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National Summary:

Janata Dal (U) has ruled out the suggestion to hand over the disputed land in Ayodhya to the Janmabhoomi Nyas for building a Ram temple by the Sangh Parivar. Party doesn't concede it a solution to the controversial issue. JD(U) president Sharad Yadav said a settlement of the issue through a court verdict or a negotiated agreement between the parties to the dispute were the only two ways out of the problem.

the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the affiliate Vishwa Hindu Parishad has made a flexible stance towards Ayodhya verdict, both welcomed the decision of the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court in Lucknow to deliver the Ayodhya verdict on September 28. Earlier, the Sangh Parivar organisations emphasised on a resolution through a Parliament legislation. Ashok Singhal of the VHP had said that a court decision cannot resolve the dispute.

Admitting that the police and administration had failed to rid Maoist menace in West Bengal, Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said that the ultras have to be tackled politically.

The food price index rose 15.46 per cent while the fuel price index climbed 11.48 per cent in the year to Sept. 11, government data on Thursday showed. In the previous week, annual food and fuel inflation stood at 15.10 per cent and 11.48 per cent, respectively.

According to a Columbia University report, India has emerged as the world's 21st largest outward investor, with an investment of over USD 75 billion across the world over the past decade. Report shows that annual FDI outflows have jumped fifty-fold after 2000, and Indian firms have invested over USD 75 billion overseas in the past decade.

India says it's relations with China have "vast differences" over the boundary issue which cannot be resolved in a short duration with "easy fixes". But India does not consider it a "primary obstacle" in the normalization of bilateral ties.

An official US report on global governance has declared the country the third most powerful nation after the United States and China. The new global power lineup for 2010 compiling the world's most powerful countries or regions recognised India as the third-most powerful country behind the US and China, and predicted that its clout as well as that of China and Brazil would further rise by 2025. In 2010, the US tops the list of powerful countries/regions, accounting for nearly 22 per cent of the global power. The US is followed by China (more than 12 per cent), European Union (more than 16 per cent), India (nearly eight per cent), and less than five per cent each for Japan, Russia and Brazil. According to this international futures model, by 2025 the power of the US, EU, Japan and Russia would decline while that of China, India and Brazil would increase, even though there would be no change in this listing.

After a long discussion, India will be part of a regional initiative on Afghanistan along

with Iran. The foreign ministers of India, Iran and Afghanistan are working on meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York to signal the start of this trilateral. Significantly, the formal proposal for the meeting came from Iran last week and, sources said, the three countries have agreed and officials are busy setting it up. Also, Tehran has sent a letter supporting New Delhi's candidature for a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council. The trilateral initiative will be an important breakthrough for India because it has been left out of every other regional effort at the behest of Pakistan. Islamabad's discomfiture is what led to Turkey not inviting India to a regional meet last year.

India and Argentina have signed an agreement for cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, according to department of atomic energy.

India's indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile failed to take off during a user trial from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Orissa coast on Friday apparently due to a technical problem.

Terming the planned visit by an all-party delegation to Jammu and Kashmir an "eyewash," the hardline Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Geelani said his party would not meet it. Mr. Geelani said the delegation had been given the mandate to talk within the framework of the Constitution but "that is not going to help in moving forward to resolve the Kashmir dispute." He said Kashmir was a 63-year-old dispute, and India and Pakistan had held 150 rounds of talks during the period but failed to reach any agreement. "We are not against the dialogue process but before that certain measures are necessary," he said.

The News Broadcasters' Association (NBA) issued specific guidelines to its member-channels on their coverage of the Allahabad High Court's judgment in the Ayodhya title suit, expected on September 28. In view of the "ultra-sensitive nature of the case...The telecast of any news relating to it should not be sensational, inflammatory or be provocative."

The Allahabad High Court verdict on the Ayodhya title suit will not be delivered on 24 of September with the Supreme Court deferring it by a week in a sudden turn of events after it decided to hear the plea for postponement to 28 September.

A report in the Daily Telegraph claimed that India bribed 72 Commonwealth countries \$100,000 each to get the hosting rights for the scandal-hit 19th edition of the Games which will start in Delhi from October 3-14.

Regional Summary:

Security has been further intensified in sensitive places in Uttar Pradesh, including Ayodhya and Faizabad, in view of the verdict on the Babri Masjid title suit on September 28.

At least 25 north Bihar villages are destroyed by heavy flood in Bihar. Rivers Yamuna, Kosi and Ramganga are also in spate as the weather bureau predicted heavy rains in the State.

Flood fury claimed 68 more lives in Uttar Pradesh even as the deluge situation in most parts of northern India on Friday eased with water level of major rivers receding due to absence of rains. With fresh casualties reported from Basti, Kannauj, Bijnore, Moradabad and Lakhimpur Kheri districts since Thursday, the death toll rose to 380 in Uttar Pradesh this monsoon season since June.

Confusion reigns in the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party over the reshuffle of the Karnataka Cabinet on the Ministers to be dropped and the legislators to be inducted into the 28-month-old Yeddyurappa Ministry. It is, however, almost certain that either an expansion of the Cabinet or a total revamp of the Ministry, including a change in the portfolios of several Ministers will take place on Wednesday.

National Report

Politics:

Paswan supports autonomy for Kashmir

LJP President Ramvilas Paswan on Thursday said he favoured autonomy for Kashmir and withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from the region. "There is no doubt that Kashmir is an integral part of India, but if it is possible within the frameworks of the Constitution, Jammu and Kashmir should be given autonomy," Paswan, who was a member of the all-party delegation to the state, told reporters here. Paswan, who met hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani and JKLF leader Yasin Malik on September 20 and September 21, also demanded that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) be withdrawn. Steps should be taken for holding talks with leaders within the constitutional framework, he said. "Separatist leaders should be taken into confidence and invited for talks unconditionally and those jailed during the period should be released unconditionally," Paswan said. He urged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to concede the recommendations of the all-party delegates and try to implement programmes for the people there in a time-bound manner. Claiming that the 110 killed during the unrest since June in the valley were 'innocent civilians', he called for a high-level probe into the killing of youths and children in a series of firings since June 11. He also demanded that the government should pay compensation of Rs 20 lakh to the bereaved families and provide a government job to an eligible member from each family. Stating that curfew should not continue for days, he said "people have a common complaint about being harassed and insulted by security personnel who have their bunkers at several places." He suggested that educational institutions, medicine shops and essential services be kept out of the purview of curfew. Immediate steps, he said, should be taken for opening of educational institutions, hospitals and essential services. Stating that he felt that unemployment was a big issue and should be sorted out, he said efforts would have to be made to instill confidence among the people. "The visit of the all-party delegation has given a ray of hope to the people," Paswan said. (The Indian Express)

“Legislation not a solution”

Legislation to hand over the disputed land in Ayodhya to the Janmabhoomi Nyas for building a Ram temple as suggested by the sangh parivar has been ruled out by the Janata Dal(United) as a solution to the controversial issue. JD(U) president Sharad Yadav said a settlement of the issue through a court verdict or a negotiated agreement between the parties to the dispute were the only two ways out of the problem. His stand sharply differed with that of the Bharatiya Janata Party, its alliance partner in the October-November Bihar Assembly poll. Mr. Yadav said the Ayodhya verdict, expected to be delivered on September 24, must be respected by all, and there should be no attempt to drum up public frenzy or incite communal passions. "People must oppose and confront whoever tries to create trouble and tension on this," he said, when asked what his views were on the possibility of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal and other allied

organisations trying to create communal tension in the event of the verdict not favouring building of a temple at the disputed site. (The Hindu)

Sonia asks Manmohan to give liberal package to flood-hit States

Congress President Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday asked Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to give flood-hit Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand a liberal package, after she made an aerial survey of the worst-affected areas. Ms. Gandhi, accompanied by Defence Minister A.K. Antony, flew over Haridwar along the Ganga and over the districts of Bijnaur, Muzaffarnagar, Rampur, Moradabad and Bareilly, all of which were inundated with water overflowing from the Ganga, the Ramganga and the Kosi. According to a statement issued by Congress general secretary Digvijay Singh, she saw several villages totally cut off, with some kutch houses totally damaged. She also saw that water had entered some parts of Rampur and Moradabad towns and that canals and roads had been breached at some places. She observed extensive damage to the standing kharif crop. Immediately after she reached New Delhi, Ms. Gandhi spoke to the Prime Minister and requested him to have the damage assessed, so that a liberal package could be made available to the two States through the National Calamity Relief Fund. Earlier, at the Dehradun airport, Defence officials briefed Ms. Gandhi on the rescue operations conducted by the Army. (The Hindu)

Minorities' Issues:

Hope in prejudice: for funds, Muslim vote goes to Hindu

The predominant Muslim community of Godhra has decided to vote for only Hindu women to represent them in the local civic body. Reason: the community believes only a Hindu councillor can bring development to their areas and, women are less corrupt than men. Municipal elections are scheduled for next month. A meeting of representatives of Godhra's 17,000-strong, close-knit Ghanchi Muslim community was attended by a majority of local maulvis, elders and community leaders on Wednesday morning. Speaker after speaker argued the case for Hindu representatives: since Independence, having a Muslim councillor has always meant coming last on the list of civic development initiatives. The provision of civic amenities tilts heavily towards Hindu areas, and Muslim councillors and their constituents are invariably ignored, the speakers said what doesn't help either is the fact that many elected male representatives are corrupt. In the hope of attracting more civic attention to their areas, the meeting decided to vote for Hindu women candidates — irrespective of her party. Ghanchi Muslims are capable of determining results in six out of 12 wards of the Godhra municipality. Since 1947, an invisible 'border' Hope in prejudice: for funds, Muslim vote goes to Hindu has existed between the Muslim and Hindu areas of the town, with Muslims controlling half the seats — of which there are three per ward — in the municipality. Muslim candidates in Godhra have traditionally won on Congress tickets or as Independents, but have also backed a BJP-led Board after 2002. "Our candidates since 1947 could not bring any development to our areas. Either they were never heard during the civic body meetings or they were too corrupt," said Firdous Kothi, president of the Ghanchi Muslim Community.

