutions can do nothing except create illusions". So deep-rooted is the Maoist belief that democracy is a "sham" and "people's struggles" are bound to be crushed by repressive classes that Maoists see Islamic extremists like Taliban as some sort of fellow travellers despite the "strong religious content in their movements". Maoist leaders feel that "Islamic fundamentalism" was an ally in the fight against "fundamentalism" of the US and West. Maoist leaders like

Ganapathy see in Hamas and Hezbollah instances of "enormous courage in putting up bold resistance to Israeli Zionist aggression" and have seen in such "movements" in Afghanistan and Iraq expressions of a nationalist struggle against invading forces. There is no sense of discordance given the apparent Maoist anathema for religious mobilisation as is evident in their opposition to Hindutva groups. The unambiguous manner in which Maoists lay out their agenda might be a lesson to their witting and unwitting allies such as some political leaders, including some Congress office-bearers, who seek to make distinctions between Maoists and "terrorists". While the need to address the development gap that provides tribal recruits to Maoist ranks is obvious, it is equally necessary to keep in mind that ultras are really not interested in negotiations. The argument that "bravado" may have brought the Dantewada killings upon the government is dangerously flawed. Whether home minister P Chidambaram needs to walk the talk is one aspect. But Maoists are unlikely to put their guns away if tough talk and aggressive ground action is shelved. Working to ideological goals, a revolutionary change is their agenda. In the course of achieving this objective, ultras are adept at whipping up the poor governance in tribal areas card as a political justification for ruthless slaughter -- of even those very persons who are purported victims if they are suspected of being informers. While their actions in killing security personnel or villagers are never questioned closely, every attempt to push back the Maoists is met with a clamour of "state repression". Using their allies, ultras use the courts in a wily manner to ensure officers face allegations of extra-judicial killings while their own actions are not held to account similarly.(Times of India)

### **Economic Front:**

#### **Qatar eyes Indian power sector: Report**

Qatar has evinced interest to invest in the Indian infrastructure sector, especially the power segment, and both countries will look at collaborations in the area, a newspaper report has said. According to the report, a delegation from India will soon visit Qatar to discuss prospects for investment. "There are Qatari interests in India's power sector and very soon we will be able to see (announcements)," India's Ambassador to Qatar Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa said, while addressing a meeting of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), Doha chapter. The envoy said it is expected that the Qatari investments will be in the Indian power generation sector. India permits 100 per cent foreign direct investment in power generation, transmission and distribution. India, which has the fifth largest electricity generation capacity in the world, needs investments worth about USD 167 billion in the power sector during 2007-12 period in order to add more than 90,000 MW of generation capacity. (The Indian Express)

#### **'Reverse brain drain in India has begun'**

India is in the cusp of a reverse brain drain as the country's great minds are flocking back to the resilient economy that has withstood the global meltdown, Salman Khurshid, Minister of State for Corporate and Minority Affairs has said. "Reverse brain drain has already begun and it is a great sign of the world's confidence in India and its recognition of India's potential," Khurshid said who is on a four-day official visit to Dubai. "Those who know that you cannot permanently leave India have sensibly kept your links with the country by educating your children in systems that are compatible to those of India so that they can go back to India either for higher studies or for work." "Many second-generation Indians are coming back to the country. Top multinationals are sending their top Indian minds to head their companies in India. So when we lose some, we



win many back," he added. (The Indian Express)

