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Summary:

The all-party meeting on Jammu and Kashmir has failed to arrive at a consensus on partial withdrawal or dilution or revocation of the contentious Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). It is decided to send a delegation of political parties to the State to meet all sections of the people and assess the ground situation.

The Bharatiya Janata Party accused the Central and State governments of being completely devoid of any vision on how to deal with the situation. The party criticizes the Jammu and Kashmir government under Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and sought his immediate replacement. BJP advise the government not to consider lifting the Armed Forces Special Powers Act [AFSPA] from any disturbed district of the State. According to the party government should take adopt strict policy to control the recent upsurge in the valley.

The Allahabad high court has refused to delay the verdict on the Ramjanambhoomi- Babri Masjid which will be pronounced on Sept 24. Tripathi, a defendent in the case, had filed the application for making another attempt to reach a solution to the dispute through reconciliation and deferment of the verdict.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat said that Muslims did carry the burden of proving their “patriotic credentials” and have to “remove the trust deficit” by helping to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya. For only then a “clear message would be sent out” that Muslims do not look “outside the country” and “no one will be able to point fingers at them and describe them as unpatriotic.”

The rising anti-outsourcing sentiment in the US is likely to adversely impact the \$51-billion Indian IT industry, feel analysts. The Ohio State's ban on outsourcing IT services to foreign lands is worrisome for India. Ohio Governor Ted Strickland of Democratic Party has banned outsourcing saying this undermines economic development and has unacceptable business consequences for his state. According to analysts the Ohio move will have long-term impact as most of Indian IT companies have huge exposure to the US market overall. This will not only impact the companies financially but psychologically too. Indian IT companies like Infosys Technologies, Wipro, HCL Technologies and TCS get 60 per cent of their export revenue from the US.

India accelerates its diplomatic effort for reform of the UN Security Council and its permanent membership as external affairs minister S M Krishna gears up to meet his counterparts from other G4 countries, including Japan, Brazil and Germany, and those of other multi-nation groupings to seek their support.

Curfew extended to all major towns of the Kashmir Valley on Tuesday after violent clashes have claimed life of 17 innocent dead and over 70 injured.

The national capital remained firmly in the grip of dengue with 68 more patients testing positive for the vector-borne disease on Friday, taking the total number of cases to

2,153.

Despite high growth rate, India is nowhere in the recently released world university rankings. The three rankings; Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and QS World University Rankings none of the Indian varsities have made it to the top 100.

National Report

Politics:

BJP says Centre's handling of Kashmir crisis lacks vision

Upping the ante against the UPA government's handling of the current crisis in Jammu and Kashmir, the Bharatiya Janata Party accused the Central and State governments of being completely devoid of any vision on how to deal with the situation. Stating that the Jammu and Kashmir government had completely collapsed, the BJP termed Chief Minister Omar Abdullah “a complete failure” and sought his immediate replacement. In a statement issued after an emergency meeting of the party's Core Group comprising L.K. Advani, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitley, S.S. Ahluwalia and Ravi Shankar Prasad, the BJP cautioned the Centre that this was not the time for appeasement or vote bank politics. “This is a time for action. The government should not under any circumstance consider lifting the Armed Forces Special Powers Act [AFSPA] from any disturbed district of the State. The security environment must be strengthened; miscreants must feel scared and should not be allowed to call the shots. If the government does not realise this, the challenges before the Indian State will worsen,” the statement said. It added that the last three months had seen a sudden worsening of the situation in the Valley, with separatist groups supported from across the border having engineered an environment of violence and terror. Taking a dig at Mr. Abdullah, the BJP said an unpopular Chief Minister suffered complete alienation from his people, and that it was time for him to be replaced by a more acceptable person. Referring to the continued demonstrations and marches across the Valley, the party said the myth that these were peaceful protesters out to make a political statement was shattered during Eid. “Mobs were let loose in the Valley and attempted to threaten public property and human life. The government has completely collapsed. It failed to realise that mobs cannot be allowed to congregate in order to foment trouble,” the party said. The statement said: “The stratagem of the separatists is clear: they want to push the Central government to loosen the political relationship between India and the State of Jammu and Kashmir. “Once the government loses this battle of nerves, the separatists will reject the concessions granted by the Union government and move to the next stage till they realise their declared object of ‘azadi.’ (The Hindu)

Kashmir, Naxalism India's biggest challenges: Gadkari

The Kashmir issue and growing menace of Naxalism are among biggest challenges faced by India, BJP president Nitin Gadkari said. “Among the biggest challenges for the country ahead are social security, economic reforms, food inflation, unemployment, law and order, Maoist-Naxal menace and the Kashmir issue,” Gadkari said. He was addressing the inaugural function of national executive of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), BJP's youth wing, at the Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini. “It is time for the youth of this country to handle all this challenges in a very positive way,” Gadkari said. He emphasised that there should be politics for the development oriented approach and political will to do good. Gadkari asked BJYM members to ensure more youth participate

in nation building process. “We can change the scenario of this country along with ideas of nationalism, good governance and political will,” he said. BJYM should plan for perfection, constructive thinking and leadership initiatives for achievement of long term goals, the BJP chief said. Gadkari appreciated BJYM members for their deep concern for the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and lauded the Yuva Morcha for having taken up the challenge of ‘India First’ (Bharat Pratham) campaign against separatist forces in Kashmir. Stating that BJP is a truly democratic party following the principle of “country first, party second and self last”, Gadkari said nationalism is the soul of India and BJP believes in taking forward this ideology to every Indian. Along with nationalism, good governance is what BJP will look forward to when it regains power at the Centre, Gadkari said. Decentralisation of power and division of work should be taken into account at all levels for development process across the country, he said. Ananth Kumar said through the India First campaign, every Indian should be aware of the current scenario in Jammu and Kashmir and should be able to participate in efforts to save the region going into wrong hands. (The Indian Express)

All-party delegation to visit J&K

The all-party meeting on Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday decided to send a delegation of political parties to the State to meet all sections of the people and assess the ground situation. However, it failed to arrive at a consensus on partial withdrawal or dilution or revocation of the contentious Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). The meeting, convened by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, agreed that the delegation should meet all sections of the people and gather all shades of opinion. The visit will be facilitated by the Home Ministry and the Jammu and Kashmir government. The government will take into account the deliberations at the meeting while considering measures and initiatives to reach out to the people. “The feedback received from the all-party delegation would form an important input into the government's evolving response on various issues relating to Jammu and Kashmir,” said a statement issued after the meeting, which lasted five-and-half hours. The meeting agreed that the “Constitution of India provides ample scope to accommodate any legitimate political demand through dialogue, civil discourse and peaceful negotiations.” Setting the tone for the meeting, the Prime Minister reiterated that the only path for lasting peace and prosperity in the State was that of dialogue and discussion. “It is indeed tragic that some of our people have forsaken this path during the recent days. I was shocked and distressed to see young men and women, even children, joining the protests on the streets.” Dr. Singh said meaningful dialogue could happen only in an atmosphere free from violence and confrontation. “Discussions can take place only if we have calm and public order.” He reiterated his appeal to the State people, especially the youth, to eschew violence. “We are ready for a dialogue with anybody or any group that does not espouse or practise violence. We have also told the State government to restore peace and public order in order to create conditions congenial to a dialogue process. The Central government will provide all possible assistance in this task.” The meeting witnessed Congress president Sonia Gandhi, BJP chief Nitin Gadkari, People's Democratic Party leader Mehbooba Mufti and leaders from the four Left parties agreeing on the need for initiating dialogue with all sections of people in the State. Though all parties spoke in different terms about deficit in

governance, no direct demand was made for the resignation of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Sonia calls for healing

Ms. Gandhi called for setting aside ideological and political differences to arrive at suitable decisions that “will break this vicious cycle of violence and suffering.” She said her party was more than willing to support a process of “healing and dialogue” in partnership with the State people. Linking the turmoil in Kashmir to “anger and pain” among youth who grew up in “conflict and brutality,” Ms. Gandhi said their “legitimate aspirations” must be respected and a magnanimous approach adopted to give them hope. The Left parties said there should be accountability for the security forces and action taken on excesses and human rights violations. Pending the question of amending the AFSPA, the Disturbed Areas proclamation could be revoked from Srinagar and other centres. (The Hindu)

Minorities’ Issues:

Muslim elders appeal for peace

Prominent Indian Muslims have condemned the violent reaction, including the attacks on churches, by a section of the community in India to the alleged desecration of the Holy Koran in the U.S. “Any religious follower has a right to protest the desecration of the religious scriptures but has no right to attack individuals or places of worship of others as Islam forbids it very clearly. Any such attack needs to be equally condemned as that of the desecration of the Koran by two individuals in the U.S.,” said a statement signed by Manzoor Alam, general secretary, All-India Milli Council; Mujtaba Farooque, secretary, Jamat-e-Islami Hind; Niaz Farouqi, secretary, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind; and Navaid Hamid, secretary, South Asian Council for Minorities. The signatories said they equally condemned the attempts of some individuals in the U.S. to desecrate the Quran: “...these misguided individuals [obviously] never went through the message of the Koran which has universal appeal and the message of peace and brotherhood for all mankind...” The group appealed to the Muslim community in India to show restraint as any violent reaction would only deepen the divide between the “followers of the two Abrahamic religions — Islam and Christianity — across the globe.” “We appeal to the governments of U.S. and India to explore all possibilities of legal action against all those who have desecrated the Islamic holy book or have vandalised religious properties or have attacked innocent individuals in the name of religion.” (The Hindu)

Allahabad HC refuses to defer Ayodhya verdict

An effort for deferring the judgement in the 60-year-old title suit in the Ramjanambhoomi- Babri Masjid dispute was on Friday rebuffed by the Allahabad high court, which will now pronounce its verdict on Sept 24. A 3-judge Special Bench of the Court rejected a petition filed by one Ramesh Chandra Tripathi for deferring the judgement for working out an out-of-court amicable settlement of the issue saying there was no merit in the application. The Special Bench, comprising Justice S U Khan ,

Justice D V Sharma and Justice Sudhir Agarwal, decided to imposed a heavy fine which would be annunced later though Justice Agarwal proposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh. The judges asked the parties whether they were interested in going for any discussion for a compromise and none of them showed interest. Following this, the court rejected the petition for deferring the judgement. Tripathi, a defendent in the case, had filed the application for making another attempt to reach a solution to the dispute through reconciliation and deferment of the verdict. Objections were filed on Thursday by Sunni Central Board of Wakf and the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha before Court against any deferment of the verdict and with Friday's order they have become infructous. (Times of India)

Hindu Fundamentalism:

“Muslims must remove trust deficit”