The Ghanchis have traditionally won around 15 of Godhra municipality's 18 'Muslim' seats. Kothi said there was "clearly a form of discrimination" against Muslims. "We have not been inclined towards any party, but if we select educated Hindu women candidates, they will be obviously listened to (in the civic body). Our youths would consider them their sisters, so no Hindu woman need have any reservations about contesting from Muslim areas. This will build trust between the communities separated by the 'border' here," Kothi said. Kothi alleged there has been no development in his Ward No. 4 in the last three years. "People suffer from dengue here. Pipes have been laid but there is no water. We don't want any party representation. We only want Hindus to represent us so that our problems would at least be heard," Kothi said. Sajid Kala, a councillor from Ward No. 8, considered one of the least developed, said, "Of the Rs 3 crore allocated by the state government, only Rs 38 lakh was given to the six ('Muslim') wards, including my ward. Funds allocations on the two sides are highly unequal. We feel things might change if Hindu ladies represent us." Safoora Sadamat, a councillor from Ward No. 6, said she would abide by her community's decision. "I was not present in the meeting but I know what our leaders have decided and I fully understand. I have been a councillor for the past five years. Our problems are never heard in the civic body meetings," she said. Her husband, former councillor Saeed Sadamat, was named in four complaints of assaults during his tenure from 1995 to 2005. "My husband got into brawls with councillors from Hindu areas. This was because civic amenities were set up in their areas, but nothing would happen on this side of the border," Safoora said. "I would not mind making way for an educated Hindu lady to represent us. I would cooperate fully with her and ask everyone from the community to vote for her." Murli Moolchandani, the BJP president of the Godhra Municipality, welcomed the Ghanchi community's move, but declined to comment on allegations of discrimination against the six 'Muslim' wards. "If they (Ghanchi Muslims) plan to do such a thing, it is a great move," Moolchandani said. However, a former president of the municipality, who has been a councillor for over two decades, predicted the move would have very few takers. "Elections are always fought along community lines in Godhra. This new idea may sound good, but the fact is hardly any Hindu woman will agree to stand from the Muslim areas. And even if she does, she would lose," said the veteran councillor. (The Indian Express)

Hindu Fundamentalism:

RSS, VHP change stance on Ayodhya verdict

A slight but significant shift in the stance of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the affiliate Vishwa Hindu Parishad towards the impending Ayodhya verdict was noticeable on Friday, when both welcomed the decision of the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court in Lucknow to deliver the Ayodhya verdict on September 24, as announced earlier. Till Thursday, the sangh parivar organisations emphasised on a resolution through a Parliament legislation. Ashok Singhal of the VHP had said that a court decision cannot resolve the dispute. Spokesperson of the RSS Ram Madhav on Thursday pointed out that the court can at most deliver a verdict on the title deed of the disputed site (where the Babri mosque was razed to the ground on December 6, 1992 and where the idol of Ram is kept in a makeshift temple). However, for building a grand Ram temple "much more

land” would be needed (and in that the Centre had a role to play). After the Babri mosque demolition, the Narasimha Rao government had acquired large plots of land around the disputed structure through The Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Ordinance, 1993. The land in the possession of the Centre practically encircles the disputed plot and all parties to the dispute are aware that some sort of Central government intervention would be needed to re-develop the disputed land whether as a mosque, a temple or in any other way. On Friday after news reports came in that the special bench of the Allahabad High Court at Lucknow had reiterated its stand that it would deliver the verdict on September 24, dismissing the petition that asked for a negotiated amicable settlement of the dispute, senior VHP leader Giriraj Kishore said he “welcomed” the court decision of not delaying the verdict coming after 60 long years. A similar sentiment was expressed by Mr. Madhav who described the court decision as “right” and blamed the petitioner Ramesh Chandra Tripathi for trying to delay the verdict. The RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had recently clarified he did not want the issue to be politicised. The sangh parivar is aware that if the issue is politicised once again, as it was during the late eighties and early nineties, no resolution would be possible, as the central government would have to play a role in allotting the land around the disputed structure. (The Hindu)

Insurgency Movements:

Maoists have to be tackled politically: Buddhadeb

Admitting that the police and administration had failed to rid Maoist menace in West Bengal, Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said that the ultras have to be tackled politically as it was done in 1977 when the Left Front came to power. "This time too we will be able to deal with Maoists politically and that is the only way out," Bhattacharjee told a primary teacher's rally while stating that the administration and police had failed to counter the problem. The chief minister said he would spare no effort to deal politically with the menace which was receiving the "direct backing" of the state's main Opposition party. "The Left Front government is determined to rid West Bengal of Maoists and there will be no looking back." Without naming the Trinamool Congress, he alleged that the main Opposition party was providing direct support and patronage to the Maoists. "Maoists and the main Opposition party are made for each other and they rejoice over the bodies of innocent people," Bhattacharjee said. Stating that the people had realised who were the real enemies, he expressed concern at the spurt in Maoist activities in West Midnapore, Bankura and Purulia districts. He asked Maoists what they achieved by killing hundreds of innocent farmers, labourers, students and teachers. Making his often repeated charge about a conspiracy being hatched to topple the Left Front government, he said "such sinister moves are still on". "Attempts are repeatedly being made to topple the Left Front government which is evident from systematic moves to create anarchy," he claimed. "But my government is determined to defeat the forces of destabilisation and I am sure we will succeed in our efforts," the chief minister said, adding that he would visit West Midnapore soon. (The Indian Express)

Economic Front:

Food inflation spikes to 15.46 pct

The food price index rose 15.46 per cent while the fuel price index climbed 11.48 per cent in the year to Sept. 11, government data on Thursday showed. In the previous week, annual food and fuel inflation stood at 15.10 per cent and 11.48 per cent, respectively. The primary articles index was up 16.80 per cent in the latest week compared with an annual rise of 16.22 per cent in the previous week, which was the first reading of a new series of data with a different base year of 2004-05, new components and weightings. The wholesale price index, the most widely watched gauge of prices in India, rose 8.5 per cent in August. (The Indian Express)

'India is world No. 21 in outward FDI'

India has emerged as the world's 21st largest outward investor, with an investment of over USD 75 billion across the world over the past decade, a Columbia University report has said. "India is now the world's 21st largest outward investor, which is significant given its historically minuscule foreign direct investment (FDI) outflows," said the Vale Columbia Center on Sustainable International Investment in its report released on Outward FDI from India. "Annual FDI outflows have jumped fifty-fold after 2000, and Indian firms have invested over USD 75 billion overseas in the past decade, in some cases to attain global status by acquiring world-leading firms," the report said. Substantial improvements in the country's economic performance and the competitiveness of its firms and their strategy, resulting from ongoing liberalisation in economic and outward FDI (OFDI) policies, made these developments possible, it said. Indian firms now invest across a wide variety of sectors and countries, departing from their historical focus on trading and textile investments in developing countries. Following the 25 per cent crisis-induced drop in Indian OFDI in 2009, Indian firms are once again increasing their overseas investment, including through mergers and acquisitions (M&As), the report said. "India's OFDI should continue its rapid upward trend over the next few years, as more companies seek to transfer their products and service innovations to new markets, and acquire strategic international know-how and market shares, particularly in crisis-hit developed economies," it said. Another report by the Columbia university released yesterday said that India is now the world's 13th largest FDI host country. With 2008 inflows of USD 42 billion and 2009 inflows of USD 27 billion, it is also a global top three preferred investment destination. "Notable liberalisations in FDI policy and in several economic sectors, a globally competitive workforce, and rapid GDP and market growth are the main drivers of foreign investment in India. "Yet, equity caps limit the size of potential new inflows, while national security concerns might prompt more oversight of FDI approval processes," it said. India had received some USD 169 billion of cumulative FDI inflows by the end of 2009 since it first opened itself to foreign direct investors in 1991, it said. "Inflows rocketed to USD 20 billion in 2006, further doubling to USD 42 billion in 2008, transforming India into the world's 13th largest host to FDI globally," it said. (The Indian Express)

The Sensex past 20,000 points for the 20th time

As cricketers slug it out at the Champions League T20 tournament, financial market investors put together their own Twenty-20 championship of sorts – helping the Sensex past 20,000 points for the 20th time. The first time Sensex closed above 20,000 level was on December 11, 2007 and the last before today was on January 15, 2008. Before January 15, 2008, Sensex had closed above this mark in 19 trading sessions, making today's closing the 20th time. The Sensex settled 95.45 points higher at 20,001.55 points on Tuesday -- just a shade above the psychological mark. In intra-day trade, Sensex had risen to 20,088.96 points. Tuesday's intra-day peak is the highest for the Sensex since January 17, 2008, while the closing level is highest since January 15 that year when the index had settled at 20,251.09 points. That was also the last time it settled above 20,000 level. Sensex had for the first time closed above 20,000 level on December 11, 2007 when it settled at 20,290.89 points. Starting that day, it settled over 20,000-point milestone for four consecutive trading sessions till December 14, 2007. After slipping below this level for some days, the Sensex again closed over 20,000 level for three consecutive days from December 26, 2007. After a gap of one day, the Sensex again returned to close over 20,000 level on December 31, 2007 and this trend continued for 12 straight trading sessions till January 15, 2008. The feat comes after a gap of 32 months. (The Indian Express)

Foreign Relations/Geo-strategic developments:

No 'easy fixes' for Sino-India boundary issue: Rao

India and China have "vast differences" over the boundary issue which cannot be resolved in a short duration with "easy fixes", Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao has said, while asserting that it is not a "primary obstacle" in the normalisation of bilateral ties. Rao said the path of confrontation would not ease the "vast differences" India and China have on the issue. "The complicated history of the outstanding boundary question entails that discussions to resolve it cannot be of short duration with easy fixes," she said. She said both countries have not allowed the border issue to become a "primary obstacle" in terms of normalisation of relations. "The reality is that India and China have worked hard over the last two decades to deepen dialogue and bilateral relations in a number of fields. Peace and tranquility have prevailed in the India-China border areas despite the unsettled boundary question," Rao said, delivering the Harish Mahindra memorial lecture at Harvard. India's relationship with China should not be seen as being only competitive but needs to be handled in a rational and "cool-headed" manner, she said. "Relations with China, our large neighbour, has to be transacted in a very rational, cool-headed and hard-nosed, not hard-lined manner. Being hard-nosed is not (being) hard-lined. We can deal with this relationship. There is increasing confidence. This is the new India which is not hyperventilating in a way that introduces irrationality into our actions," Rao said. "The question asked is whether our relationship with China will be one dominated by increasing competition for influence and for resources as our economic needs grow. I believe the proposition should not be exaggerated in a way that it overshadows all attempts to rationalise the relationship between India and China." She said the Sino-India

relations need not be seen as "being only competitive". "As our Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said, India and China will continue to grow simultaneously and our policies will have to cater to this emerging reality." (The Indian Express)