### **Foreign Relations/Geo-strategic developments:**

#### **India willing for another FS-level talks with Pak: Sources**

After the ice-breaking February 25 Foreign Secretary-level talks, India has conveyed to Pakistan its willingness to have the second round of parleys but is yet to get any response. India also has not heard anything from Pakistan on the three dossiers given to it containing names of 34 terrorists wanted here, including LeT chief Hafiz Saeed, with a demand for handing them over and other effective actions. Sources said India has told Pakistan that the second round of talks can be held but they have to "come back to us". The February 25 talks held in Delhi were an ice-breaker after the 26/11 attacks when the dialogue process was put on hold by India as terrorists from Pakistan were responsible for the strike. The initiative for those talks was taken by India and was intended to discuss terrorism, which India says is the "core issue". India is still not satisfied by Pakistan's actions with regard to ending terrorism but it conveyed to it that the channels of communication are open from the Indian side, they said. At the day-long talks between Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao and her Pakistani counterpart Salman Bashir on February 25, the two sides noted the "trust" deficit in the ties and decided to "remain in touch and continue endeavour to restore trust". India had said that the trust had been "erased" by the Mumbai attacks. With regard to 26/11, India "acknowledged" that Pakistan had taken certain steps to bring perpetrators to justice, but "pointed out that these did not go far enough to unravel the full conspiracy behind the Mumbai attack and to award exemplary punishment to all culprits." (The Indian Express)

#### **Discourse on India-Pakistan water sharing hot up**

As public discourse on the water component of India-Pakistan relations takes on a shrill note with charges like "stealing water" and "water wars" being leveled against India, High Commissioner Sharat Sabharwal on Saturday said India had never hindered water flows into Pakistan even during the 1965 and 1971 wars. Describing the allegations as "preposterous," Mr. Sabharwal used the platform provided by the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations and Pakistan-India Citizens Forum to counter the "apprehensions, misconceptions, misinformation and allegations pertaining to India that characterise the debate on water scarcity in Pakistan." Of the view that the Indus Waters Treaty had served the two countries well, the High Commissioner said those who questioned its fairness should note that it assigned 80 per cent share of water of the Indus system of rivers to Pakistan. Pointing out that the Treaty permitted the limited use of water from the Western rivers of the Indus system by India, he added that this entitlement had not been fully used till date. As against the storage entitlement of 3.6 MAF, India has built no storage so far. Of the 1.34 million acres permitted for irrigation, only 0.792 million acres is being irrigated, he said. "We have exploited only a fraction of the hydroelectric potential available to us on these rivers." Out of a total potential of 18,653 MW, projects worth 2,324 MW have been commissioned and those for 659 MW are under construction. "In any case, even after India starts using its full entitlement of water from the Western Rivers under the Treaty, it will amount to no more than 3 per cent of the mean flow in these rivers." Referring to the charge that India was acquiring the capacity to withhold Pakistan's share of water, Mr. Sabharwal said those who made these allegations completely ignored the fact that this would require a storage and diversion

canals network on a large scale. “Such a network simply does not exist and figures nowhere in our plans.” As for the reduced flows into Pakistan, he said it was dictated by the melting of snow and quantum of rainfall, not violation of the Treaty by India. Stating that it was natural for questions to arise on the implementation of any treaty, he said India believed that the Permanent Indus Commission was the best forum to resolve all such matters. (The Hindu)

### **India keen on joining Shanghai grouping**

After being unenthusiastic to the idea of joining the six-country Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in its first term of governance, the United Progressive Alliance government now in its second term is now keen on joining the grouping. “We are interested in SCO membership. It is a very important organisation concerning the region,” sources in the government said. The government had asked the missions in four central Asian countries, Russia and China to explore the nature of rule changes for joining the SCO that are under way. India would take a view on joining the SCO after the criteria are adopted, the sources said. India's inclination comes amid the SCO's plan to take into its fold more countries from the near neighbourhood, including Pakistan and possibly Iran. The rules for enrolment are expected to be unveiled around the next SCO summit, scheduled for June in Tashkent. An entry into the SCO will allow India to play a greater role in the region, besides helping to narrow down the differences with its neighbours towards a solution in Afghanistan. In fact, Afghanistan will be one of the core issues at the SCO summit, with Uzbekistan likely to highlight the insufficient involvement of countries like Iran and India. By joining the grouping, India will also have got an opportunity to interact with countries in the region that are interested in tackling the Iran issue. A rethink on the SCO came about a year ago when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh headed the delegation to the summit in Yekaterinburg. This marked a departure from the past when India was represented once by a Foreign Minister, several times by Petroleum Minister Murli Deora and once by Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Prithviraj Chavan. The Indian delegation to the Tashkent summit, likely to be led by External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna, will take stock of the deliberations on expanding the SCO. New Delhi's earlier lack of enthusiasm for the SCO, it was officially explained, was due to the limited role of the observer countries. The organisation has addressed this problem by changing some of the norms to allow greater participation of observers at the Yekaterinburg summit. At last year's Russia-India-China Foreign Ministers' meeting in Bangalore, both Sergei Lavrov and Yang Jiechi urged their counterpart Mr. Krishna to take greater interest in the SCO, as India was crucial to stabilising the neighbourhood. Founded in 1996 as Shanghai Five with Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the organisation was renamed SCO five years later, with Uzbekistan coming on board. India, Iran, Pakistan and Mongolia are observers. (The Hindu)