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Tuesday indicated that his organisation's response to the expected Ayodhya verdict later this month would be within the legal, democratic and constitutional framework of the country. He signalled that one party or the other involved in the dispute would appeal to a higher court, the Supreme Court. However, he left no one in doubt about the core RSS belief: Muslims did carry the burden of proving their “patriotic credentials” and had to “remove the trust deficit” by helping to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya. For only then a “clear message would be sent out” that Muslims do not look “outside the country” and “no one will be able to point fingers at them and describe them as unpatriotic.” He was interacting with women journalists at the Indian Women's Press Corps. In his opening remarks, Mr. Bhagwat projected the RSS as a liberal organisation not dogmatic about the “different forms of worship (‘pooja padhiti’)” by different religious communities in India. For his organisation “Hindus” meant “all those who are children of Bharat Mata,” he said. If ‘pooja’ and ‘namaz’ were equally acceptable but different forms of worship, why demolish a mosque at Ayodhya and why insist on building a Ram temple in its place? If the RSS was serving the cause of social harmony and unity, then why did it not agree to both a temple and a mosque at the site or a hospital or a school to serve people of both the communities? Mr. Bhagwat's response to these questions was: “a temple had been destroyed at the spot [by the first Mughal Emperor Babur]” and “Ram was a cultural icon of India for Hindus as well as ordinary Muslims and Ayodhya was his ‘janmasthan.’ ” Will he appeal to the people to remain calm when the verdict on the decades-old dispute is delivered? He did not make any appeal but said there would be no ‘jhanjhat’ (problem) from the RSS and its organisations as the RSS “did not believe in violence.” If the Mayawati government in Uttar Pradesh was in a state of full alert “that is the job of the government.” Repeatedly he signalled the matter was in the hands of the ‘sants’ who would lead the show. And it was the ‘sants’ who would decide the Kashi-Vishwanath and Mathura-Krishna Janmabhoomi issues as well. “They will consult [us] when they need to.” When directly asked, he refused to give any commitment on giving up – or persuading others to give up – the Kashi-Mathura temple-mosque issues if a Ram temple was indeed built in Ayodhya. “Those issues will be decided by the ‘sants’, ” he said, ignoring the fact that the so-called ‘dharma sansad’ (parliament of ‘sants’) is a body

created and controlled by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which in turn is an RSS-affiliate. Yes, the Bharatiya Janata Party had “gained a lot [politically]” from the Ram temple “movement” of the late eighties and early nineties. “It is now for the BJP to think what it wants to do [to join another movement or not]. He evaded a question that possibly the Ram temple issue had lost its earlier appeal, and that could explain the BJP's silence on the issue at the moment. As for the RSS: “We are not here to garner votes. We are committed to the building of a grand temple at Ayodhya.” Asked about “saffron terror,” his response was that the government should catch and punish those found guilty of any terror activity, but no one should drag the name of organisations (the RSS) which have nothing to do with it. “Just think what message we will be giving to the world at a time when internationally Pakistan is seen as a rogue nation on the terror issue. Do we want India to be described in the same way?” On Kashmir, Mr. Bhagwat reiterated the known views of the RSS against abolition of Article 370 of the Constitution and conceding “autonomy” or ‘azadi’ to Kashmiris. “Special status breeds the separatist mindset, which has happened. There should be an attempt to integrate Kashmir with the rest of India. Take people into confidence, win their trust ... the Government failed on that front.” (The Hindu)

Insurgency Movements:

Economic Front:

Ambani to be world's richest: Forbes

With a net worth of USD 62 billion, Indian business tycoon Mukesh Ambani would be the richest man on earth in 2014, according to a forecast issued by the prestigious Forbes magazine. "One of the predictions is that Reliance Industries' chief Ambani, who currently has a net worth of 29 billion dollars, pips the world's richest man Mexican businessman Carlos Slim to top Forbes' rich list in 2014," it said. Ambani's net worth swells to USD 62 billion while Slim is "hit hard by Mexican political, financial chaos," according to the prediction by Forbes. 53-year-old Ambani currently ranks fourth on Forbes' list of the world's billionaires. Forbes has listed a number of events that could happen over the next 10 years in the field of politics, energy, medicine, finance, society and technology. (The Indian Express)

Global slowdown not yet over, India must stay alert: Pranab

Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said that India will have to remain cautious, as the global economic slowdown is not yet over. "We will have to stay alert as India is not alienated from the global situation," Mukherjee said at an event in the Hooghly district of West Bengal. Referring to the recent global forecast of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he said the evaluation made by the inter-governmental organisation was not so rosy. According to the IMF, the European recovery will be delayed and the same is true for Canada and North America, he said. "Since we are not alienated, we will have to stay alert," he said. Mukherjee earlier said that India was the second largest growing economy after China, pointing out that India's GDP growth would be in the region of 8.5 per cent to 8.75 per cent in 2010. (The Indian Express)

US' anti-outsourcing steps to hit Indian IT mkt: Experts

Rising anti-outsourcing sentiment in the US, evident by Ohio State's ban on outsourcing IT services to foreign lands, is likely to adversely impact the \$51-billion Indian IT industry, feel analysts. Ohio's ban came just weeks after the US government hiked the fee for H-1B and L1 visas, a move that would hurt Indian IT players. "The protectionist trend of the USA is definitely worrying and creates uncertainty for the sector in the medium term as the trend might spread to the other states and corporate bodies," a report said. Ohio Governor Ted Strickland of Democratic Party has banned outsourcing saying this undermines economic development and has unacceptable business consequences for his state. "The Ohio move will have long-term impact as most of Indian IT companies have huge exposure to the US market overall. This will not only impact the companies financially but psychologically too," SMC Capitals Equity Head Jagannathan Thunuguntla said. Last week, US President Barak Obama too raised the outsourcing bogey, stressing that he would end "tax breaks" for companies that "create jobs and profits in other countries". The move comes ahead of the US President Barack Obama's visit to India in November and follows a controversial legislation that increased H-1B and L1 visa fees, hitting India's over \$50-billion IT industry. Indian IT companies like Infosys Technologies, Wipro, HCL Technologies and TCS get 60 per cent of their export revenue from the US. "The move may dampen the Indian IT companies in a long-run, amid fears that other US states may too follow the suit in order to create local jobs," Ashika Brokers Research Head Paras Bothra said. Voicing a similar note, IT and BPO industry apex body Nasscom had said, "Ohio state's proposed ban on outsourcing of government IT projects comes at a time when the November elections to the United State Congress and Ohio governorship are drawing nearer." But some analysts feel that this move is a political gimmick and will not have much impact on the Indian IT companies. "More than the IT companies, MNC's like IBM and Accenture are more exposed to the fears of a ban. It's a political gimmick and moreover a temporary sentiment," Angel Broking Research analyst Srishti Anand said. (The Indian Express)

Indian growth model wins praise over Chinese rival

Indian economic growth, often described as chaotic and weighed down by poor infrastructure, came in for praise from experts here, compared to more disciplined but highly autocratic Chinese model. While Indian economic growth was fuelled more by high domestic consumption and services, the Chinese model relied heavily on manufacturing and exports, said Western and Chinese experts at the state TV debate, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum being held. Besides, India has comparative strategic advantage in the value chain whereas China relied mostly on the labour and cost advantages, said Fu Jun, Professor of the Political Economy of the Peking University. "India in comparison has done a better job", Jun said. "What is interesting from now on is which one is more viable. I have to give credit to India. What India will do next is to continue the strategy and move into other areas. By comparison we (China) have to readjust our strategy into manufacturing. I do not see reasonable balance between supply and demand," he added. Human Resources Development Minister Kapil Sibal, who was participating in the debate, said, "Because our economy is based on domestic demand,

there is much greater innovation and ability of the entrepreneurs to actually produce wealth. In the long run a lot of innovation and lot of wealth production is going to come from our part of the world." Martin Wolf, Associate Editor of the Financial Times, who was critical of the Indian growth model said, however, "Indian development is working despite failure of organisation and poor infrastructure. It is clear that lot of successful multinational companies have good assets in India." The debate, the first of the three was held on the side lines of the Geneva based World Economic Forum which was being held at Chinese port city of Tianjin, where over 1,400 political, business leaders and economists gathered to deliberate on "Driving Growth through Sustainability". Besides Sibal, Karnataka Chief Minister, BS Yeddyurappa and a host of Indian business leaders are taking part in the meeting, which is inaugurated by Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao. (The Indian Express)

Foreign Relations/Geo-strategic developments:

Pakistan calls for restraint

Pakistan on Tuesday urged India to abandon its policy of "violence" against the people of Kashmir and "procrastination" on their demand for self-determination. Instead of using force, India should exercise restraint and work for finding a solution to the Jammu & Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant resolution of the United Nations and aspirations of the Kashmiris, Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi said in a statement issued by the Foreign Office. Expressing Pakistan's "unequivocal solidarity" with the people of J&K, the Minister condemned the use of "blatant violence" by Indian security forces against protesters, causing loss of scores of lives since June this year. Mr. Qureshi also made it clear that Pakistan would continue to extend political, moral and diplomatic support to the people of J&K for their right to self-determination. (The Hindu)

Another 26/11 may lead to Indo-Pak war with nukes: US expert

In the event of another Mumbai- type attack, India is most likely to strike back by eliminating terrorist training camps across the border which may lead to a "full-blown" Indo-Pak war involving possibility of a nuclear exchange, a noted US counter-terrorism expert has said. "I think a very serious concern that we should all be collectively worried about is the possibility of a Mumbai II attack," Peter Bergen, the Counter-terrorism Strategy Initiative Co-Director at New America Foundation, said in his testimony before the House Homeland and Security Committee. Mumbai-II, Bergen, said would change every strategic calculation in South Asia. "I think the Indians showed great restraint after the last Mumbai attack. But their populations are going to demand some kind of retribution if a large-scale attack happens on Indian soil by a Pakistani militant group, which I think is one of the more foreseeable foreign policy challenges we have going forward," he told the committee, which had organised a hearing on the evolving nature of terrorism nine years after 9/11. One of the more predictable US foreign policy challenges of the next years is a "Mumbai II": a large-scale attack on a major Indian city by a Pakistani militant group that kills hundreds, Bergen said. However, an attack like this

would likely produce considerable political pressure on the Indian government to "do something," he said. "That something would likely involve incursions over the border to eliminate the training camps of Pakistani militant groups with histories of attacking India. That could lead in turn to a full-blown war for the fourth time since 1947 between India and Pakistan," he said. "Such a war involves the possibility of a nuclear exchange and the certainty that Pakistan would move substantial resources to its eastern border and away from fighting the Taliban on its western border, so relieving pressure on all the militant groups based there, including al-Qaeda," Bergen said. (Times of India)