New global lineup lists India 3rd most powerful nation

Recognising India's growing clout in the world, an official US report on global governance has declared the country the third most powerful nation after the United States and China. The new global power lineup for 2010 compiling the world's most powerful countries or regions recognised India as the third-most powerful country behind the US and China, and predicted that its clout as well as that of China and Brazil would further rise by 2025. "Global Governance 2025" -- a follow-on to the NIC's 2008 report -- was jointly issued by the National Intelligence Council (NIC) of the powerful Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the European Union's Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). In 2010, the US tops the list of powerful countries/regions, accounting for nearly 22 per cent of the global power. The US is followed by China (more than 12 per cent), European Union (more than 16 per cent), India (nearly eight per cent), and less than five per cent each for Japan, Russia and Brazil. According to this international futures model, by 2025 the power of the US, EU, Japan and Russia would decline while that of China, India and Brazil would increase, even though there would be no change in this listing. By 2025, the United States would still be the most powerful country of the world, but it would have a little over 18 per cent of the global power. The US would be closely followed by China (nearly 16 per cent), European Union (14 per cent) and India (10 per cent). The report concludes that three effects of rapid globalisation are driving demands for more effective global governance economic interdependence, the interconnected nature of the challenges on the international agenda, and interwoven domestic and foreign challenges. According to the 82-page report, more effective global governance is critical to addressing "threats such as ethnic conflicts, infectious diseases, and terrorism as well as a new generation of global challenges including climate change, energy security, food and water scarcity, international migration flows and new technologies," which are increasingly taking centre stage. Complicating the prospects for effective global governance over the next 15 years, however, is the shift to a multi-polar world, particularly the shift in power towards non-state actors, it says. "Diverse perspectives and suspicions about global governance, which is seen as a Western concept, will add to the difficulties of effectively mastering the growing number of challenges," the report's authors noted. The report notes that the relative political and economic clout of many countries will shift by 2025, according to an International Futures model measuring GDP, defence spending, population, and technology for individual states. In the report, the authors stress the importance of multilateral institutions, which "can deliver public goods that summits, non-state actors, and regional frameworks cannot supply," because "multiple and diverse governance frameworks, however flexible, probably are not going to be sufficient to keep pace with the looming number of transnational and global challenges absent extensive institutional reforms and innovations". (The Indian Express)

Now, an India-Iran-Afghanistan tri-summit

After months of under-the-radar discussion, India will be part of a regional initiative on Afghanistan along with Iran. It's learnt that foreign ministers of India, Iran and Afghanistan are working on meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York to signal the start of this trilateral. Significantly, the formal proposal for the meeting came from Iran last week and, sources said, the three countries have agreed and officials are busy setting it up. Also, Tehran has sent a letter supporting New Delhi's candidature for a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council. The trilateral initiative will be an important breakthrough for India because it has been left out of every other regional effort at the behest of Pakistan. Islamabad's discomfiture is what led to Turkey not inviting India to a regional meet last year. Then, of course, India was quite taken aback with Russia not including India at the quartet — Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan — meet in Sochi last month. India discussed this proposal at length with Afghanistan Foreign Minister Zalmai Rassoul when he was here last month and then followed it up with the Afghanistan NSA Rangin Dadfar Spanta. If all goes by plan, External Affairs Minister S M Krishna, Iran Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and Rassoul will meet in New York during the next 10 days. With Pakistan making its intentions clear to block Indian efforts, India began quiet talks with Iran given how both are in sync on Afghanistan. Both countries worked closely when the Taliban was in power in Kabul and are now cooperating on key infrastructure projects. Given that Pakistan does not allow transit rights to India, most Indian equipment and goods are transported via Iranian ports. However, the chill in India-Iran ties following New Delhi's decision to vote against its nuclear programme in the IAEA upset equations in the relationship. At that time, India was also pursuing closure of its nuclear deal with the US and other western powers. More so, India has maintained that another nuclear armed country in the region was not in its interests. Despite these reservations, New Delhi has often put a rider that Iran has a right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy as long as it abides by its international treaty obligations. Two actions on the part of India in the past month, sources said, have sent out the signal to Iran that New Delhi does not always toe the US line on the Iranian nuclear programme. First, India decided to approach the UN on removing Iran-o-Hind, an Indo-Iranian shipping joint venture, from the list of entities that UN recently sanctioned in Iran. Second, India supported a strongly worded NAM resolution against the IAEA on the DG's recent report on the Iran programme. New Delhi seemed to have agreed with the NAM view that proper procedures were not be followed. India had also floated the idea of a India-US-Afghanistan trilateral, the fate of which is still not known, said sources. (The Indian Express)

India, Argentina ink agreement on peaceful uses of N-energy

India and Argentina have signed an agreement for cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, according to department of atomic energy. Agreement between the government of India and the Argentine Republic for Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy was signed at Vienna by Dr S Banerjee, chairman of Atomic Energy Commission and Dr Norma Boero, president of the Atomic Energy Commission of Argentina (CNEA) on Thursday. The agreement was signed on the on the sidelines of the 54th general

conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, a DAE release said. "This is an inter-governmental agreement and the scope of cooperation is wide," Banerjee said from Vienna on Friday. "We have lot of commonality and therefore possibilities of exchange of information on operation and maintenance of reactors," he said. In addition there could be scope for service assistance to Argentina with the Indian expertise on en-masse coolant replacement of nuclear power reactors, Banerjee said adding, "we are also looking forward for cooperation in research and development (R&D) in various peaceful uses of nuclear energy." (Times of India)

Military

Prithvi-II fails to take off in user's trial

India's indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile failed to take off during a user trial from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Orissa coast on Friday apparently due to a technical problem, defence sources said. Though the ITR authorities were not immediately available for comment, defence sources said the sophisticated missile could not take off during the planned trial from the launch complex-III of the test range due to some "technical snag." "The failure to lift Prithvi-II was due to a snag either in the main missile or the sub-system, including the launcher," they said, adding the test-fire was slated to be held as part of user's trial by the armed forces. During Friday's planned trial, a noise could be heard as smoke billowed from the launch site around the time of the blasting. Efforts were on to ascertain the exact reason behind the failure on the part of the missile to take off and defence scientists were examining the matter thoroughly, they said. The last four user's trials of the surface-to-surface missile were successfully conducted during the about one year period, from the same site in the ITR. The last trial was conducted on June 18, this year. The test firing of the state-of-the-art missile, which has already been inducted into armed forces, was planned as users trial by the specially formed "Strategic Force Command" (SFC), the sources said. (Times of India)

Indian Occupied Kashmir:

Geelani not to meet all-party delegation

Terming the planned visit by an all-party delegation to Jammu and Kashmir an "eyewash," the hardline Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Geelani said his party would not meet it. The delegation, headed by Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram, is scheduled to visit the State from Monday. Mr. Geelani, scrapping the programme of marching towards Army camps, has instead asked people to raise their voice for demilitarisation at their respective district headquarters. In a statement, Mr. Geelani said the delegation had been given the mandate to talk within the framework of the Constitution but "that is not going to help in moving forward to resolve the Kashmir dispute." He said Kashmir was a 63-year-old dispute, and India and Pakistan had held 150 rounds of talks during the period but failed to reach any agreement. "We are not against the dialogue process but before that certain measures are necessary," he said. He reiterated the five-point formula in which he had called for withdrawal of forces, release

of prisoners and punishment to those responsible for recent killings. He had also wanted India to accept Kashmir as a dispute. Mr. Geelani claimed that while the government was “[making every effort to] suppress the genuine democratic movement in Kashmir,” in a single day 17 people were killed, which made it clear “to what extent the government can go to muzzle our voice.”

3 more civilians killed

Even as the authorities relaxed curfew here for some hours, three more civilians were killed in clashes with security forces in Anantnag and Pattan areas on Saturday. At least 20 people were injured. With one youth dying of injuries in hospital and the body of a missing youth allegedly chased by security forces being fished out of the Jhelum, the death toll in the unrest since June 11 has gone up to 103. Two youths, Ansar Ahmad and Ali Mohammad, were killed when security forces opened fire to disperse demonstrators in Palhalan on the Srinagar-Baramulla highway. Seven people were injured, one of whom died later in hospital. Locals said the firing was unprovoked but a police spokesman said the crowd tried to block the Highway and threw stones at the security forces. (The Hindu)

Curfew imposed across Kashmir Valley

Curfew was imposed in Srinagar and other major towns of the Kashmir Valley to prevent Friday protests called by the separatists. Officials said schools would open from Monday and that steps are being taken to end the cycle of violence. "Curfew has been imposed to maintain law and order," a senior police officer said here. Protests and incidents of stone-pelting after the congregation of Friday prayers have almost become a routine affair during the last three months of unrest in the valley that has claimed 104 lives so far. Hardline separatist leader Syed Ali Geelani had asked people to resume normal life Friday and observe a protest shutdown Saturday and Sunday. "No separatist leader would be allowed to paralyse life across the valley and cause adverse effect on education of children, commercial activities and the livelihood of people," an administration official said. Kashmir divisional commissioner Asgar Samoon has asked parents to send their children to schools and colleges from Monday onwards. All educational institutions and markets have virtually remained closed during the last three months because of separatist shutdowns and curfew imposed by the authorities. "The cycle of violence will have to end now and for that the administration is prepared to take necessary steps," police here said. (Times of India)

Social front:

TV channels to follow norms on Ayodhya

If the news broadcasters' attempt to self-regulate themselves works, you will not be seeing endless footage of the Babri Masjid demolition playing on news bulletins this week. The News Broadcasters' Association (NBA) issued specific guidelines to its member-channels on their coverage of the Allahabad High Court's judgment in the Ayodhya title suit, expected on September 24. In view of the “ultra-sensitive nature of the case...The telecast of any news relating to it should not be sensational, inflammatory or

be provocative,” said the statement issued on Friday. The guidelines on visuals made it clear that “no footage of the demolition of the Babri Masjid is to be shown in any news item relating to the judgment” and “no visuals need be shown depicting celebration or protest of the judgment.” Similarly, there is to be no speculation about the judgment before it is pronounced, or of likely consequences after the verdict, which could be provocative. Instead, all related news “should be verbatim reproduction of the relevant part of the said judgment uninfluenced by any opinion or interpretation,” said the statement.