### **Construction works in PoK, stapled visas to top Krishna's China agenda**

As external Affairs Minister S M Krishna prepares to leave for a four-day visit to China starting Monday, the two sides will look at leaving behind recent acrimony and turn a new page in bilateral relations. Top sources said China is the only country with which India interacts at all levels be it as a neighbour, an emerging power, a regional player or an economic giant — and continuation of this relation will be the focus of the visit. In this context, India is also keen on a membership at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and is looking forward to sending a high-level delegation, headed by Krishna, to the next meeting of the organisation that will be

held in Uzbekistan in June. One of the aims of the meeting will be to finalise the criteria of expansion of the organisation. India and Pakistan already have observer status at the SCO. During Krishna's visit to Beijing, India will raise contentious issues like Chinese construction projects in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), which it considers illegal, besides the 'dual visa policy' of issuance of stapled visas to residents of Jammu and Kashmir. "This is a matter of core concern for India because it is at the heart of our territorial sovereignty and integrity," Joint Secretary in-charge of East Asia in the External Affairs Ministry Gautam Bambawale said a press interaction ahead of Krishna's visit. He added that India will continue to press the Chinese side on the matter. It may be recalled that India has forbidden individuals with stapled visas to exit the country after several cases of such 'discriminating' visas came to light. The issue will be part of discussions between Krishna and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi in Beijing. This will be Krishna's first visit to China and also the highest level Indian visit since the current government took over last year. Also, given Chinese concerns, the issue of work visas to Chinese workers will also be discussed. This is one of the major outstanding issues between the countries, given that more than 20,000 Chinese workers have been sent back as they were working on business visas. It is learnt that the Indian side is still trying to resolve the issue and one of the proposals that has emerged is the creation of a new category of project visas that will address most concerns about Chinese workers. The issue was discussed at a Committee of Secretaries meeting and certain ministries insisted that Chinese workers were required to complete the ongoing projects. The two sides will also exchange views on Iran with both sides having significant stakes in the country. While India has long-standing ties with Iran, China derives important resources from the country. Both countries have also been reticent in giving an all-out approval to US sanctions against Iran. The situation in Afghanistan will also come up for discussions. (The Indian Express)

### **Krishna seeks more Chinese support on U.N. Security Council seat**

External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna began his Beijing visit by calling on the Chinese government to rethink its opposition to India's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and to cooperate more on tackling terror from Pakistan. Mr. Krishna said it was "time for China to review previously held positions [on United Nations reforms] and welcome the presence in the Security Council of a nation with which it has much in common." He was speaking in an interaction with scholars at the China Institute of International Studies, a government-affiliated think-tank. Asked for a response to his comments, a Chinese official did not say more than that China was willing to hold talks with India on the U.N. issue. "We hope relevant parties can have discussions in a patient way to reach a package of consensus on the issue," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Jiang Yu said. "We will together with other parties maintain working mechanism of the U.N. China and India are important countries in the region, and we understand the desire of India to play a larger role on the world stage." The issue will be discussed on Wednesday morning, when Mr. Krishna will hold talks with his counterpart Yang Jiechi. He said he would also raise India's concerns over China supporting development projects in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and issuing stapled visas to Indian citizens from Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Krishna will meet Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Wednesday afternoon. But on Tuesday, he painted a largely optimistic picture of Sino-Indian ties, saying the two developing countries had an increasing convergence of interests on the global scale, from climate change to global trade rules. "We strongly feel that the India-China relationship is grossly under-realised