India to recharge bid for UN Security Council seat

India is set to accelerate its diplomatic effort for reform of the UN Security Council as external affairs minister S M Krishna gears up to meet his counterparts from other G4 countries, including Japan, Brazil and Germany, and those of other multi-nation groupings to seek their support. Krishna leaves for New York on a 10-day visit during which he will represent India at high-segment meetings of the 65th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and other associated events. The G4 foreign ministers are expected to meet on the sidelines of the UNGA next week to review the progress in their campaign and rejig their strategy for accelerating the long-dragging reforms of the UN Security Council. The meetings come at a hopeful moment for India as it readies to get elected to a non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council for 2011-12 in October with an overwhelming majority. If all goes well for New Delhi, India will be in the Security Council for a two-year term as a non-permanent member from Jan 1, 2011 -- the first time in 19 years it will get the prized seat. With barely days to go before the UN General Assembly decides on India's bid for a non-permanent seat Oct 1, Krishna will be networking extensively and address multi-nation groupings, including G-77 foreign ministers meeting on Sept 24, the SAARC foreign ministers' gathering Sept 29, and the meetings of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China), IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and RIC (Russia, India and China). In a positive development for India, some of the countries in the United for Consensus, informally called Coffee Club, who were opposed to the G4 bid, are now backing India's claim for a permanent seat. Many countries in the Coffee Club did not have problems with India's candidature, but were hostile to their rivals in the G4 grouping. Pakistan opposed India's bid, Mexico opposed Brazil's candidature, and Italy was dead set against Brazil's UN ambitions. Now, many of the Coffee Club countries are backing India for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council, an indication that many of them will finally veer around to supporting India for a permanent seat as well. (Times of India)

Pak seeks 'full resumption' of dialogue process with India

Pakistan sought an "early and full resumption" of the dialogue process with India, saying it wants constructive, sustained and result-oriented talks on all issues, including the Kashmir problem. Foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Pakistan is committed to finding a "just and peaceful resolution of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people," according to a statement issued by the Foreign Office. He said "Pakistan has

sought early and full resumption of the dialogue process with India" and "wants a constructive, sustained and result-oriented dialogue with India on all issues, including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute." At the same time, Qureshi said Pakistan will "continue to stand by the Kashmiris in their just cause." "Gross and systematic abuse of human rights ... in Kashmir must end. Pakistan calls upon the Government of India to exercise restraint," Qureshi said. He said Pakistan has taken "serious note of the deteriorating situation" in Jammu and Kashmir. "The indigenous movement in (Jammu and Kashmir) has gained a new momentum and urgency. The Kashmiris are unanimous in their demand for self-determination," he said. Qureshi said Pakistan condemns the alleged "blatant" use of force by Indian security forces against the protesters. The statement by Qureshi was the strongest reaction from the Foreign Office to the recent developments in Jammu and Kashmir. It comes at a time when leaders of opposition parties like the PML-N and politicians from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir have stepped up pressure on the government to take up the situation in Jammu and Kashmir with the international community. (Times of India)

India to raise its concern over protectionism at G20 meet

India will raise its concern over the increasing protectionist policies in the United States at the upcoming G20 meeting, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Friday. "G20 needs to coordinate policies in a manner that should ensure sustainable and balanced growth," Mukherjee said at a conference on G20 issues organised by ICRIER. He said G20 member countries should work together to ensure financial stability and make international trade more open and transparent. Mukherjee said India would lobby with other countries of the group to raise the issue of increasing tendencies of protectionism in some countries, especially in the United States. The fifth summit of G20 is scheduled to be held in South Korea on Nov 11 and 12. Finance ministers of the group of 20 countries will meet next month to outline the agenda for the meeting of the head of states. Referring to the global economic crisis, Mukherjee said a coordinated effort should be made to overcome the crisis as no country was insulated from it. He said the global economic crisis was turning out to be more broader and deeper than expected. The US government recently announced a series of measures to curb outsourcing of business and boost demand for local products. The state of Ohio in the US early this month said it would forbid outsourcing of IT services by government departments. The US has also increased visa fee by \$2,000 for certain H-1B and \$2,250 for L1 categories. This will negatively affect the businesses of Indian IT companies which are dependent on the US for over 60 per cent of their income. (Times of India)

Military:

S Asia should collectively tackle terrorism threat: Army chief

Chief of Army Staff V K Singh on Friday said the threat of terrorism should be tackled collectively by all countries of South Asia for a more stable environment for economic growth. Inaugurating a two-day seminar on "India's role in South Asia: Strategic challenges and opportunities in 21st century", he referred to security dynamics country wise in the region, including Sri Lanka, which is looking at rehabilitating and resettling

internally displaced persons during the LTTE-Sri Lankan Army conflict. "The security situation will entirely depend on how these efforts succeed. If the majority community there is more magnanimous, takes greater interest in amalgamating the minority, we will find much more stability which ensures that security situation in our country remains all right," he said. He said South Asia should adopt a collective approach for regional security and development, without which it would be very difficult for it to find its place in the world order. "If we want South Asia as an entity to progress we should have mutual balance in exploitation of global commons. These are space, cyber space ocean and communications," he said. The Army chief said social unrest, political revolution and violence driven by various separatist movements in some of the countries affect the entire region. He said economic growth would give stability and ensure that this populous region has equitable wealth distribution, which would take people forward to areas of growth and development. He said South Asia, like much of Europe, would soon find they may like to have much more free trade, which would ensure that markets could be used collectively by all nations. "If we put more barriers, if we try to pull down each other in various practices that prevail, we will find it will only lead to mistrust and more harm than good," he said. Pointing out that 'youth bulge' would be the next problem facing South Asia, he said studies had shown 95 per cent of increase in world population by 2025 would be in this region, affecting the way youth are tackled in terms of jobs and directing their energies for the gains a nation wants. "If not tackled properly, it will bring in great pressure on these countries and ensure that progress wanted is retarded because we are not able to harness the workforce which will get directed into something that is not useful," he said. (Times of India)

Indian Occupied Kashmir:

Curfew extended to all major towns of Kashmir Valley

Curfew extended to all major towns of the Kashmir Valley on Tuesday as a precautionary measure after violent clashes left 17 people dead and over 70 injured, official sources said here. The sources said the curfew was imposed in fresh areas as a precautionary measure and to prevent people from pouring out on roads and streets. Srinagar city, Anantnag, Bijbehara, Awantipora, Lethpora, Pampore and Pulwama towns in south Kashmir and Sopore town in north Kashmir were already under curfew since Sunday. The new areas that have been brought under the ambit of prohibitory orders include Budgam town, Choon, Mirgund, Ompora, Narkara, Shekhpora, Humhama, I.G.Road, Gulwanpora, Nadir Gund, Chadoora and Wathoor in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Curfew was also imposed in Ganderbal and Kangan towns, Kulgam, Qoimoh, Shopian town, Baramulla town, Tangmarg, Kupwara town, Treggham, Kralpora, Handwara, Chotipora, Kulangam and Bandipora town. (The Indian Express)

Social front:

Over 2,150 dengue cases in Delhi

The national capital remained firmly in the grip of dengue with 68 more patients testing positive for the vector-borne disease on Friday, taking the total number of cases to 2,153.

The capital has reported five dengue deaths this season. During the same period last year, the number of cases of the vector-borne disease in the city was only 18 while it was 294 and 52 in the corresponding periods in 2008 and 2007. South Delhi continued to be worst-affected this season recording 335 cases, followed by MCD Civil Lines Zone (299), Central Zone (279) and Rohini (246). The civic bodies are attributing the rapid increase in dengue cases this season to prolonged monsoon and stagnation of water at Commonwealth Games construction sites. The dengue outbreak has also raised concern among several countries which are sending teams to participate in the Games to be held here next month. Over 20 nations had sought information from the Games Organising Committee about the dengue outbreak and steps being taken to combat it. Delhi government had earlier directed MCD to form 100 teams to spray mosquito repellent in the area of two km radius surrounding the Games Village in east Delhi. The MCD teams are being assisted by trained personnel of National Disaster Response Force. The health personnel yesterday went in 21 boats to spray anti-larval chemical on three sides of the Games Village. (Times of India)

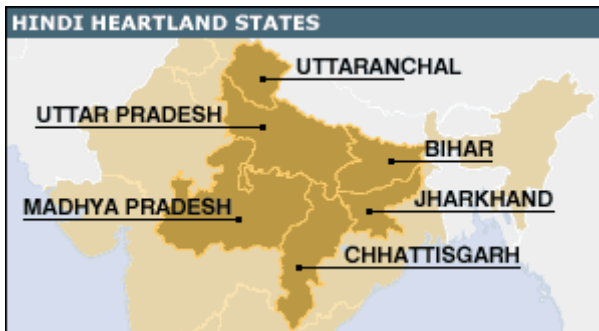
India doesn't figure in world top-100 universities

India is nowhere in the recently released world university rankings. The three rankings — Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and QS World University Rankings — are just out, but none of the Indian varsities have made it to the top 100. While overall the US dominates all the three rankings, the QS rankings have China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Israel, Taiwan and even Thailand ahead of India with IIT- Bombay in the 187th position. In the other two rankings, (Times Higher Education World University Rankings and Academic Ranking of World Universities) India finds no place in the top 200, but Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Turkey bag decent places in between the two rankings. B K Mathur, dean, planning and co-ordination, IIT Kharagpur, however, dismisses the world university rankings as a subject for "coffee table discussions". But at a time when India is being hyped as a future knowledge economy and the country is emerging as the new academic destination globally, isn't international benchmarking in education important for India? Mathur stresses, "It is not ranking but word of mouth that conveys our academic excellence to students. We have 50,000 alumni across the world, they are our ambassadors." However, agreeing that the world is watching us, Narendra Jadhav, member, Planning Commission, says, "Though the international ranking methodology is erroneous, Indian universities need to be open to international benchmarking. What they lack is a proper 'management of information system'. Also, there needs to be greater awareness among universities to at least give out accurate information so that it reflects their true academic status." S K Barua, director, IIM-A, stresses that international benchmarking is becoming important and with the world becoming smaller and global student mobility increasing, "we need to realise that if we go up the ranking as a nation, education is going to give us inflow of foreign exchange. Besides, I believe that we have the potential to excel and if we are keen India can become the Mecca of higher education." Despite India's skepticism, rankings are becoming an important determinant. As Jonathan Adams, director of research evaluation, Thomson Reuters (Times Higher Education has tied up with Thomson

Reuters this year), points out, "Well developed and information-rich rankings can be a helpful guide to students about relative standing of universities worldwide." (Times of India)

Regional Report

Central India (Hindi Heartland)

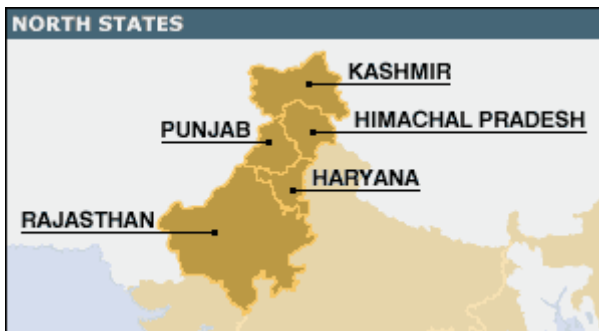


Politics:

Social front:

Economic Front:

The North

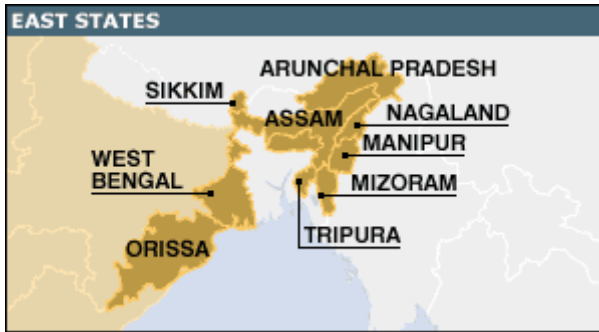


Politics:

Social front:

Economic Front:

The East



Politics:

Alliance with Trinamool only if self-respect is ensured: Rahul

An alliance with the Trinamool Congress was essential to dislodge the Communist Party of India (Marxist) from power in West Bengal, but it could happen only if the self-respect of the Congress was ensured, Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi said on Tuesday. Mr. Gandhi, who is on three-day visit to West Bengal, called for strengthening the party organisation in the State. He held closed-door meetings with Youth Congress workers and participated in minority conventions at Santiniketan in Birbhum district, Barasat in North 24 Parganas district and in the Garden Reach area on the outskirts of the city. “Mr. Gandhi told us that we must fight together to end the 35-year rule of the CPI(M), but never compromise on the self-respect of the Congress,” said Pradeep Bayen, a Youth Congress member, after the session with Mr. Gandhi at Garden Reach. “He said the Congress, respecting the Trinamool, gave seven ministerial berths to the party in the UPA government and this respect must be reciprocated,” said local MLA Abdul Khalek Mollah, who was present at the minority convention. Mr. Gandhi said change was coming in West Bengal and the Youth Congress would bring about this change. “If the [Youth Congress] organisation can be strengthened, the CPI(M) will be forced to shut shop here.” He promised free and fair elections in the Youth Congress. People could be appointed to various post in the Youth Congress only through elections and “no leader shall be forced from above.” The State had not done anything for the minority communities. The Sachar Committee report had proved that the communities here had fallen behind, he said. “If you have the ability, you can be the leader of the whole country, not just of West Bengal or of a minority community,” Mr. Gandhi said, adding that it had happened in States like Maharashtra. “There is reservation for minority communities, but it is not necessary for you to progress in the organisation. If you work hard, you will move ahead in the Youth Congress.” (The Hindu)

Social front:

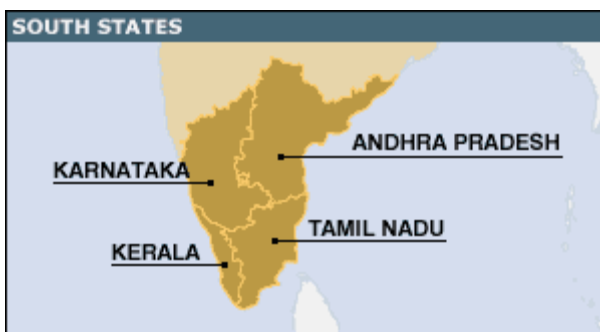
Sikkim has the highest suicide rate

Sikkim has dislodged the usual top ranker Kerala as the State with the highest suicide rate in the country, according to Lakshmi Vijayakumar, regional representative of the World Health Organisation on suicide prevention and founder of SNEHA, a non-governmental

organisation. Addressing a Continuing Medical Education programme organised by the Department of Psychiatry, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute (CHRI), Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar said Sikkim, with a suicide rate of 48.2 per lakh of population, and Puducherry, with a rate of 46.9 per lakh, presented a new and worrying trend of an escalation of suicides in smaller States. She said that Kerala dropped to the fourth position with a suicide rate of 25 per lakh, while the Andaman and Nicobar Islands ranked third with a rate of 34.5 per lakh. Bangalore led the list among cities, with a rate of 42.1 per lakh, followed by Rajkot (31.5), Jabalpur (24.4) and Vijayawada (23.2). Chennai (20.4) and Tamil Nadu (21.7) were ranked sixth among cities and States respectively. “The data trends more or less perpetuate the status of southern States having relatively higher suicide rates than the northern States,” she said. India has a suicide rate of 10.8 on a par with developed countries. If one mapped suicide trends from an economics standpoint, suicide rates seemed to be higher in transition economies, she said. Statistical analysis showed that while men were more prone to committing suicide than women, Asian women had the highest suicide rate irrespective of the development status of their country. Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar felt that the Western proposition of a mental disorder as an underlying factor in a majority of suicide victims might not apply to India. Apart from depression and alcohol, almost 50 per cent of suicide victims in the country had no history of mental disturbance. Noting that suicide ideation was a dynamic than a static state of mind, she stressed the importance of periodic assessment. The handful of interventions among the innumerable prevention strategies tried out had succeeded because of the ambivalence — the clash of will to live and will to end it all — of the affected individual, she pointed out. Some of the effective measures included reducing access to methods and means of suicide, crisis support and helplines, drugs such as Lithium and Clozapine and enlightened media reporting on suicides, she said. While the media can often be a double-edged sword in terms of suicide ideation, the media in Tamil Nadu had to be credited with being instrumental in the government's pioneering decision to allow students who fail Class X or XII examinations to re-appear without having to lose a year — a measure that led to a decline in examination failure-triggered suicides. Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar said a national suicide prevention strategy was imperative for India, where an estimated 5 million attempted suicides are carried out every year. (The Hindu)

Economic Front:

The South



Politics:

Social front:

Economic Front:

West India



Politics:

Social front:

Economic Front:

BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

News Monitoring Report No. 137 on South India

Reference period: Sep.10-17, 2010

Presentation: Sep.22, 2010

Rushdy Nizar

Andhra Pradesh

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- City blasts accused have Pune link

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Detailed Report Kerala

CPM leader Peroorkkada Sadasivan died

Peroorkkada Sadasivan, CPI-M leader and veteran trade unionist, died here Saturday, party sources said. Sadasivan (82) had been keeping indifferent health for some time.

For long, he had served as member of the CPI-M's state committee and Thiruvananthapuram district committee. He was in the forefront several labour struggles in the south Kerala.

In a condolence message, CPI-M state secretary Pinarayi Vijayan said Sadasivan had made significant contributions to the party as well as its trade union wing CITU.

He had played a vital role in organizing laborers in different sectors including the loading and unloading workers. His contribution in building the CPI-M as a frontline political force in south Kerala was also great, Vijayan said.

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

ECONOMY

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Coromandel mulls urea plant in Russia, Middle East

Chennai, Sep 8 (IANS) Fertilizer major Coromandel International is looking out for opportunities in Middle East or in Russia to set up a urea plant.

Part of the city-based \$3.03 billion industrial conglomerate, Coromandel International will start its retail operations in Karnataka while mulling an entry into farm equipment and drip irrigation.

'We do not produce urea. However setting up a plant in India is not viable owing to the high gas price. On the other hand, we are looking at Middle East or Russia,' V.

Ravichandran, lead director (fertilizers and sugars) of the Murugappa group said here Wednesday.

He said the company, currently importing and selling farm equipment, is planning to expand business by adding more products as well as look at drip irrigation products.

According to him, the company is also planning to double the paddy farm services - like raising a nursery bed, ploughing, weeding - this fiscal in Andhra Pradesh to around 4,000 acres.

Speaking about expanding retail outlets for farm products, Ravichandran said: 'We are tweaking the retail model after its success in Andhra Pradesh. There we own all the 425 outlets. But in Karnataka we are looking at franchisee route. We will soon have around 20 outlets in Karnataka.'

According to him, the company is investing around Rs.350 crore on expanding its capacity to 4.2 million tones per annum from the current 3.2 million tones.

Andhra Pradesh

CM irked by outsourcing ban

Hyderabad, Sept. 10: The Chief Minister, Mr. K. Rosaiah, on Friday expressed dismay at the decision of the Ohio state government in the United States to ban outsourcing.

The Chief Minister cautioned that raising invisible trade barriers on the eve of the President, Mr. Barack Obama's visit to India in November 2010 would not augur well for the relations between the two biggest democracies in the world.

Mr. Rosaiah was reacting to Ohio State's decision to ban outsourcing and Mr. Obama indicating that incentives to companies outsourcing IT projects would be withdrawn.

The Chief Minister, in a statement, said that more than half of the world's top 500 companies outsource their work to India which has become the world's back office.

"Our state has become an information technology hub providing employment to more than two lakh people in various Indian and multinational companies," he said.

The Chief Minister apprehended that any hasty decision by the US would be detrimental to the interests of all our IT employees as well as fresh graduates, who had tremendous potential.

The Chief Minister also wrote letters to the Union external affairs minister, Mr S.M. Krishna, commerce and industry minister Mr Anand Sharma, and the information technology minister, Mr Raja, in expressing concern over the developments and seeking their intervention to prevent adverse impact on the state and national economies.

"It is ironical that a country like the US which advocates free markets and competition, is opposing outsourcing at a time when more and more countries are opening up their markets for competition," he pointed out.

The Chief Minister also said the anti-outsourcing plans are jarring at a time when the bilateral trade and business relations between the two countries are likely to deepen and widen in the wake of the civil nuclear cooperation agreement.

Karnataka

ENERGY

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

DRDO's commercial arm by year-end

Bangalore: DRDO plans to form a commercial arm by year-end as it seeks to put in place an aggressive approach towards marketing and commercialization of its products and technologies and exports, a senior official said. DRDO was exploring the possibility of export of Akash and Nag missiles besides the Light Combat Aircraft (Trainer) among others, developed by it, DRDO Research and Development Chief Controller Prahlada said, adding the proposed venture would be similar to Antrix, the marketing arm of ISRO.

"If not today, tomorrow we want to start export," Prahlada said after unveiling the logo of newly formed Bangalore Defense and Aerospace Journalists' Forum (BDAJF) and delivering the inaugural talk.

"We would have a commercial arm for export of defense items... so that we are going to see a different type of business models," he said.

ENVIRONMENT

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

IMMIGRATION/ REFUGEE/ IDPs

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

HEALTH

Kerala

Kerala DCA files cases of violation of rule 18C against 2 hospitals, seizes drugs worth Rs.3 lakhs

Even as the dispute over drug license between the Kerala drug control authorities and the members of the QPMPA is on, the drug control officials on last Friday seized drugs worth lakhs of rupees from two hospitals.

Reverse Shoulder Surgery Performed in Kochi

The Lakeshore hospital in Kochi became the first hospital in South India to perform a reverse shoulder transplant surgery on a 72-year old man.

One of the country's best orthopedic surgeon Dr Jacob Varghese performed the operation on a patient who had already tried to correct his rotator cuff tear through a surface surgery without any success. Dr Varghese managed to replace the joint using a Delta reverse shoulder which is very effective in maintaining the alignment of the shoulder joints.