Call for strict adherence

Editors have been asked to take extra care in vetting all reporting at the highest level. The NBA asked for “strict adherence,” warning that any violation “may attract strict action.” The heads of major channels said they would comply with the “spirit of the guidelines,” though it was up to each channel to decide the methods to implement them. Several channels have already carried special programming on the verdict, going over the history of the case and replaying the demolition footage. These guidelines come after the Union Cabinet appealed for peace and order to be maintained in the aftermath of the judgment. Leaders of political parties and religious bodies have also been calling for a peaceful acceptance of the verdict. However, channels emphasised that this was a voluntary initiative on their part and not in response to any governmental instruction. “It must be understood that this is compliance out of self-regulation, not due to any government pressure,” said Arnab Goswami, Editor-in-Chief of Times Now. “It shows the immense maturity of the news channels today. It dispels any notion that they are irresponsible.” “I don't think this should be seen as censorship,” said Rajdeep Sardesai, Editor-in-Chief of the IBN18 network. “It simply means we must absorb the basic principle of self-restraint...one of the important lessons we have learnt.” (The Hindu)

Two injured as armed men attack foreign tourists in Delhi

Two armed men on a motorcycle opened indiscriminate fire outside the historic Jama Masjid in the Walled City of Delhi on Sunday morning, injuring two Taiwanese nationals who were about to board a tourist bus. A red alert has been sounded as the attack comes barely two weeks ahead of the Commonwealth Games. Just a few hours after the incident there was another security scare as a Maruti 800 car went up in flames about 100 metres from the ancient mosque. Though an e-mail, purportedly sent by the Indian Mujahideen to a radio station, claimed responsibility for the incident, the police have ruled out the involvement of any organised terror group. “Investigation so far does not indicate any specific target or the involvement of any specific terror group. The police have recovered seven empty 9 mm cartridges from the spot,” said Delhi Police spokesperson Rajan Bhagat. On the possible link between the attack and the fire in a car, Mr. Bhagat said: “We found a pressure cooker and a circuit in the car. It is a crude circuit. It could be the handiwork of some disgruntled group. No explosives or inflammables were found. It may or may not be linked to the earlier attack on the foreigners.” The attack took place outside Gate No. 3 of the mosque. The injured — Zewei (40) and Chiang (38) — were taken to the Lok Nayak Jaya Prakash Narayan Hospital and are said to be out of danger. (The

Hindu)

SC defers verdict on Ayodhya title suit till September 28

The Allahabad High Court verdict on the Ayodhya title suit will not be delivered on 24 of September with the Supreme Court deferring it by a week in a sudden turn of events after it decided to hear the plea for postponement next Tuesday. After sharp differences over the issue of entertaining the petition challenging the HC order refusing to postpone the judgement, a Bench comprising Justices R V Raveendran and H L Gokhale stayed for a week the verdict due to have been pronounced on 24 by the High Court's Lucknow Bench. Following the court's tradition in case of differences, the Bench decided to issue notices to all the contesting parties and sought their response to the plea by retired bureaucrat Ramesh Chand Tripathi. Tripathi's petition pleaded for exploring the possibility of an out-of-court settlement on the 60-year-old Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit dispute. Significantly, the court made the Centre a party to the hearing by issuing a notice to Attorney General G E Vahanvati and sought his presence when the deferment plea comes up again on Tuesday. Justice Raveendran was of the view that the special leave petition filed by Tripathi should be dismissed while Justice Gokhale was of the opinion that a notice should be issued for exploring the option of settlement. Notwithstanding his reservations, Justice Raveendran, who was heading the Bench, preferred to go along with Justice Gokhale in making one attempt to find a settlement. "If there is one per cent chance, you have to give it (for settlement)," Justice Gokhale said. Justice Raveendran in his order said: "One of the members of the Bench is of the view that the special leave petition should be dismissed. Another member is of the view that the order should be stayed and notice issued. "Tradition of this court is when one member says that notice be issued another says that it should not be issued, the notice should be issued." "And we issue notice and stay the order. There shall be an interim stay for a week. Notice will be to all parties and the Attorney General who shall be present in the court". The posting of the next hearing on September 28 assumes importance in view of the fact that one of the three judges of the Ayodhya Bench in Lucknow – Justice D V Sharma -- is due to demit office on October 1. Today's order was preceded by 45 minutes of arguments with Justice Raveendran and Justice Gokhale voicing divergent views on the postponement plea. At the outset, senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Tripathi, submitted that if the judgement was not deferred it could lead to serious crisis in the country which he said was already plagued by the violence in Jammu and Kashmir, the worsening flood situation in different parts of country and the upcoming Commonwealth Games. The argument failed to convince Justice Raveendran, who shot back: "Is that the ground for postponement of a judgement. For 50 years you have not been able to solve. Please see the order (High Court) hundreds of opportunities were given to you." However, senior advocate and BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad, appearing for Dharamdas and another senior counsel Anup George Chaudhary who was arguing for the Sunni Wakf Board, said several efforts were made to arrive at settlement without success. "This is the problem," both the parties contended, adding, "It is not possible and it was recorded in the order of the High Court." At one stage, Prasad submitted that Tripathi was not a serious contestant in the dispute and did not bother to appear before the High Court during the 90 days of hearing. Responding to this argument, Justice

Gokhale said: "He may not be a party before the court. They may be ordinary people. It is the ordinary people who are always the sufferer. All that he is saying is let us give a trial". Justice Raveendran said: "One way or the other it will have to be decided. Why do you think people are so immature. Why do you assume that the people in this country are so immature." "Religious passion will rise if people raise it. If people don't raise it, it will not rise". Justice Raveendran said: "If you are able to persuade one of the parties to the dispute to support your stand, we could have considered it". Rohatgi said one of the parties to the dispute Nirmohi Akhara was supporting the stand. However, Justice Raveendran said: "It should not be a publicity exercise. What were you doing all these days." Prasad and Chaudhary strongly opposed any deferment of the High Court judgement saying Tripathi was not a serious contestant in the dispute. Justice Raveendran quipped: "So both of you are on the same side, why not at least sit with him (Tripathi) and try to sort it out". At this point, Justice Gokhale quoting a newspaper report, said: "Even one of the Vice Presidents of the Muslim Personal Law Board was keen on an out-of-court settlement." However, Prasad said the judgement cannot be deferred as one of the judges (Justice D V Sharma of the High Court who is the part of three-judge bench) was due for retirement on October 1. He pointed out that in the event of the judgement being deferred after the judge's retirement, it would lead to serious problems as the entire matter would have to be re-heard by a new Bench. However, Justice Gokhale brushed aside the argument and said there are enough constitutional safeguards to take care of such eventualities. "That the government of India will take care. There are constitutional provisions to take care of the situation. He is a Vice President of the Muslim Personal Law Board." When Chaudhary argued that the judgement cannot be deferred, Justice Gokhale said: "If it is adjourned, what is the prejudice? We may not be facing the consequences. Some day the judgement has to come. You will be the first people who will blame us". "Let us be clear. Let us say it is the ordinary people. There is no need of imagination. We know what has happened in the past. The High Court made efforts. They might have failed, no doubt but there are various possibilities. He (Tripathi) is an ordinary citizen. Courts cannot run away from responsibilities. We do not know which party will succeed. It will be even more difficult... how can you ignore it," Justice Gokhale said. Prasad and Chaudhary said even after the High Court verdict, the parties can move the apex court, which will have a clear picture of it for deciding the issue. However, Gokhale said: "It will be even more difficult to arrive at a settlement. How can you ignore it?" (The Indian Express)

India bribed 72 nations to get Delhi CWG: Report

India bribed 72 Commonwealth countries \$100,000 each to get the hosting rights for the scandal-hit 19th edition of the Games which will start in Delhi from October 3-14, a media report claimed. A report in the Daily Telegraph claimed that Delhi pipped Hamilton in the bid after offering huge sums of money to the 72 Commonwealth countries during the final presentation in Jamaica. The report also said that Australia received a kickback of \$125,000 from India. "Delhi sealed the right to host the Games when their delegates emerged at the final presentation in Jamaica and offered all 72 nations \$100,000 (then about \$140,000) each for athlete training schemes if they were the successful bidders," the newspaper reported. "The money, subsequently paid to all nations, was not significant to Australia because it had already decided to vote for India

and the payment was not an exceptionally large one. "But for small nations who have minimal interest in the Games, it clinched their vote and India went on to beat Canadian city Hamilton 46-22 in the final poll. Hamilton had offered the nations about \$70,000 each," it said. (Times of India)

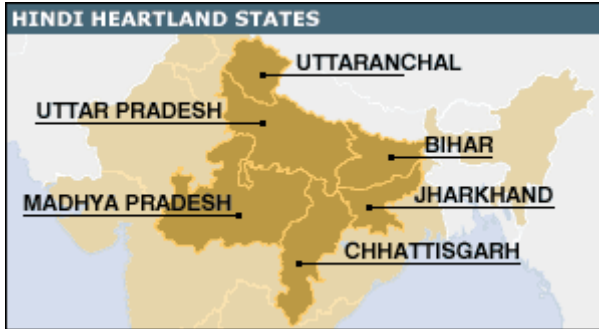
Goods train mows down 7 elephants

A goods train speeding at 70kmph through the Dooars, large tracts of which are a go-slow zone, ploughed into a herd of elephants on a clear, moonlit night, killing seven of them - the highest number of elephant deaths in a single railway accident in the country. What became immediately clear within hours of the Wednesday 11.30pm accident was that the driver seemed to have done nothing to prevent such a high casualty - three adult females, two young elephants, an adult tusker and a calf. The accident spot is in the middle of tea gardens and there are no tall trees to obstruct vision. That, along with the fact that the moon was out, would make it very difficult to not spot the animals trudging down the tracks, foresters said. The force of the impact, which took place 1.5km from Banerhat station in Jalpaiguri district, tossed five elephants off the tracks. The carcasses lay scattered in a 250-metre radius, with bones sticking out at grotesque angles and blood turning the tracks red. One of them had got entangled in the wheels, leaving the huge body broken and turning the flesh into a pulpy mass. For hours later, villagers could hear the death cries of the elephants. Two of the animals, grievously injured, managed to limp off the tracks. In the morning, they were found a few hundred metres away, shivering, as they fought the agony of slow death. Both died by the time they were taken to Gorumara National Park and the Khuttimari range for treatment. "This is murder and not an accident. Had the train maintained a controllable speed, the driver could have slammed the brakes after hitting the first elephant. Straightaway, six jumbos would have been saved. Strong steps should be taken against the driver and the railways," said Animesh Basu of the Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation. The train, officials said, was travelling at 70kmph but the claim was disputed by some wildlife organizations, who said the speed was likely to be 90kmph if the damage was any indicator. The speed limit for trains in the Dooars' protected zones is between 20kmph and 40kmph. The accident spot, however, isn't in that zone. By the time five elephants had been cut down, an adult female turned around to charge the train, claimed forest officials. The driver panicked on seeing this, and instead of slamming on the brakes, revved the train. "The train hit the elephant at full impact, dragging it for nearly 300 metres. The body got so badly entangled in the wheels that the driver had to reverse to Banerhat station," said Subhas Chandra Ghosh, ranger, Binnaguri Wildlife Squad. Like in earlier such cases, the railways refused to take blame. On Thursday, a railway official gave a technical explanation. "The accident occurred between two tea gardens, which is not a protected zone. There are no forests in the vicinity. We are supposed to maintain a speed limit only in protected zones," the official said. The statement ignores the fact that elephants - unaware of administrative demarcations of forest and field - pass through the area regularly as they go from one forest tract to another. "In fact, there are two distinct elephant corridors in the zone. Only three months back, an elephant had been run over in a nearby garden. We had protested then as well, but the railways refused to learn a lesson," said Subhashish Ghosh, of the Dooars Nature Lovers' Association. The herd was crossing over to the Reti forest from the Moraghat jungle tract when the accident took place. The two forests are separated by

two tea gardens - Moraghat and Binnaguri - and the NJP-Alipurduar tracks cut through the estates. "We have lodged an FIR against the railways with Banerhat police station and have also lodged a complaint with the Malbazar RPF and GRP," said Kalyan Das, DFO, Jalpaiguri. According to sources, WWF has decided to file a case in Supreme Court to stop train movement on the NJP-Alipurduar Junction route. (Times of India)

Regional Report

Central India (Hindi Heartland)



Politics:

Social front:

Security stepped up in U.P.