and the capacities for expansion are enormous,” he said. He also blamed “vested interests,” without naming them, of exaggerating the two countries’ “divergences.” “India and China must not just co-operate; they must be seen to be doing so by the rest of the world,” he said. Mr. Krishna also sent out a strong message to Pakistan, China’s long-time strategic ally, saying there were “few countries which believe that terrorism could be an instrument through which they would like achieve certain immediate objectives of either destabilising a country or creating a situation where development taking place will not be allowed to, at the pace at which it is taking place.” In Wednesday’s talks, Indian officials are expected to discuss the recent strains over the long-running boundary dispute, over which 13 rounds of talks have made little progress. Mr. Krishna called for patience from both sides. “We have agreed upon a mechanism in order to find a mutually acceptable solution to this complex problem,” he told reporters. “We have had 13 meetings so far, and you know boundary issues are the most complex of issues, especially when you have a long boundary like the one we have. It is going to be a time consuming affair, and one has to be very patient,” he said. On Wednesday evening, Mr. Krishna will launch a six-month-long “Festival of India in China” in Beijing’s Forbidden City to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. (The Hindu)

### **Indian Occupied Kashmir:**

#### **Track blown up in first attack on Kashmir rail line**

The popular Kashmir railway came under attack for the first time. About three feet of tracks were blown up at Galbug in Pulwama district, leading to the suspension of trains between South Kashmir and Srinagar for over five hours. An Improvised Explosive Device (IED) was triggered, probably using a remote-control device, which left a three-foot crater on the tracks, police said. “Not much damage was caused to the railway tracks, but it exploded with a big bang,” said Farooq Ahmad, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Range. A case has been registered at the Railway Police Station, Awantipore, Ahmad said. “Investigations are on to identify the persons who carried out the blast,” he said. The Railways began operations in the Valley in 2008, and currently five Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) trains run on the stretch every day. Two years ago, the Army had recovered a diary from militants containing a sketch of a railway line and details, written in Urdu, of how to plant an IED on the tracks. Police are, however, also looking at the possibility of attack having been carried out by local vested interests whose businesses have been hit by the success of the railway. Railway Protection Force (RPF) Director-General Ranjit Sinha told The Indian Express, “We have deployed close to 700 personnel to guard railway properties in Jammu and Kashmir. We plan to step up security and track patrolling.” The RPF’s plan to raise one battalion (around 1,000 personnel) of a Railway Protection Special Force exclusively for Kashmir has only remained on paper, months after it was first talked about. The RPF concentrates on trains and railway property in Kashmir; the 120-km Qazigund-Baramulla line is protected mainly by J&K Police. (The Indian Express)

#### **Separatists support Census, say Muslims losing majority status**

This is the first exercise of the Centre that separatists in Kashmir have lent support to. In a shift from their past stand, separatists have not asked people to boycott the Census. On the contrary, they have asked them to actively participate in the exercise. The reason for this shift is the separatists’ concern that the Muslim majority status of J&K is being eroded. “We ask people to participate in this (Census) process,” said Mohammad Yasin Malik, Chairman of Jammu and

Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). “Last time, we had asked people to stay away from the process but now we feel that it was not a wise decision.” Malik said they had asked people to participate actively in the Census “so that actual data on the population comes to the fore”. “There is no politics in it,” Malik said. “Last time, people didn’t participate in the process and as a result, the actual population couldn’t be established. We don’t want it to happen again.” Though he did not call for active participation, chairman of Hurriyat’s hardline faction Syed Ali Shah Geelani hinted he wasn’t opposed to the exercise by saying, “There are concerted efforts under a pre-planned conspiracy to reduce the Muslim majority status of the state. The Census is being carried out by the employees from outside the state and they have been tasked to erode the Muslim majority status of the state.” Geelani said Muslims were 85 per cent of J&K’s population before 1947 “but in the subsequent censuses of 1961 and 1981, it (Muslim population) was put at 69 per cent and 64.5 per cent respectively”. Last time around in 2000, separatists asked the people to stay away from the Census but soon after the results were out, they alleged the Census process was “a deliberate attempt to show the Muslim population of the state less than actual”. The Census will start in J&K on May 15, a month and a half later than in the rest of the country. “The Census calendar for the state has been devised keeping in view the climatic conditions and availability of the staff in the state,” Director of Census Farooq Ahmad said. (The Indian Express)