Dr Varghese said that the reverse shoulder transplant surgery has newly arrived in the country, adding that around 20 percent of all those who suffered from rotator cuff arthropathy last year preferred to travel overseas in order to undergo the surgery and thereby increasing the treatment costs by almost 50 percent.

Tamil Nadu

Government employee dies of swine flu in Tamil Nadu

Chennai, Sep 10 (IANS) A 39-year-old person died of swine flu at the Government General Hospital here Friday.

Hospital dean J. Mohanasundaram told reporters Mohanavelu was earlier suffering from fever and cough, and underwent treatment at a private hospital.

An assistant public relations officer at the state secretariat, Mohanavelu was treated for viral infection for ten days and was discharged. However, his condition turned worse and he was again admitted to the same hospital. Later he was found to be infected with swine flu.

Mohanasundaram said the patient was shifted to the Government General Hospital in a critical condition.

Four people, suffering from swine flu, were undergoing treatment in the hospital, he said

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

HUMAN RIGHTS/ GENDER/ SOCIAL ISSUES

Kerala

Muslims in Kerala celebrate Eid-ul-fitr

Thiruvananthapuram: Muslims in Kerala Friday celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr, marking the end of the fasting month of Ramzan. People congregated in large numbers in the mosques and Eidgahs across the state, where special prayers for Eid were held.

Religious scholars and community leaders called upon the people to re-dedicate themselves to the tenets of Islam to foster social and communal harmony.

Governor R S Gavai and Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan extended their greetings to the Muslims of the state on the occasion.

Kozhikode will be made a "sports city": Minister

Kozhikode, Sept 4 (PTI) Kerala Sports Minister, M Vijay Kumar, today said Kozhikode city will be converted into a 'Sports City'. Speaking after inaugurating the construction works on the new grand stadium here, Vijay Kumar said it is being built against the backdrop of the coming 35th National Games to be held in May 2011 in Kerala, in which Kozhikode is one of the venues for some events. The estimated expense for the grand stand at the stadium will be around Rs 18

crore, he said. With the completion of the national games, major towns in the state, will be ready for hosting national as well as international meets, he said. A synthetic track at an expense of Rs 4.50 crore is coming up in Kozhikode, besides an indoor stadium at a cost of Rs 32 crore, he said. The construction of the grand stadium was expected to be completed within eight months.

DYFI protest turns violent, AI office vandalized

Kozhikode, Sep 6 (PTI) DYFI's state-wide protest against cancellation of Air India Express flight services from Kerala to Gulf countries turned violent today with its activists allegedly vandalizing the airlines booking office here. About 150 activists of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), who took out a protest march, barged into the AI office after pushing aside police guarding it, damaged furniture, computers and broke glass panes, police said. No arrests have been made yet, they said. Similar marches were taken out to Air India booking offices in Kochi, Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram. In Kochi, the activists raised slogans and tried to gatecrash into the city office but were stopped by police. Air India Express has cancelled three flights to Muscat per week from September 13 and daily flights to Sharjah from Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode airports from September 20, airline sources in Kochi said. The Thiruvananthapuram-Dubai and Thiruvananthapuram-Abu Dhabi daily flights have been cancelled from September 20. All the passengers booked on the cancelled flights are being accommodated in Air India and Indian Airlines flights to the Gulf, they said. The flights have been cancelled due to staff shortage, they said, adding the cancellations were being made effective only after the peak rush when schools re-open in the first week of September in the Gulf. The Malabar Chamber of Commerce said the cancellations of the flights had severely affected Non-Resident Keralites. It had also emailed letters to Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh and Union Aviation minister Praful Patel, urging for the resumption of the cancelled flight services.

Varsity tells college to take back lecturer

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The syndicate of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, on Thursday decided to ask the management of Church-run Newman

College to revoke the dismissal of lecturer TJ Joseph whose right hand was chopped off by alleged Muslim fanatics last July 4 alleging blasphemy.

After the syndicate's meeting, VC Rajan Gurukkal said the college management had not followed norms while taking action against Joseph. The university, he said, would ask the college to take him back.

The management of Newman College, Thodupuzha, had suspended Joseph soon after a controversy over a question paper set by him for an internal exam.

Despite the university revoking Joseph's suspension, the college gave him the marching orders on September 1 stating it was necessary to protect secular credentials of the institution.

Joseph, meanwhile, shot off a letter to the college management pleading he is taken back on humanitarian grounds. He argued his salary was the only source of income for his family. The College is run by Kothamangalam diocese of Syro Malabar Church.

T J Joseph, a professor at Newman College, Thodu-puzha, withdrew a question alleged to be derogatory about the Prophet after Muslims groups protested. He apologized for it as well. But he was attacked by the radical Muslim group Popular Front of India. Now, he finds himself minus his hand and his job and, according to his sister, in "a state of shock".

After hooch tragedy, Kerala MLA gives up toddy trade

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Amidst shrieks of death in Kerala's Malappuram district hit by one of its worst hooch tragedies that claimed 25 people, there was some pleasant news on Thursday with a Congress MLA in toddy business for 35 years deciding to give it up.

"After 35 years in the business, I have decided to give up," K Achutan, who represents Chittoor in the assembly, told TOI on Thursday, a day after excise minister PK Gurudasan pointed fingers at his kin.

"Neither me, nor anyone related to me will have anything to do with toddy henceforth," Achutan said adding licenses of five liquor vends in the name of his kin would be surrendered.

German Bakery blast accused was part of Kerala radical outfit

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives Mirza Himayat Baig and Shaikh Lal Baba Mohammad Hussain Farid alias Bilal, arrested on Tuesday in connection with the Pune German Bakery blast, had indoctrinated several youths and were instrumental in setting up a wide network of terror sleeper cells across the country.

Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) interrogations of the duo has further revealed that Baig was an active member of Popular Front of India (PFI), a radical group in South India, and he had been arranging recruits for the group.

"Baig claims to have arranged and sent several youths for terrorist training. He was entrusted with the responsibility of setting up a base for the LeT in tandem with the Indian Mujahideen (IM) in Maharashtra," said an ATS official, requesting anonymity.

The fact that ATS teams have started visiting places like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Daman, Diu, Tamil Nadu and New Delhi for investigations, clearly indicates that he has already spread his network at these places.

Baig has also revealed that his journey from Aurangabad to Colombo via Hyderabad and Chennai started in March 2008. "Faiyaz Kagzi and one more person, believed to be an expert in assembling explosives, had met him. Kagzi and his aide were already there in Colombo then," the official said.

Baig had undergone three weeks of training in organizing recruits and bomb-making techniques in a camp in Colombo. "When Baig returned, Kagzi had given him Rs2.5 lakh to get a new identity and set up base of radicals in Maharashtra. Baig, who was already on the run because of his previous cases in Pune, had been changing his locations from Beed to Pune to Bhatkal and later settled in Udgir," the official said.

He then rented a house for Rs24, 000 for one year and purchased few computers to set up his Global Internet Cafe in Udgir, the police said.

"Baig has also revealed that he had sent Bilal to Muzaffarpur and Lahore in Pakistan to attend terrorist training camps.

Squashing charge sheet: HC dismisses plea by Madhani

Plea by PDP chairman Abdul Nasser Madhani to annul the additional charge sheet framed against him the 2008 Bangalore serial blasts case was dismissed by the High Court here Thursday.

The HC said a prima facie case exists against Madhani. Prosecution has evidence regarding Madhani's links with other accused in the case and more such evidence is likely to obtain during the probe, the court observed.

Kerala top cop's LeT link nailed

It is a letter which proves controversial Kerala suspended top cop Tomin Thachankary's nexus with the LeT. TIMES NOW is in possession of this letter written by the home ministry to the chief secretary of the Kerala govt after the cop's frequent trips abroad.

The letter suggests that Kannur IG Thachankary met with terror suspects linked to Bangalore blasts - during his recent visit to Qatar.

TIME NOW has also learnt that the National Investigation Agency - which has been assigned to look into this case has recorded the statement of the Indian Ambassador to Doha.

The NIA also quizzed the top cop on Tuesday and is expected to submit its probe report anytime soon.

New CVC an accused in palmolein scam in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Centre may have given a clean chit to P J Thomas, the Kerala cadre IAS officer who has been appointed the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, but to the State Vigilance Anti-Corruption Bureau, he is still an accused in the palmolein import case.

State government sources said so far there is no information on the exoneration of Thomas in the case charge sheeted in the court of the Enquiry Commissioner and Special Judge (Vigilance) here in 2003.

Thomas is the eighth accused in the case (6/2003) charge sheeted by the VACB.

Further proceedings in the case were stayed after K Karunakaran, another accused in the case, approached the Supreme Court maintaining that the Speaker's permission was required to prosecute him.

VACB sources said as per the current status of the case, P J Thomas is still an accused in the case. "We don't have any records showing Thomas has been exonerated in the case," the source said. The Vigilance Special Court where the case was registered too does not have any record to show that Thomas has been exonerated of the charges. While the Prime Minister has held high Thomas's integrity, Home Minister P Chidambaram said Thomas was exonerated in the palm oil import scam.

The appointment of Thomas as CVC had sparked off a controversy with the BJP questioning his integrity over his alleged involvement in a 2G spectrum deal as well as the palmolein case. Subsequently, the Congress leadership had come to his rescue. The case pertains to irregularities in the import of 15,000 tones of palmolein to the state through the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco).

According to the Vigilance case, the then Chief Minister K Karunakaran colluded with Food Minister T H Mustafa, Chief Secretary S Padmakumar, Supplyco MD Jiji Thomson and Civil Supplies Secretary P J Thomas to cause a loss of Rs 2.80 crore to the exchequer.

Delegation to Delhi in connection with online lottery

Kozhikode: A delegation under the auspices of Kerala Bhagyakkuri Samrakshana Samithi, will submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh demanding banning of online lottery and promoters lottery.

Speaking to media persons here today, M V Jayarajan, Convener of the Kerala Bhagyakkuri samrakshana Samithi, said that the delegation will also meet Central ministers in this connection.

They have also sought the cooperation of the MPs, he said. 'If congress MLA V D Satheesan was sincere in his talks, he should also join the delegation to Delhi', Jayarajan said. Satheesan was the first MLA to raise the lottery issue in the Kerala assembly.

Popular Front linked to LeT, Hizbul, says Kerala govt

The Kerala government informed the state high court that investigators have obtained evidence regarding the connection of radical outfit Popular Front of India [Images], which allegedly launched a brutal attack on a college lecturer in July, with the Hizbul Mujahideen Lashkar-e Tayiba and Al Qaeda.

The submission in this regard was made by R Rajashekhara Nair; Deputy Secretary (Home) in a counter affidavit filed in a PIL by Gireesh Babu seeking a ban on PFI and to handover the investigation on the attack of the lecturer to National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The government assured that a proper and detailed investigation shall be conducted by the state into the PFI's activities. Some of the materials

seized by investigators indicate that this organization was trying to propagate an extremist ideology among its cadres, it was stated. The state government also claimed that terrorism is not deep rooted in the state. The government said that there had been no major terrorist attack in the state.