Security has been further intensified in sensitive places in Uttar Pradesh, including Ayodhya and Faizabad, in view of the verdict on the Babri Masjid title suit on September 24. Forty companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have been allotted to the Uttar Pradesh government and their deployment is almost complete. These are in addition to the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and the Rapid Action Force, civil police, village "chowkidars," and government functionaries in the rural areas who have been pressed into service. The maximum deployment of the Central forces and the PAC is in Faizabad, Lucknow, Meerut, Moradabad, Aligarh, Varanasi and Kanpur. The State had reportedly asked the Centre for 630 companies of Central forces, which means 6,300 personnel. But till now, only 40 companies of CRPF have been given. According to a senior official of the U.P. police, the emphasis this time is on community policing and soliciting the cooperation of the public. He said a comprehensive directory had been prepared containing the names and telephone numbers of the elderly and respected persons in the urban and rural areas. They would be in touch with the local police stations and conduct regular peace committee meetings in their areas. "Although security measures are imperative, we don't want to create panic among the people," he said. The assistance of other government departments has also been sought by the police. Reports suggested that some schools would be converted into makeshift jails in case of law and order problems. (The Hindu)

25 villages in north Bihar flooded

At least 25 north Bihar villages were flooded when waters from the Gandak river breached the makeshift embankment in the early hours of Sunday morning in the State's Gopalganj district. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar held an emergency meeting in the morning with top officials of the Disaster and Flood Management Departments in the wake of this second breach. While the State government has already been mobilising resources on a war-footing since Tuesday in the three districts of Gopalganj, Chhapra and Siwan, authorities said that in addition, mega-shelter camps on the pattern of the Kosi relief shelters would shortly be set up there. Speaking to reporters, Principal Secretary (Disaster Management) Vyasji Mishra said that apart from ensuring proper food and sanitation arrangements, the mega-camps would be replete with aanganwadi centres and education facilities for children.

Hundreds homeless

At least 41 people were killed overnight as incessant rains wreaked havoc in the hill state of Uttarakhand triggering landslips and floods which rendered hundreds homeless. Seven people were still trapped under the debris of flattened houses in cloudburst-hit villages, an official spokesman said. River Ganga, flowing two metres above the danger mark in Haridwar, inundated several areas in the district with holy place Har-Ki-Puari completely submerged. Rivers Yamuna, Kosi and Ramganga are also in spate as the weather bureau predicted heavy rains in the State for the next 48 hours. Almora district was the worst-hit with landslips in several villages killing 28 people, the Disaster Management and Mitigation Centre said. (The Hindu)

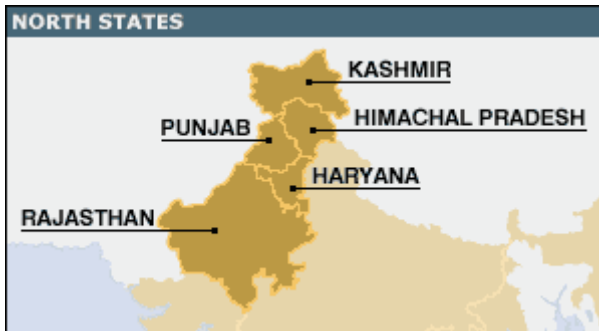
UP battles flood fury as 68 more die, toll rises to 380

Flood fury claimed 68 more lives in Uttar Pradesh even as the deluge situation in most parts of northern India on Friday eased with water level of major rivers receding due to absence of rains. With fresh casualties reported from Basti, Kannauj, Bijnore, Moradabad and Lakhimpur Kheri districts since Thursday, the death toll rose to 380 in Uttar Pradesh this monsoon season since June. The flood situation continued to remain grim in the western region of the state, specially in Bijnore, Badaun and Shahjahanpur. Relief and rescue works were on at a war footing in Bahraich, Pilibhit, Sitapur, Deoria, Gonda, Rampur, Shahjahanpur, Mathura, Bareilly, Saharanpur and Kanshiram Nagar districts. Ganga was maintaining an upward trend all through from Fatehgarh to Allahabad and from Mirzapur to Ballia, flowing above the danger mark at Fatehgarh, Kannauj and Kanpur dehat. Ram Ganga was flowing above the danger mark at Moradabad, affecting 217 villages, and Shahjahanpur where 260 villages were worst-hit. Yamuna was flowing above the danger mark at Mathura and Mavi, while Sharda has crossed the red mark at Palia Kalan (Kheri) and Shardanagar. Ghaghra was above the danger level at Ayodhya and Ballia and almost touching the red mark at Elgin Bridge (Barabanki) because of discharge of water at Bahraich. However, the state received very little rainfall on Friday. Several areas in Delhi remained inundated even as the water level in Yamuna river receded, although it continued to flow well above the danger mark. The water level in Yamuna was at 206.14 metres at 9am on Friday morning. It is, however, still flowing

well above the danger mark of 204.83 metres. The inter-state bus terminal at Kashmiri Gate has been partially submerged and operations there were affected as waters entered inside the complex. Haryana, meanwhile released another 83,000 cusecs of water. The flood situation in parts of Haryana and Punjab eased with the water inflow in Yamuna and Sutlej rivers decreasing considerably due to absence of rainfall in both the states. The water level in flood-hit areas of Yamunanagar, Ambala, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Panipat, Sonapat, Jhajjar, Rohtak, Palwal, Bhiwani, Ferozepur, Patiala, Ropar and Ludhiana districts of the twin agrarian states was fast receding and returning back to Yamuna and Sutlej, which were flowing above danger levels for the past few days. Meanwhile, the effort to plug the 300-foot breach in Yamuna near Lal Ghat at Tajewala in Yamunanagar by Army is on. After over two months of rains, the south-west monsoon appeared to be showing signs of withdrawal over Rajasthan. Weather remained dry in the state in the absence of rains. Bikaner recorded a maximum temperature of 37 deg C, while Jaipur was at a high of 32.8 deg C. (Times of India)

Economic Front:

The North

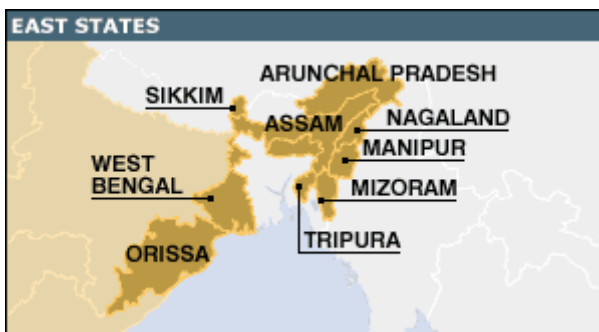


Politics:

Social front:

Economic Front:

The East



Politics:

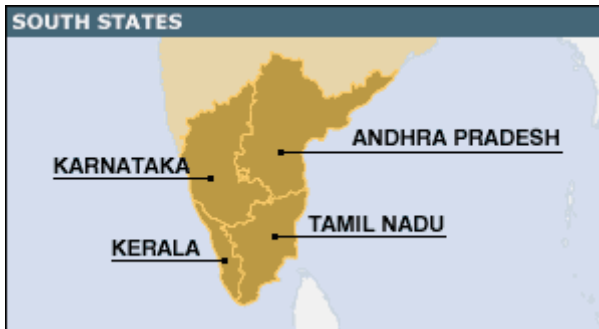
Blockade suspended in Manipur

The indefinite blockade imposed by the United Naga Council (UNC) against Manipur from Saturday has been 'suspended.' A UNC spokesman said the blockade was suspended because there was a glimmer of hope that the Union government would take a sympathetic view of the demands. However, it would decide on its future course of action on the basis of the response from the Union government. A truck was torched by miscreants on National Highway 39. Manipur was subjected to 113 days of blockade by the Naga outfits. The Home Ministry had ordered deployment of CRPF along the highways to escort trucks transporting essential goods to Manipur. (The Hindu)

Social front:

Economic Front:

The South



Politics:

BJP leaders divided over Cabinet expansion

Confusion reigns in the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party over the reshuffle of the State Cabinet on the Ministers to be dropped and the legislators to be inducted into the 28-month-old Yeddyurappa Ministry. It is, however, almost certain that either an expansion of the Cabinet or a total revamp of the Ministry, including a change in the portfolios of several Ministers will take place on Wednesday. An informal indication has been given to the Raj Bhavan on the swearing-in ceremony of the new Ministers. Governor H.R. Bhardwaj is away in New Delhi and he is expected to return to Bangalore ahead of the Ministry expansion programme. Sources in the BJP told The Hindu that the three important leaders of the ruling party, including Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, are divided on the matter of changes in the Cabinet. While the Chief Minister is keen on filling only the three vacancies, the State BJP president K.S. Eshwarappa is keen that a few Ministers should be dropped and at least seven or eight new faces should form part of the Ministry, and the party national general secretary H.N. Ananth Kumar has

categorically conveyed that the Cabinet reshuffle exercise should not be undertaken at the present juncture. Mr. Yeddyurappa and Mr. Eshwarappa, after inconclusive discussions through Sunday, left for New Delhi for a consultation with the party high command. Hectic lobbying for ministerial berths was witnessed at the official residence of the Chief Minister all through the day, with some of the key aspirants such as A. Ramdas and H.S. Shankaralinge Gowda of Mysore even bringing in their supporters to put pressure on the leadership to induct them. Same was the case with C.T. Ravi, Chikmagalur MLA, and A. Narayanaswamy Anekal MLA. The Chief Minister is particularly keen on inducting Shobha Karandlaje and V. Somanna. Sources close to Mr. Ananth Kumar said that he had conveyed his views (on the need to put off the Cabinet reshuffle exercise) to several important BJP leaders. (The Hindu0

Social front:

Bypoll results a slap in the face of Congress: Venkaiah

The former president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), M. Venkaiah Naidu, on Saturday termed the results of the Assembly by-elections in Karnataka and Gujarat as a “slap on the face of the Congress” as it drew a blank in both the States. Mr. Naidu told presspersons here that results indicated that the people had rejected the negative politics practised by the Congress and taught a lesson to it for misusing the Raj Bhavan in Karnataka and the Central Bureau of Investigation in Gujarat. He said: “In Karnataka, the Congress had raised a hue and cry and levelled false allegations against the government on illegal mining. The Legislative Assembly was turned into a battleground and Congress leaders took out a padayatra. The Union Ministers who participated in the rally had even threatened the State government. Even the Governor is dabbling in politics. All these have boomeranged on the Congress.” On the style of functioning of Governor H.R. Bhardwaj, he said it was the first time that he had come across a Governor criticising a political party by taking its name. “If that is the case, he should become the Congress spokesperson instead of continuing as Governor,” Mr. Naidu said and hoped that the Centre and the Governor would realise their constitutional responsibilities. The BJP leader said that nobody could save the Congress if did not correct its political approach by shunning negative politics. The Congress should respect the spirit of the people's verdict and behave as a responsible Opposition. The Congress had lost a series of elections, including elections to the Delhi University after the “youth leader” and AICC general secretary Rahul Gandhi emerged on the political scene. The Congress is set to lose the forthcoming Bihar Assembly elections and would never return to power in the trouble-hit Andhra Pradesh. He expressed concern that the governance and development of the Congress-ruled Andhra Pradesh was getting affected due to the ongoing turmoil there. However the Congress leaders were busy with infighting. Mr. Naidu said the BJP did not want to precipitate the issue related to handling of Kashmir by the Centre at this juncture as its priority was to ensure that normalcy was restored in the valley. On the proposed visit of all-party team to Kashmir to hold talks with the leaders there, he said the BJP's stand was that talks could be held with anybody if they believed in the Indian Constitution, shunned violence and accepted that Kashmir was an integral part of India. (The Hindu)

Economic Front:

West India



Politics:

Social front:

Economic Front:

BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

News Monitoring Report No. 138 on South India

Reference period: Sep.17-24, 2010

Presentation: Sep.29, 2010

Rushdy Nizar

Andhra Pradesh

News Headlines

Political Issues

- Hyderabad police relieved as Ayodhya verdict deferred
- Muslim Personal Law Board terms Supreme Court order 'unfortunate'
- Deferment will prolong Ayodhya issue: Owaisi

- Andhra parties, Muslim groups appeal for peace
- Lok Satta calls upon Govt to end corruption
- Naidu's 'day dreaming' remark evokes protests in Telangan
- TDP organizes rally for peace in Kashmir

Economic Issue

- Berger to invest Rs 500 cr on new paint unit in Andhra Pradesh
- AP Govt keen on rapid industrialization of backward areas: Andhra Pradesh CM
- Giant Fertilizer Units proposed in Andhra Pradesh

Social/Humanitarian Issue

- Industries should work closely with pharma colleges: Andhra Pradesh CM
- Raman seeks Andhra Pradesh govt help for release of abducted Chhattisgarhpolicemen
- Blast at Andhra hospital, none hurt
- US Consulate General to host Immigrant Visa Session
- Minister appeals for peace and communal harmony
- One kg Cocaine seized; 9 held in Hyderabad
- 15th FIRA Robot World Cup being organized in Bangalore

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

- 6 per cent agriculture growth in AP: Minister
- Seminar on plastics for green buildings

Geo-strategic Issues

Karnataka

Political Issues

- Karnataka CM, 20 ministers offer prayers at Tirumala temple

- Ashok given Home, Acharya shifted to Higher Education
- Yeddyurappa expands his ministry to 34

Economic Issue

- Tata Steel to implement Tata Metallic' Karnataka project

Social/Humanitarian Issue

- Special training for Super Cops for Dasara
- Unique Identification numbers to be issued in Karnataka from Oct
- Royal Society of Chemistry opens office in Bangalore

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

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- Thailand paint group mulls plant in Chennai
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- Puducherry prepared to tackle swine flu cases: health minister
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Detailed Report/Andhra Pradesh

Political Issues

TDP organizes rally for peace in Kashmir

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Senior Leader M V V S Murthy today flagged off a peace Rally in the port City for restoration of peace in Kashmir to mark the international peace day.

A large number of people participated in the rally that began from the Old Town and passed through Poorna Market to culminate at the Visakhi Jala Udaynavanam.

The participants were holding placards and banners and raised slogans for peace in Kashmir. Later, the participants met at Visakhi Jala Udaynavanam.

Speaking on the occasion of International Peace Day, TDP Leader V Ganesh Kumar, in charge of the City party unit said we should earn the people's confidence with our work.

He said till September 30, unit wise meets would be held.

On October 2, a human chain would be formed against the liquor menace. From October 3 to 31 'Pallebata' would be conducted.

TDP City president P Srinivas Rao, fishermen leader P C Appa Rao, Nazeer, Sayeed Nargis and others participated.

Naidu's 'day dreaming' remark evokes protests in Telangan

Activists of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) were staging protests across Telangana Friday, demanding an apology from former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for his remark that TRS chief K. Chandrasekhara Rao was 'day-dreaming'.Naidu,

chief of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), remarked Thursday that Chandrasekhara Rao was "day-dreaming" about wielding power -- apparently in a separate Telangana state. The comment angered the TRS which is spearheading the renewed struggle for statehood to Telangana region.

Condemning Naidu's remark, TRS activists took to streets in various towns, burning his effigies and demanding an unconditional apology to the TRS chief and people of Telangana.

Though the former chief minister clarified that KCR, as the TRS president is popularly called by his initials, is "day dreaming" of coming to power, the TRS alleged that he was referring to the movement for formation of separate Telangana state. Reacting swiftly, KCR termed the TDP as the biggest hurdle in formation of the separate Telangana. "But even 300 Naidus can't stop formation of Telangana," he told his party cadres at a meeting.

Continuing his attack for the second day, Naidu said KCR's meeting with some industrialists Wednesday was for "settlement".

Addressing TDP leaders from Telangana through tele-conference Friday, Naidu clarified his remarks were not against Telangana.

He questioned KCR's meeting with chief executive officers (CEOs) of some firms and giving all sorts of assurances to them.

At the meeting with CEOs, KCR claimed that the new state (Telangana) would soon become a reality with Hyderabad as its capital and promised all support to industrialists and investors.

Naidu's remark is likely to further intensify the TRS' campaign against the TDP. Naidu faced violent protests from Telangana activists recently during his visit to Ranga Reddy and Mahbubnagar districts.

The TRS has vowed not to allow Naidu, who hails from Rayalaseema region, to visit Telangana on the ground that he was opposed to formation of a separate state.

Lok Satta calls upon Govt to end corruption

The Lok Satta Party today called upon political and the state government to come forward voluntarily to put an end to corruption before people revolt against them.

Talking to the media, Party leaders Katari Srinivasa Rao, G Raja Reddy and Eda Chennaiah said had the government prevented siphoning of funds, it would have had enough resources to ensure healthcare and education to all, development of 1,000 small towns and livelihood opportunities to 50 lakh youth.

There would not have been agitations in the name of backwardness in certain areas. The Lok Satta leaders recalled, charges of corruption were laid against a few politicians or officials or institutions in good old days. These days, however, the integrity of everyone has come under a shadow.

A solution lies in constitution of special courts and appointment of independent prosecutors to try the corrupt. The government should attach ill-gotten properties and send the guilty to jail.

Sure and swift punishment alone will help eradicate corruption and cleanse the political system. Lok Satta leaders will not be an exception if they too face charges.

Hyderabad police relieved as Ayodhya verdict deferred

Hyderabad, Sep 23: Police in Hyderabad Thursday heaved a sigh of relief with the Supreme Court deferring, till Sep 28, the pronouncement of the verdict in the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi dispute by the Lucknow bench of Allahbad High Court.

Andhra Pradesh Police officials said the deferment of verdict till Sep 28 has eased pressure on them. The security agencies, especially police in communally sensitive Hyderabad, were on tenterhooks as the pronouncement of verdict was scheduled Sep 24, coinciding with Friday prayers and coming two days after the Ganesh immersion process.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner A.K. Khan had admitted that ensuring peace after the verdict was the second challenge after the peaceful conduct of Ganesh immersion procession Wednesday.

Director General of Police Aravinda Rao, who was to address a press conference to announce security measures in view of the court verdict, cancelled it after learning of the

Supreme Court decision.

The state police was having a testing time since the beginning of the 11-day Ganesh festival which began Sep 12, and coincided with Eid-ul-Fitr. The second was Sep 17 when the announcement by some groups announcing of its celebration as "Telangana liberation day" - to mark the merger of Hyderabad State with Indian Union in 1948 - had created tension. The day passed off peacefully amid tight security.

For the mammoth Ganesh immersion procession Wednesday, over 35,000 policemen and personnel of paramilitary Rapid Action Force (RAF) were deployed and even the military was asked to stand-by for any emergency.

Khan had announced that the same security measures would continue for Friday. There was no word till late this evening whether 25,000 policemen mobilized from other parts of the state would be sent back or they would remain till pronouncement of the Ayodhya verdict.

Muslim Personal Law Board terms Supreme Court order 'unfortunate'

Hyderabad, Sep 23: The All India Muslim Personal Law Board, the apex body of Indian Muslims, Thursday termed as "unfortunate" the Supreme Court order deferring the pronouncement of the verdict in the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi case.

The board demanded immediate pronouncement of the court saying "we must face the truth". It suspects malafide intentions behind the petition against delivering of the verdict.

"The Supreme Court should not have entertained the petition and it should not have deferred the pronouncement of the verdict because the issue has been in the court for so many years. It has served the conspiracy of some people who want to delay the judgment," board assistant general secretary Abdul Rahim Qureshi told IANS.

He alleged that some elements who don't want the pronouncement of the verdict by the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court were behind the petition. "These people don't want the idols from the mosque to be removed," he said.

Pointing out that the title suit was pending in the court since 1950, the Muslim leader cautioned that not pronouncing the verdict before the retirement of one of the three

judges of the high court would further complicate matters.

One of the judges is retiring Sep 30 and if the verdict is not pronounced, the arguments have to be heard all over again, he claimed.

Qureshi said there was not even one percent chance of an amicable settlement. He was reacting to the observation made by one of the two apex court judges that if there is one percent of chance of conciliation it should be explored.

He said the board would make its stand clear before the Supreme Court on Sep 28. "We want the verdict to be pronounced as early as possible. Let the truth come out. We must face the truth," he averred.

On the petitioner's apprehension that pronouncement of the verdict may lead to violence, Qureshi said if the government has the will it can control any situation.

Deferment will prolong Ayodhya issue: Owaisi

Hyderabad, Sep 23: Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi Thursday apprehended that further deferment of the Ayodhya verdict's pronouncement by the Allahabad High Court would unnecessarily prolong the issue.

Ruling out any compromise on the matter, Owaisi said the people of the country have the right to know the truth.