### **Jammu shuts down over bill to ban inter-district recruitment**

All shops and business establishments were closed and traffic was off the roads as the daylong shutdown called by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against a bill seeking to ban inter-district recruitment in Jammu and Kashmir began on Friday. The bill, which is scheduled to be debated in both the houses of the state legislature Friday, has generated anger in Jammu region as it denies Scheduled Caste candidates jobs reserved for them at the district level. While valley-based parties, the National Conference (NC) and the opposition Peoples Democratic Party, favour the ban on inter-district recruitment, Jammu-based parties like the BJP and Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party are opposed to it. Congress, which is a constituent of the ruling alliance in the state, is divided as its Jammu-based legislators are opposed to the ban while those from the valley support it. Protesters set up road blockades by burning tyres and held noisy demonstrations at several places. The police, however, cleared one of the main bridges over river Tawi that connects Jammu city with the rest of the country. Both the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region have their own reasons for supporting and opposing the bill that bars applicants from seeking jobs in districts other than their native ones. While the valley feels that inter-district recruitment limits Kashmiri youths’ employment opportunities as jobs are reserved for the Scheduled Caste community, the Jammu region feels that the bill seeking to ban such recruitment overturns the constitutional provision of reservation of jobs for the socially marginalized people. If enforced, it would deprive the Scheduled Caste community, which constitutes about 20 percent of the five million population in the region, of the district cadre posts in Kashmir Valley. The state has a population of over 10 million. The community has no presence in the valley where Muslims are in an overwhelming majority, with less than 3,500 Kashmiri Hindus as a microscopic minority. “The scales of natural justice demand that our people should get at least the jobs in their own districts,” NC legislator Chaudhary Mohammad Ramzan told IANS. But the BJP, which was the biggest beneficiary in the assembly elections in December 2008 when it won all-time high 11 seats owing to the regional sentiments on the

Amarnath land row, is opposing it. "It's subversion of constitution," said BJP legislature Chaman Lal Gupta. "We will not allow the fragmentation of the state on regional grounds," he told reporters.