Pointing that the power to ban PFI rests with the union government, the government said that PFI's linkages with organizations like SIMI [Images] are under investigation. In Kerala, the National Democratic Front (NDF) and PFI activists have been involved in several crime cases including murder. Allegations regarding the inflow of foreign funds to extremists are being looked into by police and state intelligence. The allegation that terrorists were getting weaponry, financial and political support from Pakistan is under enquiry by the central government agency, the affidavit stated.

The investigation into the attack on college lecturer, Professor T J Joseph, was progressing and this cannot be transferred to the National Investigation Agency. The allegations regarding PFI and STPI, Popular Front's sister organization, are propagating extreme ideology was under enquiry.

SI shot dead by accused in woman harassment case

Malappuram: In a shocking incident never heard in Kerala, a Sub-Inspector in the district was shot dead by an accused in a woman harassment case when the official went to his house for the execution of a warrant, Sunday.

Police said the incident occurred when Vijay Krishnan (53) went to the house of Mujib Rehman at Chokkadu near Kalikavu, about 45 km from here, along with a team to execute the warrant, issued by a family court, in the district. Mujib after committing the crime, escaped to the nearby forest area, they said.

Though Vijay Krishnan was taken to a nearby hospital, he breathed his last before reaching there, police said. Meanwhile, Kerala Home minister, Kodyeri Balakrishnan, expressing sorrow over the death of the SI, said the incident was 'serious' and the search for the accused was on.

Orders have already been given to take follow up action in connection with the incident, the minister said. Balakrishnan said government would provide all help to the family of the Sub-Inspector.

Director General of Police Jacob Punnoose said that all effort will be made to nab the culprit will be nabbed with the help of the people. Though our job is a risky one, this was the first time that such an incident had taken place, he said, adding the morale of the police is always high as we always get the support of the people.

The preliminary report had said that the accused had used a country made pistol, but only the postmortem will confirm it, he said. He is survived by wife and two children.

Comfort stations for women to be operational on Sept 13

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala state women's development corporation (KSWDC) has initiated the construction of custom-built comfort station-cum retiring rooms at different parts of the state, exclusively for the use of women which would be operational on September 13.

The project is being implemented by KSWDC under the flagship programme on gender awareness programme announced in the state assembly earlier.

The scheme envisages the setting up of comfort station-cum retiring rooms to provide basic amenities for outside women who travel their homes.

These comfort stations have been constructed in the land provided by respective local self government (LSG) institutions. Six such rooms under the scheme are already for service at present.

State Health and Social Welfare Minister P K Sreemathy would hand over the keys of these comfort stations to the respective LSG bodies on September 13, an official press release here said.

The function would be held at the Public Relations Department chamber, the release said.

Bengal, Kerala shut down again

The nationwide general strike by eight central trade unions including ruling Congress's Intuc against price rise, alleged violation of labour laws and disinvestment affected public sector units and airlines across the country with West and Kerala being its epicenters.

Workers affiliated to Intuc, Aituc, Citu, HMS, among others in sectors like coal, power, telecom, bank, insurance, defense, port and dock, road transport, petroleum and construction joined the strike. Banking operations, however, were only partially affected.

"It was an unprecedented strike all over the country. It is the unity (of the trade unions) that inspired workers to join the stir and its impact was massive," Aituc general secretary and CPI MP Gurudas Dasgupta told reporters. Intuc president and Congress MP G Sanjeeva Reddy said he would meet Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh and party president Sonia Gandhi in the next two days and discuss the issues and demands of workers.

Nearly five lakh employees working in public sector banks, private banks and regional rural banks supported the strike, claimed Aibea (bankers' association) general secretary C H Venkatachalam. There are about 10 lakh employees in the banking sector across the country.

In Left-ruled West Bengal and Kerala, the strike was almost total. The ruling CPM, however, kept minority dominated areas out of the purview of the shutdown in view of Ramzan in West Bengal.

The main opposition, Trinamool Congress, predictably opposed the strike.

Kerala to amend Tax on Paper Lotteries Act

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 8 (PTI) the Kerala cabinet today decided to promulgate an ordinance to amend the Tax on Paper Lotteries Act, with provisions including hiking the tax on lotteries.

The tax would be increased from Rs seven lakh to Rs 25 lakh for ordinary draws and Rs 17 lakh to Rs 25 lakh in the case of bumper draws, Finance Minister T M Thomas Isaac told reporters here today.

The ordinance would stipulate that the promoters, in this case Mega Distributors of Bhutan and Sikkim, file an affidavit while remitting advance tax with details on lotteries. Like place of draw, where the lottery tickets were printed and a certificate to prove they were the authorized promoters of the lottery of that state, he said.

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Ganeshotsav, Id festivities across AP

The twin festivals of Ganesh Chaturthi and Id-ul-Fitr were celebrated with religious fervour and traditional gaiety across Andhra Pradesh on Saturday.

Id-ul-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, was celebrated by members of the Muslim community in different districts of the state as they offered special prayers at Eidgahs and mosques.

Thousands of Muslims also offered prayers at the Eidgah in Mir-Alam tank and at the historic Macca Masjid in the state capital amid tight security.

Young and old-alike clad in new clothes embraced each other and exchanged greetings with Hindus also as they the day marked commencement of the 11-day Vinayaka Chavithi celebrations.

The celebrations of Vinayaka Chaturthi began with installation of idols of Lord Ganesha at pandals and at homes even as hundreds of people worshipped at Ganesha temples which were decorated with flowers and colorful lights.

Andhra Pradesh Governor, Mr. E.S.L. Narasimhan, along with his wife was among the first devotees to perform special pujas

At the famous Khairtabad pandal, where a 50-foot Pachamukhi Ganesha has been installed.

A devotee from Tapeswaram in East Godavari district offered a 450 kg laddu at the Khairtabad pandal.

Similarly, Telugu Desam Party President and former Chief Minister, Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu and the Praja Rayam party chief, Mr. Chiranjeevi, performed special pujas at their respective party offices where eco-friendly Ganesha idols were installed.

Meanwhile, a report from Visakhapatnam city said, a 76-foot tall Ganesha idol-considered to be the tallest in the state was installed at Lanka Maidanam under old Gajuwaka area along with another Ganesh idol measuring 70-feet was also installed in Vizag city. According to organizers, both the Ganesha idols were made using clay and natural water colors.

An eight-ft Biscuit Ganesha caught the attention of visitors at a mall. The Ganesha idol was decorated with 18 varieties of biscuits.

The Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi general secretary Bhagavanth Rao appealed to all Ganesh Mandap organizers in Hyderabad city to perform daily pujas and 'Aartis' at 9 pm during the ten-day festival.

He said 150 Ganesh Coordination Committees were set up across the city to look after the arrangements at Ganesh Mandaps and added "It is good that both Ganesh and Id-ul-Fitr festivals were being celebrated on the same day."

The Hyderabad Police meanwhile has made elaborate security arrangements in the city by deploying as many as 20,000 police personnel for bandobast duty.

City blasts accused have Pune link

Hyderabad, Sept. 10: Investigators have now found that those accused of the twin blasts in the twin cities are linked to the Pune German Bakery blast suspect Mirza Baig, who was arrested by the Maharashtra ATS recently.

The Laskar-e-Tayyaba operative, Mirza Baig, has allegedly confessed that he along with other operatives of the Indian Mujahideen (IM), including those involved in the Hyderabad Lumbini Park and Gokul Chaat blasts, met in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to train and conspire. Baig traveled to Colombo via Hyderabad and Chennai, police said.

Police also alleged that Indian Mujahideen operative Akbar Ismail Choudhary, who was arrested for planting bombs in Dilshuknagar on August 25, 2007, met Baig while working in a library in Pune.

Baig, who was wanted in the 2006 Aurangabad arms dealing case, went underground and took the help of Akbar to escape the police net. Baig was introduced to the Bhatkal brothers, who police say are key IM operatives, by Akbar's brother, Mohsin Chaudhary, who is also supposed to have played a key role in the Pune bombing. Police from the counter-intelligence cell have left for Pune to question Baig and other accused in the Pune blasts about their links to the Hyderabad twin blasts.

Karnataka

GEO-STRATEGIC ISSUES

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

News Monitoring Report No. 137 on South India

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Rushdy Nizar

Andhra Pradesh

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Detailed Report Kerala

CPM leader Peroorkkada Sadasivan died

Peroorkkada Sadasivan, CPI-M leader and veteran trade unionist, died here Saturday, party sources said. Sadasivan (82) had been keeping indifferent health for some time.

For long, he had served as member of the CPI-M's state committee and Thiruvananthapuram district committee. He was in the forefront several labour struggles in the south Kerala.

In a condolence message, CPI-M state secretary Pinarayi Vijayan said Sadasivan had made significant contributions to the party as well as its trade union wing CITU.

He had played a vital role in organizing laborers in different sectors including the loading and unloading workers. His contribution in building the CPI-M as a frontline political force in south Kerala was also great, Vijayan said.

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

ECONOMY

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Coromandel mulls urea plant in Russia, Middle East

Chennai, Sep 8 (IANS) Fertilizer major Coromandel International is looking out for opportunities in Middle East or in Russia to set up a urea plant.

Part of the city-based \$3.03 billion industrial conglomerate, Coromandel International will start its retail operations in Karnataka while mulling an entry into farm equipment and drip irrigation.

'We do not produce urea. However setting up a plant in India is not viable owing to the high gas price. On the other hand, we are looking at Middle East or Russia,' V.

Ravichandran, lead director (fertilizers and sugars) of the Murugappa group said here Wednesday.

He said the company, currently importing and selling farm equipment, is planning to expand business by adding more products as well as look at drip irrigation products.

According to him, the company is also planning to double the paddy farm services - like raising a nursery bed, ploughing, weeding - this fiscal in Andhra Pradesh to around 4,000 acres.

Speaking about expanding retail outlets for farm products, Ravichandran said: 'We are tweaking the retail model after its success in Andhra Pradesh. There we own all the 425 outlets. But in Karnataka we are looking at franchisee route. We will soon have around 20 outlets in Karnataka.'

According to him, the company is investing around Rs.350 crore on expanding its capacity to 4.2 million tones per annum from the current 3.2 million tones.

Andhra Pradesh

CM irked by outsourcing ban

Hyderabad, Sept. 10: The Chief Minister, Mr. K. Rosaiah, on Friday expressed dismay at the decision of the Ohio state government in the United States to ban outsourcing.

The Chief Minister cautioned that raising invisible trade barriers on the eve of the President, Mr. Barack Obama's visit to India in November 2010 would not augur well for the relations between the two biggest democracies in the world.

Mr. Rosaiah was reacting to Ohio State's decision to ban outsourcing and Mr. Obama indicating that incentives to companies outsourcing IT projects would be withdrawn.

The Chief Minister, in a statement, said that more than half of the world's top 500 companies outsource their work to India which has become the world's back office.