"Where is the question of compromise when both the parties have already ruled out the same," asked Owaisi, reacting to the Supreme Court deferring the Ayodhya verdict till Sep 28.

The Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) chief told IANS that the deferment was unnecessary as it served no purpose and would, in fact, prolong the issue. "Our fear is that if Justice Dharam Veer Sharma (of the high court) retires before the verdict is pronounced, the issue will again get prolonged," Owaisi said.

Justice Sharma, one of the three judges of the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court that is to give its ruling on the Ayodhya verdict, is retiring on Oct 1. Legal experts say that if the verdict is not pronounced before his retirement, the

hearing would have to take place all over again.

"This issue is going on for 50 to 60 years. The people of this country have a right to know what is the truth," Owaisi, a barrister, contended.

He felt that the Supreme Court deferring the verdict was unnecessary, especially when the Muslim Personal Law Board and others have already stated that the verdict would be acceptable to them.

Asked if Muslims would approach a larger bench of the Supreme Court against the deferment, Owaisi said it was for the Muslim Personal Law Board to take a decision. "But I think since there are only four days for the next hearing we should wait and see," the MP added.

Andhra parties, Muslim groups appeal for peace

Hyderabad, Sep 23: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister K. Rosaiah, leaders cutting across party lines and Muslim groups have appealed to people to maintain peace and harmony after Friday's court verdict in the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi dispute.

Rosaiah has asked police to be vigilant and take all precautionary measures to deal with the situation after the Allahabad High Court gives its judgment. He appealed to the public, political leaders and elders of all communities to ensure that harmony prevails said a statement from the chief minister's office.

He said the court verdict on the issue should be accepted by all and no one should react in a manner that hurts the religious sentiments of other communities.

Rosaiah Thursday held a meeting with Director General of Police Aravinda Rao, Police Commissioner A.K. Khan and other top officials to review security arrangements across the state.

President of the state unit of the ruling Congress party D. Srinivas, opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu, Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) chief K. Chandrasekhara Rao, Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) president K. Chiranjeevi and Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) leader Asaduddin Owaisi have also appealed to people to maintain peace and harmony.

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board has also issued an appeal to Muslims to maintain peace no matter in whose favour the judgment goes. Board general secretary Moulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani urged the community not to show any reaction to the

verdict.

Leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Movement for Peace and Justice, Majlis Tameer-e-Millat, Majlis Bachaco Tehreek and other Muslim organizations have also appealed for maintaining peace.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner A.K. Khan said security measures taken for Ganesh idol immersions Wednesday would continue till Friday. More than 35,000 policemen were deployed for the procession.

Fifteen people, who were sending provocative SMSes ahead of the court verdict have been identified and will be arrested, police say. The cyber crime wing of city police is investigating the case.

Khan told reporters that police were in touch with mobile phone service providers and would keep a close watch on those sending SMSes to several numbers simultaneously.

Appealing to people to maintain peace, Khan said the verdict should not be construed as the victory of one community over another. "Whatever be the verdict, it will not be a final one as one or both the parties will have the option of approaching the Supreme Court," he said.

Economic Issue

Giant Fertilizer Units proposed in Andhra Pradesh

The Oswal Chemicals and Fertilizers Limited, pioneer in setting up fertilizer plants, has offered to set up a fertilizer plant in Andhra Pradesh at Rs 7,000 crores investment.

Mr. Abhay Oswal, Chairman and Managing Director of Oswal Chemicals and Fertilizers, today met Chief Minister Dr K Rosaiah and discussed the issue in detail, according to a release from CMO office.

Andhra Pradesh being an agrarian economy and State set for a record cultivation, is in need of fertilizers.

Hence a fertilizer unit will be in the best interest of the State.

Mr. Abhay Oswal proposed to set up a unit with 1.2 million tons per year capacity of a urea plant based on natural gas with estimated investment of Rs.5,000-00 crore.

Their request for gas allocation for the project has already been forwarded by the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers to Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

The plant will employ about 5,000 labor forces during construction phase and about 1,000 skilled and unskilled manpower during normal plant operations.

Mr. Oswal said the Unit will also establish a 100 mw capacity power plant using surplus steam from urea manufacturing facilities supplemented by coal. The Group controls ownership interest in the coal mines in Indonesia having more than 100 million tons of coal reserves. The Company also proposed to set up a one million ton capacity Di-Ammonium Phosphate Plant at an investment of Rs 2,000 crore.

Phosphoric acid required for the plant will be imported from Syria.

The company has already tied up phosphate rock in Syria for production of phosphoric acid.

The ammonia requirement for the plant will be met out of surplus ammonia of urea plant.

The plant will employ about 3,000 labor forces during construction phase and 700 skilled and unskilled manpower during normal plant operations.

The Chief Minister agreed to positively consider the proposal of Oswal Chemicals and Fertilizers and clear the proposal at the earliest. Adviser, Industries, Mr. Peter Hassan, Principal Secretary, Industries, Mr. B P Acharya, Principal Secretary to CM, Mr. Sam Bob and other officials attended the meeting, the release said.

AP Govt keen on rapid industrialization of backward areas: Andhra Pradesh CM

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister K Rosaiah today said the state government was keen on rapid industrialization of backward areas.

Managing Director of Berger Paints India Ltd, Mr. Subir Bose today called on the Chief Minister at his residence and informed him about his plans to set up water-based paint

plant at Hindupur in Anantapur district.

Welcoming the proposal of Mr. Bose, the Chief Minister said with the setting up of the paint plant, Hindupur will grow into a major industrial centre and the state was poised for further development with other paint majors showing keen interest to set up their plants here.

He thanked the Chief Minister for the allotment of 48 acres of land for the purpose.

The capacity of the Rs 200 crore plants will be 1, 50,000 KL/MT per annum. This will be scaled up to more than 3, 00,000 KL/MT per annum over a period of five years. The total investment over this period is estimated at more than Rs.300 crore.

Berger to invest Rs 500 cr on new paint unit in Andhra Pradesh

Paint major Berger paints India limited will invest Rs 500 crore for its new water-based paints plant at Hindupur in Anantapur district.

This was revealed by Berger paints India ltd Managing Director Subir Bose today.

The two-phased plant will have a capacity of 1, 50,000KL/MT per annum at an estimated cost of Rs 200 crore. This will be scaled up to more than 3, 00,000 KL/MT per annum over a period of five years.

The total investment over this period was estimated at more than Rs 300 crore.

The direct employment potential will be 400 employees by the time the project attains full capacity.

Mr. Bose said the company has also proposed to put up a paints plant by its British paints division in Gollapuram Industrial area near Hindupur which will have an installed capacity of 24,000 KL per annum of both water-based and solvent-based paints with an investment of Rs 25 crore. This will generate direct employment potential for 160 people.

It was also proposed to set up a manufacturing unit of plastic and metal containers by their group of company, Seaward Packaging Private Limited at an investment of Rs 22 crore generating an employment potential of 104 employees. With the mega paint

complex in Hindupur, their total investment will be to the tune of Rs 350 crore.

The direct employment will be of about 700 people and indirect employment will be much higher, the Managing Director said.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister K Raosaiah said the State Government was keen on rapid industrialization of backward areas.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Royal Society of Chemistry opens office in Bangalore

The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) UK has opened its office in this Garden City as part of its continuing drive to expand its international network in publishing and educational activities. This is the first office in South Asia.

The India office would serve to build a stronger relationship with the Chemical Research Society of India and help expand the RSC's global network, according to a release here today.

The RSC also has global offices one in Philadelphia, Beijing and Shanghai and proposes to open in Tokyo by the end of this year.

Speaking at the British Deputy High Commission in Bangalore, RSC Chief Executive Richard Pike said it was a very exciting time for the Society but warned that greater international co-operation was vital in order to meet the energy and environmental challenges of the future.

"This is a natural extension of our long-standing links with, and commitment to, India.

"As India's remarkable growth as a nation continues, chemistry and related-sciences will play a leading role in developing society, providing innovative solutions for challenges in energy, health, agriculture, climate change and sustainability.

"We look forward to strengthening our links with India and building new relationships in the future, through our office in Bangalore and our network of partners in industry, academia and government in both the UK and India," he added.

One kg Cocaine seized; 9 held in Hyderabad

Excise and Enforcement officials have sized one Kg Cocaine during raids in a hotel in Kachiguda area and detained nine persons, including police constables in this

connection.

The nine persons detained were from Karimnagar and Nizamabad districts, sources said adding the seized contraband was estimated to be worth over Rs one crore in the market.

Enforcement authorities raided a hotel in Kachiguda and two other places in Secunderabad. The raids were part of drive to check narcotic dealing in Hyderabad which has come to the fore recently.

Last month, two brothers of a popular Telugu cine actor were caught for possessing high end drug. An African drug peddler was also caught with them.

The lead from the peddler took the police and the Enforcement authorities through from high profile actors, businessmen and other rich people's children.

Police said they had a list of at least 60 celebrity reportedly involved in the drug racket.

Collapsed foot over bridge built by Hyderabad firm

The foot over bridge which collapsed Tuesday near the main Commonwealth Games venue, the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, was constructed by the Hyderabad -based PNR Infra, which was contracted by the Delhi government's Public Works Department. Delhi government's Public Works Department minister Raj Kumar Chauhan told IANS: "A rod was being rested on a grid but a clip slipped...resulting in the bridge collapsing." "The bridge was constructed by Hyderabad based PNR Infra".

Here are the salient details on its construction:

Government agency in charge: Public Works Department, Delhi government;

Constructed by: Hyderabad based PNR Infra;

Chief Engineer: A.K. Sinha

Cost: Rs. 5 crores

Length: 95 metres

Breadth: 5 metres

Work initiated: April 2010

Work completion: Sep 2010

Minister appeals for peace and communal harmony

Andhra Pradesh Minister for Minorities Welfare and Primary Education Mr. Mohammed Ahamadullah today appealed to all the section of the society to maintain peace and communal harmony without giving any chance for any kind of unrest to erupt by elements on the occasion of Ganesh immersion on September 22.

According to a release, the Minister expressed his confidence that as the Holy Ramzan had passed off peacefully with love and tranquility among the people, the immersion of Ganesh will also pass-off peacefully.

The Minister further stated that on account of the Judgment to be delivered by the Allahabad High Court in the dispute relating to Babri Masjid-Ayodhya temple issue on September 24, he requested all religious communities to be cautious on this particular occasion because some anti-social elements and communal forces are likely to spread communal hatred for their personal gains, thereby disrupting the peace and tranquility and creating law and order problems. He also urged to respect whatever be the outcome and let the law to take its own course.

US Consulate General to host Immigrant Visa Session

Hyderabad Officials from the US Consulate General Chennai will host a public information session on immigration to the United States and the immigrant visa application process here on September 23.