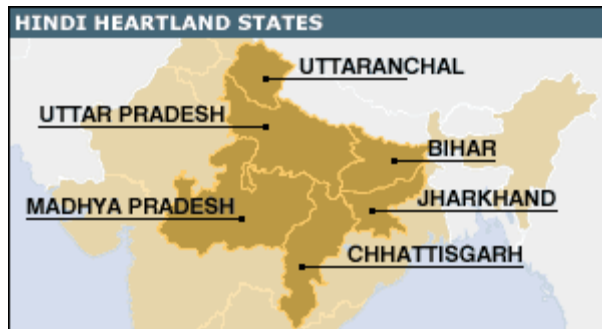
### **Social front:**

#### **Number of Indians receiving Green Cards on decline in US**

The number of Indians receiving the coveted Green Card or the Legal Permanent Residency status in the US has experienced a considerable decline in the past three years. The Legal Permanent Residency (LPR) is a step short of US citizenship, and is a much sought after status for those who eventually want to acquire US citizenship. However, latest official figures released on Thursday showed that the number of Indians being granted the Green Card has declined each year since 2007. In 2009, as many as 57,309 Indians received the Green Card, while in 2008 the figure was 63,352 and the previous year in 2007 as many as 65,353 Indians had received the Legal Permanent Residency Status. According to the Annual Flow Report released by the US Department of Homeland Security, in 2009 a total of 1,130,818 persons became LPRs of the United States. India was, however, among the top five countries who provided the maximum number of LPRs to the US in 2009. The majority of new LPRs (59%) already lived in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence, while nearly two-thirds were granted permanent resident status based on a family relationship with a US citizen or legal permanent resident of the United States. In 2009, 15% of all persons becoming LPRs were born in Mexico. The second leading country of birth was China (5.7%), followed by the Philippines (5.3%), India (5.1%), and the Dominican Republic (4.4%). These five countries accounted for 35% of all new LPRs in 2009, it said. According to the Department of Homeland Security, the leading regions of birth of persons becoming LPRs in 2009 were Asia (37%) and North America (33%). Together, Asia and North America accounted for approximately 70% of the LPR flow each year from 2007 to 2009. California was the state of residence of one-fifth (20%) of persons gaining LPR status in 2009. Other leading states of residence included New York (13%), Florida (11%), Texas (8.4%), and New Jersey (5.2%). These five states represented the residence of 58% of new LPRs in 2009. (The Times of India)

## **Regional Report**

### **Central India (Hindi Heartland)**



#### **Politics:**

#### **Social front:**

#### **Shutdown in Chhattisgarh to protest Maoist massacre**

Roads were deserted, schools were closed and shops downed shutters across many parts of Chattisgarh on Thursday as the opposition Congress began a daylong shutdown to protest the massacre of 76 troopers by Maoist guerrillas. Roads wore a deserted look not only in the state capital Raipur but also in the second most populous town in the state, Bilaspur. In Durg and the industrial towns of Korba, Raigarh and Bhilai too, vehicles remained off roads. According to reports coming in from the state's Maoist stronghold of Bastar region, the shutdown hit life in the five districts- Dantewada, Bijapur, Narayanpur, Bastar and Kanker. Schools remained closed across the state while shopkeepers downed their shutters as a mark of protest. Chhattisgarh state Congress president Dhanendra Sahu told reporters here that the strike was called to protest the flawed policies of the state's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) that resulted in the the killing of 76 troopers Tuesday in the biggest ever attack carried by Maoists. Hundreds of Maoists trapped over 80 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) troopers on a hilly stretch, some 450 km south of Raipur, in Dantewada district and went on a killing spree using pressure bombs and automatic weapons. About a dozen industrial bodies, including the Chhattisgarh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, have extended support to the shutdown to express their solidarity with the deceased security personnel. (Times of India)

#### **Economic Front:**

## The North

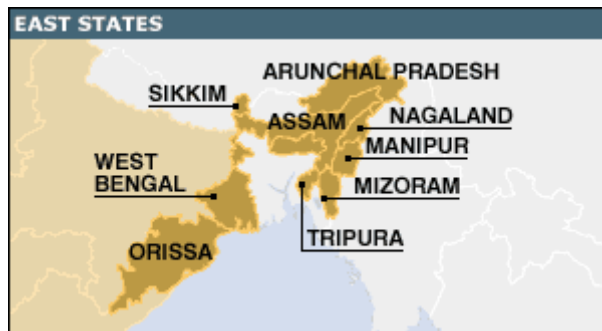


### Politics:

### Social front:

### Economic Front:

## The East



### Politics:

### **Muslim job quota soon: Buddha**

Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee announced that the state government will implement 10 per cent Muslim reservation in government jobs at the earliest. "The committee on implementing the reservation is currently working on it and we hope to implement it as soon as possible," said. He argued that if Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be provided with reservation, why Muslims can't be provided the same as they are equally backward. Stressing on the overall minority development, the CM also announced that in 12 districts of the state, Rs 500 crore would be spent as Multi-Sectoral Development Fund for the overall development of minorities. Of the 19 districts in the state, Malda, Murshidabad, North and South Dinajpur, South 24 Parganas are the ones where the percentage of minority population is higher than 25 per cent of the overall population of the district. Bhattacharjee distributed loans and scholarships worth Rs 3.14 crore to 475 businessmen and 546 students. (The Indian Express)