"Our state has become an information technology hub providing employment to more than two lakh people in various Indian and multinational companies," he said.

The Chief Minister apprehended that any hasty decision by the US would be detrimental to the interests of all our IT employees as well as fresh graduates, who had tremendous potential.

The Chief Minister also wrote letters to the Union external affairs minister, Mr S.M. Krishna, commerce and industry minister Mr Anand Sharma, and the information technology minister, Mr Raja, in expressing concern over the developments and seeking their intervention to prevent adverse impact on the state and national economies.

"It is ironical that a country like the US which advocates free markets and competition, is opposing outsourcing at a time when more and more countries are opening up their markets for competition," he pointed out.

The Chief Minister also said the anti-outsourcing plans are jarring at a time when the bilateral trade and business relations between the two countries are likely to deepen and widen in the wake of the civil nuclear cooperation agreement.

Karnataka

ENERGY

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

DRDO's commercial arm by year-end

Bangalore: DRDO plans to form a commercial arm by year-end as it seeks to put in place an aggressive approach towards marketing and commercialization of its products and technologies and exports, a senior official said. DRDO was exploring the possibility of export of Akash and Nag missiles besides the Light Combat Aircraft (Trainer) among others, developed by it, DRDO Research and Development Chief Controller Prahlada said, adding the proposed venture would be similar to Antrix, the marketing arm of ISRO.

"If not today, tomorrow we want to start export," Prahlada said after unveiling the logo of newly formed Bangalore Defense and Aerospace Journalists' Forum (BDAJF) and delivering the inaugural talk.

"We would have a commercial arm for export of defense items... so that we are going to see a different type of business models," he said.

ENVIRONMENT

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

IMMIGRATION/ REFUGEE/ IDPs

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

HEALTH

Kerala

Kerala DCA files cases of violation of rule 18C against 2 hospitals, seizes drugs worth Rs.3 lakhs

Even as the dispute over drug license between the Kerala drug control authorities and the members of the QPMPA is on, the drug control officials on last Friday seized drugs worth lakhs of rupees from two hospitals.

Reverse Shoulder Surgery Performed in Kochi

The Lakeshore hospital in Kochi became the first hospital in South India to perform a reverse shoulder transplant surgery on a 72-year old man.

One of the country's best orthopedic surgeon Dr Jacob Varghese performed the operation on a patient who had already tried to correct his rotator cuff tear through a surface surgery without any success. Dr Varghese managed to replace the joint using a Delta reverse shoulder which is very effective in maintaining the alignment of the shoulder joints.

Dr Varghese said that the reverse shoulder transplant surgery has newly arrived in the country, adding that around 20 percent of all those who suffered from rotator cuff arthropathy last year preferred to travel overseas in order to undergo the surgery and thereby increasing the treatment costs by almost 50 percent.

Tamil Nadu

Government employee dies of swine flu in Tamil Nadu

Chennai, Sep 10 (IANS) A 39-year-old person died of swine flu at the Government General Hospital here Friday.

Hospital dean J. Mohanasundaram told reporters Mohanavelu was earlier suffering from fever and cough, and underwent treatment at a private hospital.

An assistant public relations officer at the state secretariat, Mohanavelu was treated for viral infection for ten days and was discharged. However, his condition turned worse and he was again admitted to the same hospital. Later he was found to be infected with swine flu.

Mohanasundaram said the patient was shifted to the Government General Hospital in a critical condition.

Four people, suffering from swine flu, were undergoing treatment in the hospital, he said

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka

HUMAN RIGHTS/ GENDER/ SOCIAL ISSUES

Kerala

Muslims in Kerala celebrate Eid-ul-fitr

Thiruvananthapuram: Muslims in Kerala Friday celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr, marking the end of the fasting month of Ramzan. People congregated in large numbers in the mosques and Eidgahs across the state, where special prayers for Eid were held.

Religious scholars and community leaders called upon the people to re-dedicate themselves to the tenets of Islam to foster social and communal harmony.

Governor R S Gavai and Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan extended their greetings to the Muslims of the state on the occasion.

Kozhikode will be made a "sports city": Minister

Kozhikode, Sept 4 (PTI) Kerala Sports Minister, M Vijay Kumar, today said Kozhikode city will be converted into a 'Sports City'. Speaking after inaugurating the construction works on the new grand stadium here, Vijay Kumar said it is being built against the backdrop of the coming 35th National Games to be held in May 2011 in Kerala, in which Kozhikode is one of the venues for some events. The estimated expense for the grand stand at the stadium will be around Rs 18 crore, he said. With the completion of the national games, major towns in the state, will be ready for hosting national as well as international meets, he said. A

synthetic track at an expense of Rs 4.50 crore is coming up in Kozhikode, besides an indoor stadium at a cost of Rs 32 crore, he said. The construction of the grand stadium was expected to be completed within eight months.

DYFI protest turns violent, AI office vandalized

Kozhikode, Sep 6 (PTI) DYFI's state-wide protest against cancellation of Air India Express flight services from Kerala to Gulf countries turned violent today with its activists allegedly vandalizing the airlines booking office here. About 150 activists of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), who took out a protest march, barged into the AI office after pushing aside police guarding it, damaged furniture, computers and broke glass panes, police said. No arrests have been made yet, they said. Similar marches were taken out to Air India booking offices in Kochi, Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram. In Kochi, the activists raised slogans and tried to gatecrash into the city office but were stopped by police. Air India Express has cancelled three flights to Muscat per week from September 13 and daily flights to Sharjah from Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode airports from September 20, airline sources in Kochi said. The Thiruvananthapuram-Dubai and Thiruvananthapuram-Abu Dhabi daily flights have been cancelled from September 20. All the passengers booked on the cancelled flights are being accommodated in Air India and Indian Airlines flights to the Gulf, they said. The flights have been cancelled due to staff shortage, they said, adding the cancellations were being made effective only after the peak rush when schools re-open in the first week of September in the Gulf. The Malabar Chamber of Commerce said the cancellations of the flights had severely affected Non-Resident Keralites. It had also emailed letters to Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh and Union Aviation minister Praful Patel, urging for the resumption of the cancelled flight services.

Varsity tells college to take back lecturer

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The syndicate of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, on Thursday decided to ask the management of Church-run Newman College to revoke the dismissal of lecturer TJ Joseph whose right hand was chopped off by alleged Muslim fanatics last July 4 alleging blasphemy.

After the syndicate's meeting, VC Rajan Gurukkal said the college management had not followed norms while taking action against Joseph. The university, he said, would ask the college to take him back.

The management of Newman College, Thodupuzha, had suspended Joseph soon after a controversy over a question paper set by him for an internal exam.

Despite the university revoking Joseph's suspension, the college gave him the marching orders on September 1 stating it was necessary to protect secular credentials of the institution.

Joseph, meanwhile, shot off a letter to the college management pleading he is taken back on humanitarian grounds. He argued his salary was the only source of income for his family. The College is run by Kothamangalam diocese of Syro Malabar Church.

T J Joseph, a professor at Newman College, Thodu-puzha, withdrew a question alleged to be derogatory about the Prophet after Muslims groups protested. He apologized for it as well. But he was attacked by the radical Muslim group Popular Front of India. Now, he finds himself minus his hand and his job and, according to his sister, in "a state of shock".

After hooch tragedy, Kerala MLA gives up toddy trade

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Amidst shrieks of death in Kerala's Malappuram district hit by one of its worst hooch tragedies that claimed 25 people, there was some pleasant news on Thursday with a Congress MLA in toddy business for 35 years deciding to give it up.

"After 35 years in the business, I have decided to give up," K Achutan, who represents Chittoor in the assembly, told TOI on Thursday, a day after excise minister PK Gurudasan pointed fingers at his kin.

"Neither me, nor anyone related to me will have anything to do with toddy henceforth," Achutan said adding licenses of five liquor vends in the name of his

kin would be surrendered.

German Bakery blast accused was part of Kerala radical outfit

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives Mirza Himayat Baig and Shaikh Lal Baba Mohammad Hussain Farid alias Bilal, arrested on Tuesday in connection with the Pune German Bakery blast, had indoctrinated several youths and were instrumental in setting up a wide network of terror sleeper cells across the country.

Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) interrogations of the duo has further revealed that Baig was an active member of Popular Front of India (PFI), a radical group in South India, and he had been arranging recruits for the group.

“Baig claims to have arranged and sent several youths for terrorist training. He was entrusted with the responsibility of setting up a base for the LeT in tandem with the Indian Mujahideen (IM) in Maharashtra,” said an ATS official, requesting anonymity.

The fact that ATS teams have started visiting places like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Daman, Diu, Tamil Nadu and New Delhi for investigations, clearly indicates that he has already spread his network at these places.

Baig has also revealed that his journey from Aurangabad to Colombo via Hyderabad and Chennai started in March 2008. “Faiyaz Kagzi and one more person, believed to be an expert in assembling explosives, had met him. Kagzi and his aide were already there in Colombo then,” the official said.

Baig had undergone three weeks of training in organizing recruits and bomb-making techniques in a camp in Colombo. “When Baig returned, Kagzi had given him Rs2.5 lakh to get a new identity and set up base of radicals in Maharashtra. Baig, who was already on the run because of his previous cases in Pune, had been changing his locations from Beed to Pune to Bhatkal and later settled in Udgir,” the official said.

He then rented a house for Rs24, 000 for one year and purchased few computers to set up his Global Internet Cafe in Udgir, the police said.

“Baig has also revealed that he had sent Bilal to Muzaffarpur and Lahore in Pakistan to attend terrorist training camps.

Squashing charge sheet: HC dismisses plea by Madhani

Plea by PDP chairman Abdul Nasser Madhani to annul the additional charge sheet framed against him the 2008 Bangalore serial blasts case was dismissed by the High Court here Thursday.

The HC said a prima facie case exists against Madhani. Prosecution has evidence regarding Madhani’s links with other accused in the case and more such evidence is likely to obtain during the probe, the court observed.

Kerala top cop's LeT link nailed

It is a letter which proves controversial Kerala suspended top cop Tomin Thachankary's nexus with the LeT. TIMES NOW is in possession of this letter written by the home ministry to the chief secretary of the Kerala govt after the cop's frequent trips abroad.

The letter suggests that Kannur IG Thachankary met with terror suspects linked to Bangalore blasts - during his recent visit to Qatar.

TIME NOW has also learnt that the National Investigation Agency - which has been assigned to look into this case has recorded the statement of the Indian Ambassador to Doha.

The NIA also quizzed the top cop on Tuesday and is expected to submit its probe report anytime soon.

New CVC an accused in palmolein scam in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Centre may have given a clean chit to P J Thomas, the Kerala cadre IAS officer who has been appointed the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, but to the State Vigilance Anti-Corruption Bureau, he is still an accused in the palmolein import case.

State government sources said so far there is no information on the exoneration of Thomas in the case charge sheeted in the court of the Enquiry Commissioner and Special Judge (Vigilance) here in 2003.

Thomas is the eighth accused in the case (6/2003) charge sheeted by the VACB.

Further proceedings in the case were stayed after K Karunakaran, another accused in the case, approached the Supreme Court maintaining that the Speaker's permission was required to prosecute him.

VACB sources said as per the current status of the case, P J Thomas is still an accused in the case. "We don't have any records showing Thomas has been exonerated in the case," the source said. The Vigilance Special Court where the case was registered too does not have any record to show that Thomas has been exonerated of the charges. While the Prime Minister has held high Thomas's integrity, Home Minister P Chidambaram said Thomas was exonerated in the palm oil import scam.

The appointment of Thomas as CVC had sparked off a controversy with the BJP questioning his integrity over his alleged involvement in a 2G spectrum deal as well as the palmolein case. Subsequently, the Congress leadership had come to his rescue. The case pertains to irregularities in the import of 15,000 tones of palmolein to the state through the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco).

According to the Vigilance case, the then Chief Minister K Karunakaran colluded with Food Minister T H Mustafa, Chief Secretary S Padmakumar, Supplyco MD Jiji Thomson and Civil Supplies Secretary P J Thomas to cause a loss of Rs 2.80 crore to the exchequer.

Delegation to Delhi in connection with online lottery

Kozhikode: A delegation under the auspices of Kerala Bhagyakkuri Samrakshana Samithi, will submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh demanding banning of online lottery and promoters lottery.

Speaking to media persons here today, M V Jayarajan, Convener of the Kerala Bhagyakkuri samrakshana Samithi, said that the delegation will also meet Central ministers in this connection.

They have also sought the cooperation of the MPs, he said. 'If congress MLA V D Satheesan was sincere in his talks, he should also join the delegation to Delhi', Jayarajan said. Satheesan was the first MLA to raise the lottery issue in the Kerala assembly.

Popular Front linked to LeT, Hizbul, says Kerala govt

The Kerala government informed the state high court that investigators have obtained evidence regarding the connection of radical outfit Popular Front of India [Images], which allegedly launched a brutal attack on a college lecturer in July, with the Hizbul Mujahideen Lashkar-e Tayiba and Al Qaeda.

The submission in this regard was made by R Rajashekhara Nair; Deputy Secretary (Home) in a counter affidavit filed in a PIL by Gireesh Babu seeking a ban on PFI and to handover the investigation on the attack of the lecturer to National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The government assured that a proper and detailed investigation shall be conducted by the state into the PFI's activities. Some of the materials

seized by investigators indicate that this organization was trying to propagate an extremist ideology among its cadres, it was stated. The state government also claimed that terrorism is not deep rooted in the state. The government said that there had been no major terrorist attack in the state.

Pointing that the power to ban PFI rests with the union government, the government said that PFI's linkages with organizations like SIMI [Images] are under investigation. In Kerala, the National Democratic Front (NDF) and PFI activists have been involved in several crime cases including murder. Allegations regarding the inflow of foreign funds to extremists are being looked into by police and state intelligence. The allegation that terrorists were getting weaponry, financial and political support from Pakistan is under enquiry by the central government agency, the affidavit stated.

The investigation into the attack on college lecturer, Professor T J Joseph, was progressing and this cannot be transferred to the National Investigation Agency. The allegations regarding PFI and STPI, Popular Front's sister organization, are propagating extreme ideology was under enquiry.

SI shot dead by accused in woman harassment case

Malappuram: In a shocking incident never heard in Kerala, a Sub-Inspector in the district was shot dead by an accused in a woman harassment case when the official went to his house for the execution of a warrant, Sunday.

Police said the incident occurred when Vijay Krishnan (53) went to the house of Mujib Rehman at Chokkadu near Kalikavu, about 45 km from here, along with a team to execute the warrant, issued by a family court, in the district. Mujib after committing the crime, escaped to the nearby forest area, they said.

Though Vijay Krishnan was taken to a nearby hospital, he breathed his last before reaching there, police said. Meanwhile, Kerala Home minister, Kodyeri Balakrishnan, expressing sorrow over the death of the SI, said the incident was 'serious' and the search for the accused was on.

Orders have already been given to take follow up action in connection with the incident, the minister said. Balakrishnan said government would provide all help to the family of the Sub-Inspector.

Director General of Police Jacob Punnoose said that all effort will be made to nab the culprit will be nabbed with the help of the people. Though our job is a risky one, this was the first time that such an incident had taken place, he said, adding the morale of the police is always high as we always get the support of the people.

The preliminary report had said that the accused had used a country made pistol, but only the postmortem will confirm it, he said. He is survived by wife and two children.

Comfort stations for women to be operational on Sept 13

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala state women's development corporation (KSWDC) has initiated the construction of custom-built comfort station-cum retiring rooms at different parts of the state, exclusively for the use of women which would be operational on September 13.

The project is being implemented by KSWDC under the flagship programme on gender awareness programme announced in the state assembly earlier.

The scheme envisages the setting up of comfort station-cum retiring rooms to provide basic amenities for outside women who travel their homes.

These comfort stations have been constructed in the land provided by respective local self government (LSG) institutions. Six such rooms under the scheme are already for service at present.

State Health and Social Welfare Minister P K Sreemathy would hand over the keys of these comfort stations to the respective LSG bodies on September 13, an official press release here said.

The function would be held at the Public Relations Department chamber, the release said.

Bengal, Kerala shut down again

The nationwide general strike by eight central trade unions including ruling Congress's Intuc against price rise, alleged violation of labour laws and disinvestment affected public sector units and airlines across the country with West and Kerala being its epicenters.

Workers affiliated to Intuc, Aituc, Citu, HMS, among others in sectors like coal, power, telecom, bank, insurance, defense, port and dock, road transport, petroleum and construction joined the strike. Banking operations, however, were only partially affected.

"It was an unprecedented strike all over the country. It is the unity (of the trade unions) that inspired workers to join the stir and its impact was massive," Aituc general secretary and CPI MP Gurudas Dasgupta told reporters. Intuc president and Congress MP G Sanjeeva Reddy said he would meet Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh and party president Sonia Gandhi in the next two days and discuss the issues and demands of workers.

Nearly five lakh employees working in public sector banks, private banks and regional rural banks supported the strike, claimed Aibea (bankers' association) general secretary C H Venkatachalam. There are about 10 lakh employees in the banking sector across the country.

In Left-ruled West Bengal and Kerala, the strike was almost total. The ruling CPM, however, kept minority dominated areas out of the purview of the shutdown in view of Ramzan in West Bengal.

The main opposition, Trinamool Congress, predictably opposed the strike.

Kerala to amend Tax on Paper Lotteries Act

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 8 (PTI) the Kerala cabinet today decided to promulgate an ordinance to amend the Tax on Paper Lotteries Act, with provisions including hiking the tax on lotteries.

The tax would be increased from Rs seven lakh to Rs 25 lakh for ordinary draws and Rs 17 lakh to Rs 25 lakh in the case of bumper draws, Finance Minister T M Thomas Isaac told reporters here today.

The ordinance would stipulate that the promoters, in this case Mega Distributors of Bhutan and Sikkim, file an affidavit while remitting advance tax with details on lotteries. Like place of draw, where the lottery tickets were printed and a certificate to prove they were the authorized promoters of the lottery of that state, he said.

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Ganeshotsav, Id festivities across AP

The twin festivals of Ganesh Chaturthi and Id-ul-Fitr were celebrated with religious fervour and traditional gaiety across Andhra Pradesh on Saturday.

Id-ul-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, was celebrated by members of the Muslim community in different districts of the state as they offered special prayers at Eidgahs and mosques.

Thousands of Muslims also offered prayers at the Eidgah in Mir-Alam tank and at the historic Macca Masjid in the state capital amid tight security.

Young and old-alike clad in new clothes embraced each other and exchanged greetings with Hindus also as they the day marked commencement of the 11-day Vinayaka Chavithi celebrations.

The celebrations of Vinayaka Chaturthi began with installation of idols of Lord Ganesha at pandals and at homes even as hundreds of people worshipped at Ganesha temples which were decorated with flowers and colorful lights.

Andhra Pradesh Governor, Mr. E.S.L. Narasimhan, along with his wife was among the first devotees to perform special pujas

At the famous Khairtabad pandal, where a 50-foot Pachamukhi Ganesha has been installed.

A devotee from Tapeswaram in East Godavari district offered a 450 kg laddu at the Khairtabad pandal.

Similarly, Telugu Desam Party President and former Chief Minister, Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu and the Praja Rayam party chief, Mr. Chiranjeevi, performed special pujas at their respective party offices where eco-friendly Ganesha idols were installed.

Meanwhile, a report from Visakhapatnam city said, a 76-foot tall Ganesha idol-considered to be the tallest in the state was installed at Lanka Maidanam under old Gajuwaka area along with another Ganesh idol measuring 70-feet was also installed in Vizag city. According to organizers, both the Ganesha idols were made using clay and natural water colors.

An eight-ft Biscuit Ganesha caught the attention of visitors at a mall. The Ganesha idol was decorated with 18 varieties of biscuits.

The Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi general secretary Bhagavanth Rao appealed to all Ganesh Mandap organizers in Hyderabad city to perform daily pujas and 'Aartis' at 9 pm during the ten-day festival.

He said 150 Ganesh Coordination Committees were set up across the city to look after the arrangements at Ganesh Mandaps and added "It is good that both Ganesh and Id-ul-Fitr festivals were being celebrated on the same day."

The Hyderabad Police meanwhile has made elaborate security arrangements in the city by deploying as many as 20,000 police personnel for bandobast duty.

City blasts accused have Pune link

Hyderabad, Sept. 10: Investigators have now found that those accused of the twin blasts in the twin cities are linked to the Pune German Bakery blast suspect Mirza Baig, who was arrested by the Maharashtra ATS recently.

The Laskar-e-Tayyaba operative, Mirza Baig, has allegedly confessed that he along with other operatives of the Indian Mujahideen (IM), including those involved in the Hyderabad Lumbini Park and Gokul Chaat blasts, met in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to train and conspire. Baig traveled to Colombo via Hyderabad and Chennai, police said.

Police also alleged that Indian Mujahideen operative Akbar Ismail Choudhary, who was arrested for planting bombs in Dilshuknagar on August 25, 2007, met Baig while working in a library in Pune.

Baig, who was wanted in the 2006 Aurangabad arms dealing case, went underground and took the help of Akbar to escape the police net. Baig was introduced to the Bhatkal brothers, who police say are key IM operatives, by Akbar's brother, Mohsin Chaudhary, who is also supposed to have played a key role in the Pune bombing. Police from the counter-intelligence cell have left for Pune to question Baig and other accused in the Pune blasts about their links to the Hyderabad twin blasts.

Karnataka

GEO-STRATEGIC ISSUES

Kerala

Tamil Nadu

Andhra Pradesh

Karnataka