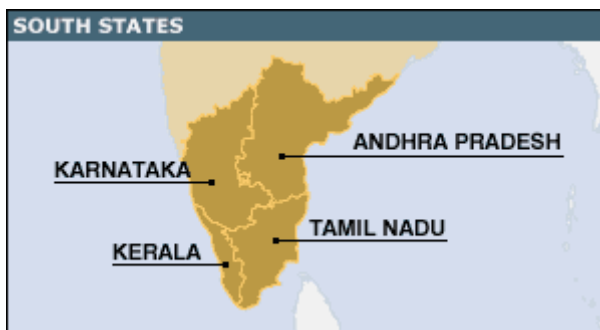
## **We welcome Chidambaram's comments on Lalgarh: CPI(M)**

Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram's visit to Lalgarh “to glimpse into the reality of people at the grass roots and the way the tribals are living,” and his comments there has been welcomed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the party's Central Committee member Mohd. Salim said here on Monday. Asked if the CPI(M) objected to Mr. Chidambaram's comment on the law and order situation in some parts of West Bengal, Mr. Salim, though expressing reservations about the language used by the Union Minister, said: “He has said and we ourselves say that the political violence happening all over the State should stop. What is there to object in that?” However, Mr. Salim was critical of the Trinamool Congress for demanding that the joint security operations against Maoists be stopped. “On the one hand, he [Mr. Chidambaram] visited the area and said that operations should be intensified, and on the other, a constituent of the government [the Trinamool] is demanding that the operations be stopped,” Mr. Salim said, adding that this dichotomy of the UPA government must be exposed. The Trinamool was harbouring a Maoist sympathiser in the form of Kabir Suman and Maoist leaders had admitted that their stand in West Bengal was derived from the stand taken by litterateur Mahashweta Devi (closely associated with Trinamool chief Mamata Banerjee), he said. “This double face of the Trinamool a rightist face at New Delhi and an extreme Left face here must be brought out in the open.” Mr. Chidambaram travelled to Ranchi, Chhattisgarh and other Maoist-affected States to coordinate the joint-operations and now he has visited Lalgarh. Hopefully, he would go to Gadchiroli, Jharkhand and affected areas in Orissa, Bihar and other States as well, Mr. Salim said. Agreeing with Mr. Chidambaram's “mixed impression” that the progress of the operations had good points and certain weaknesses, he said that apart from military action, Maoists had to be fought politically too. “The CPI(M) is constantly engaged in a struggle with them and our comrades are dying for the cause every day, but what political message have the Congress and the Trinamool given against them?” (The Hindu)

### **Social front:**

### **Economic Front:**

### **The South**



### **Politics:**

### **Social front:**

## **Economic Front:**

### **Massive World Bank grant for city**

The World Bank is ready to give a massive grant to the tune of Rs. 1,000 crore to develop the city traffic and public transportation infrastructure. A positive indication to this effect was made when a team from the bank interacted with senior officials, a few days ago. In a power point presentation to the World Bank team identifying measures necessary to improve road network, signages, public transport, pedestrian facilities, multi-level parking et al, senior civic officials concluded that a whopping Rs. 4,128 crore was required for the same. The large-scale perspective plan was prepared for seeking funds under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) Plus, as only eight per cent of the funds was utilised to the city thus far from the Mission. Immediate sanction of funds was sought for integrated traffic system and developing four model roads already widened with cycle tracks and running eco-friendly buses -- Secunderabad to Kondapur via Nagarjuna circle (20km), Afzalgunj to Secunderabad via Musheerabad (10km) and LB Nagar to Patancheru via Nalgonda crossroads (30km). The objective is to ensure average vehicle speeds increase to 40 kmph (for private) and 25 kmph (buses) as against the 12-15 kmph nowadays. Road network is to be increased to 18 per cent, public transport usage to 70 per cent from the current 42 per cent -- mostly by buses now, encourage multi-level parking, walk and bicycle-friendly pathways in all residential layouts. Other than the 650 more new buses expected under the Mission, the plan mentions nine exclusive bus corridors on high density routes of 200 km (Rs. 750 crore) and the proposed elevated metro rail under the public private partnership mode. Forty-four radial roads are to be developed (Rs. 550 crore), grade separators (Rs. 300 crore), 15 bridges across the Musi river (Rs. 300 crore), 10 road under bridges (Rs. 50 crore) and link roads (Rs. 100 crore) are envisaged. Model roads are to be developed across 200 km including an eight-km exclusive bicycle track in Cyberabad. Road renewal works for a length of 600 km (Rs. 1,000 crore cost), service ducts 1,200 km (Rs. 600 crore), 100 junctions improvement (Rs. 30 crore), 500 bus bays (Rs. 150 crore), parking complexes (Rs. 25 crore) and footpaths to be developed across 4,500 km of road length with 1,500 km in the first phase. (The Hindu)

### **Kerala seeks assistance from the Centre**

Reeling under an unusually grim summer, Kerala has decided to seek Rs 165 crore as assistance from the Centre to tackle drought conditions. According to Revenue Minister K P Rajendran, the state wanted central support of Rs 115.69 crore for maintaining water supply through short-term schemes in drought-hit areas. For other urgent measures like supply of drinking water through tankers, construction of check-dams in forests, deepening of ponds and tanks would require another Rs 39 crore. A sum of Rs five crore would be needed for compensating losses suffered by farmers in different parts of the state on account of summer showers, he said. In lightning during the summer showers, five persons were killed in the last few days and 100 houses were destroyed completely and another 2,600 damaged partly, he said. Crops loss had been reported from at least 800 hectares of land cross the state, the minister said. (Manorama Online)

## West India



### Politics:

#### **Sudhir Mungantiwar new Maharashtra BJP chief**

Four-time MLA Sudhir Mungantiwar was unanimously elected Maharashtra BJP president at the party's State convention, which began at Jalgaon on Friday. The other contenders for the post included MLC Vinod Tawde. Mr. Mungantiwar (47), who hails from Vidarbha, was the Minister for Tourism and Consumer Protection in the BJP-Shiv Sena government between 1995 and 1999. He was elected MLA from Chandrapur thrice and in 2009 from Ballarpur. He set a record, winning for the first time in 1995 with a margin of 55,000 votes. He unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha elections twice from Chandrapur in 1989 and 1991. Mr. Mungantiwar replaces Nitin Gadkari who became the party's national president. He belongs to Other Backward Classes like the former State unit chief, Gopinath Munde, who is an MP and party national general secretary. (The Hindu)

### Social front:

#### **Slum relocation may affect 4,000 school kids**

The relocation of slums from the riverfront development area spanning from Subhash Bridge to Sardar Bridge is expected to adversely impact attendance in at least 10 municipal schools. Nearly 4,000 children will feel the pinch from the coming academic session. Even teachers from these schools are being transferred anticipating an exodus. Schools in the riverside areas of Vadaj, Dudheshwar, Shahpur, Khanpur, Bhadra, Jamalpur, Raikhad, Behrampura and Ram-Rahim Tekra are on the verge of closure. At present, each school has at least 250 students in each shift. The displaced children are also less likely to get enrolled in other schools for a variety of reasons. Besides, the school buildings may be used for other purposes after the shift is complete. A senior teacher in a municipal school said that in the past week alone, 17 teachers were transferred from these areas. Against this, only one teacher was brought in. Jamalpur councillor Liyaqat Ghori said of the authorities: "They are interested only in developing avenues of mass entertainment even if that is at the cost of the lives of the poor." Ghori said the attendance in these schools will fall and there is no guarantee that all the displaced children will get admission when they relocate to the new areas. "We have made several representations before the Board but they are not prepared to listen," he said. Habib Mev, a member of the Municipal School

Board admitted that the impact on the schools would be telling and that a number of schools will have to be shut down. “But we are hopeful that we will be able to bridge the gap when the new academic year begins and fresh enrolments begin. But as many as 10 schools in the affected areas will see a drop in the number of students,” Mev said. He said the Board will come up with proposals to build additional rooms in areas where the slum population is resettled. “The Board will also issue migration certificates to the affected students, which will enable them to get admission in their new areas during vacations,” Mev said, adding that nothing has been finalised yet. (The Indian Express)

**Economic Front:**