"It is free of charge and open to the public", the consulate said in a release here today."Many of our applicants for immigrant visas are from Andhra Pradesh.

"We want to help applicants and people who may be interested in immigrating to the US, understand our laws and the application process," said Onn Olson, Immigrant Visa Chief

at the US Consulate General Chennai.

"US Immigration Policy allows qualified individuals and families to immigrate to the United States, but sometimes people get bad guidance or submit fraudulent information in order to get a visa.

" We want to make clear that committing fraud is always the wrong decision for potential applicants," said Olson.

The presentation will include information on who was eligible to immigrate to the US and how to apply for an immigrant visa according to US regulations and Consulate procedures.

Consular officials will also explain ways to avoid becoming victims of fraud or immigration scams and they will emphasize the consequences of misrepresenting facts or misusing a US visa, the release added.

Blast at Andhra hospital, none hurt

A blast took place in a hospital owned by an environmental activist at Sompeta in Andhra Pradesh's Srikakulam district. No one was injured but a portion of the hospital was damaged, police said.

The blast occurred on the third floor of Mahalakshmi Nursing Home. There was still no word from the police about the nature of explosives used and who could be behind the attack.

Y. Krishna Murthy is the convenor of environment protection committee, which is fighting against the proposal to set up a thermal power plant at Sompeta, 600 km from here. His supporters allege that the blast was to threaten him to silence.

The committee took out a peace rally after the blast, demanding action against the guilty.

The environment protection committees along with other NGOs have been opposing the proposed thermal power project by Nagarjuna Construction Company (NCC).

It was on their petition that National Environmental Appellate Authority (NEAA) in July overruled the environmental clearance given for the 2,640 MW project coming up at a cost of Rs.12, 000 crore.

Earlier on July 14, two people were killed and over 100 injured in police firing on protesters.

The groups had been protesting against the project on the ground that it would destroy the ecology and endanger their livelihood.

Raman seeks Andhra Pradesh govt help for release of abducted Chhattisgarhpolicemen

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh today sought help from Andhra Pradesh Government to secure release of four policemen of the state recently abducted by Maoists in insurgency-affected Bijapur district.

The Chief Minister talked to Andhra Pradesh Governor E S L Narasimhan and his counterpart K Rosaiah over phone and urged them to provide police help in tracing out the four policemen believed to have been held hostage by rebels somewhere in the Andhra-Chhattisgarh border areas.

Talking to media persons, Dr Singh said state's Director General of Police Vishwa Ranjan also had a discussion on the hostage issue with his Andhra Pradesh counterpart as the abductors seemed to have sneaked into the border state following intensive search and combing operation launched in Chhattisgarh.

The Chief Minister also appealed to Maoists to release the policemen without any pre-condition on humanitarian ground.

The family members of the abducted policemen, who met the Chief Minister, have also made fervent appeal to Maoists to set free their beloved ones.

Last week seven policemen, including one sub-inspector Sukhram Bhagat, five constables and one special police officer went missing from Maoist-dominated Bhopalpattanam and Bhadrakali areas in Bijapur district.

On the following day on September 20, villagers found three bodies out of the seven missing policemen in a forest near Bhadrakali bordering Andhra Pradesh. Despite launching a manhunt, the state police were unable to get any clues about the abducted policemen.

Industries should work closely with pharma colleges: Andhra Pradesh CM

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister K Rosaiah today said the state government was committed to take any step that is for promotion of the pharma industry in the state but

appealed to the industry to work closely with the pharma colleges to share the inputs on the industry requirement.

Participating in the inaugural session of the Global pharmaCEOs Conclave, on the occasion of the 6th Annual day of Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council (PHARMEXCIL), the Chief Minister noted that the Indian pharmaceutical industry, in the last few years, has shown tremendous progress in terms of infrastructure development, technology base creation and a wide range of production covering almost all therapeutic categories and dosage forms.

"I am happy that India is poised to become the manufacturing hub for pharmaceutical industry of the world and an emerging hub for contract research, biotechnology, clinical trials and clinical data management".

India's pharmaceutical industry, the Chief Minister said, the third largest in the world in terms of volume with a total turnover about 21.04 billion dollars, with a domestic market of 12.26 billion dollars which is estimated to touch 20 billion dollars by 2015, making India a lucrative destination for clinical trials for global giants

India tops the world in exporting generic medicines worth 1 million dollars with a growth rate of 17 per cent. India accounted for 20 per cent of the global generics market.

India is a globally acknowledged source of high quality affordable generic medicine with rich vendor base.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Rosaiah said, "after establishment of PHARMEXCIL, the exports of our country have grown from around 3.8 billion to 8.9 billion dollars. Exports have grown with formulations at 58 per cent, bulk drugs at 41 and herbals at 1 per cent." "The Indian share of exports to regulated countries is more than non-regulated countries which is showing the growing confidence of India's capabilities." "Andhra Pradesh has identified the pharma sector as one of the potential sectors of the state. In order to regulate the zoning of pharma industry, the state government has promoted Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City in an area of 2,200 acres at Visakhapatnam with required infrastructure facilities, which is first of its kind in the country.

"Similarly, our government has promoted 5 Pharma SEZs and 4 Biotech SEZs developed by APIIC and local pharma industrialists. A cluster for manufacturing of Medical

Devices and Equipment called MEDTECH VALLEY has also been launched at Jawaharnagar near Genome Valley, the biotech hub of India", Dr Rosaiah added.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Seminar on plastics for green buildings

The Andhra Pradesh Plastics Manufacturers Association is organizing a seminar on "Plastics for Green Buildings" on September 24 here.

"People may wonder what a "Green Building?" It is nothing but a concept wherein environment-friendly materials are used to construct buildings, making them far more user comfort-ability, energy saving etc".

The seminar is supported by Reliance Industries ltd, NCL Wintech, Indofil Chemicals, Battenfeld Cincinnati, Gruber Extrusion, Elumatec India and Sudhakar Pipes.

The seminar is targeted at Architects, Builders, Contractors, Construction Companies, government and Non Government Institutions and Members of AP Plastic Manufacturers Association, the Association said in a release here today.

6 per cent agriculture growth in AP: Minister

Andhra Pradesh Major and Medium Irrigation Minister Ponnala Lakshmaiah said the state government has achieved 6 per cent growth in agriculture and is working on long term strategies to increase the food production in the state.

Addressing a two-day national seminar on Engineering Agriculture for Evergreen Revolution organized by Indian Society of Agriculture Engineers in association with Acharya N G Ranga Agriculture University at Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University Auditorium here yesterday, the Minister said the state had achieved 6 per cent growth in agriculture and it was really good for 65 per cent people who depend on it.

The government also provided subsidies on seeds and pesticides besides on irrigation equipment resulting development in agriculture, he said.

Geo-strategic Issues

Detailed Report/Karnataka

Political Issues

Yeddyurappa expands his ministry to 34

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa, setting aside all speculations, on Wednesday expanded his twenty-eight-month-old 28-member cabinet on Wednesday taking six more ministers raising ministerial head to thirty-four.

Governor H R Bhardwaj administered the oath of the office and secrecy to A Narayanaswamy, C H Vijayashankar, C C Patil, Shobha Karandlaje, V Somanna and S A Ramdas as ministers of cabinet rank at a ceremony held at Raj Bhavan.

Besides Yeddyurappa, many of his cabinet colleagues and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National General Secretary H N Anantkumar were present there amidst anxiety on which the new faces would be.

Yeddyurappa was closeted with his confidantes on who to induct into his Cabinet, as a minor rebellion was brewing at his colleague's house after the minister, Goolihatti Shekhar, on Monday had threatened to commit suicide if he was not retained.

Former Minister for Sports and Youth Services Gulihatti D Shekar today accused Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa of not keeping his promise.

Ashok given Home, Acharya shifted to Higher Education

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa, while allotting portfolios today shifted Dr V S Acharya from Home to Higher Education Ministry while Transport Minister R Ashok was given additional charge of Home.

While allotting the portfolios to the newly-inducted six Ministers, the Chief Minister had

also affected changes in the portfolios of the existing Ministers. Shobha Kharandlaje, who was re-inducted into the Cabinet, was given Energy. She was holding Panchayat Raj and Rural Development in her first innings. Two time MP and first time Minister Vijaya Shankar was given Forest.

C C Patil was allotted Women and Child Development, S A Ramadass got Medical Education (lying vacant after Ramachandre Gowda resigned) and Narayanaswamy Social Welfare. All the three Ministers were new entrants.

D Sudhakar, who was allotted Youth Services and Prison, was earlier holding the Social Welfare Portfolio.

V Somanna, who was re-inducted, was allotted Food and Civil Supplies he was holding Housing portfolio in the first innings.

Mr. Umesh Vishwanath Katti was shifted to Agriculture and Panchayat Raj Department from Horticulture while Ravindranath was shifted to Horticulture from Agriculture.

Karnataka Cabinet reshuffle done in consultation with BJP Central lead

The BJP today dismissed the reports of trouble brewing in the Karnataka Legislature Party in the state BJP and said there were no quarrels and the reshuffle and expansion had taken place in consultations with the BJP Central leadership.

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP M Venkaiah Naidu said at a press conference that the Central leadership had no doubts in its mind about the Government in the state and the Government was functioning properly and effectively.

The Government had won convincingly in the by-elections held recently or in the past, he said.

Three Karnataka ministers dropped, six to take oath Wednesday.

Karnataka CM, 20 ministers offer prayers at Tirumala temple

Two-days after induction of six more ministers in his cabinet, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa, accompanied by 20 ministers and ex-ministers, participated in the morning rituals of the Lord Venkateswara Swamy Temple, here today.

According to temple sources, Mr. Yeddyurappa, Information and Public Relation Minister K Subramnyam Naidu and 18 other ministers and former ministers arrived Tirumala hills last evening. They had Sri Vari meals at TTDs Nityaannadhanam complex and night halt at the hill.

Today, the Chief Minister, along with ministers, Andhra Pradesh BJP Official Spokesman Bhanu Prakash Reddy and General Secretary Narasimha Reddy, offered prayers to the Lord Venkateswara Swamy.

After 'darshan', the Chief Minister was presented Sri Vari Prasadams and lord's portrait by TTD officials at Ranganayakula Mandapam inside Sri Vari Temple. Earlier, Mr. Yeddyurappa made offerings in Sri Vari hundi

Meanwhile, despite the Ananda Nilyam Ananta Swarnamayam Scheme issue was in the Andhra Pradesh High Court, the former Karnataka Endowments Minister Krishnaiah Shetty donated two kg of gold to the TTD for the scheme and also offered two motor vehicles for the benefit of handicapped and old age pilgrims.

Economic Issue

Tata Steel to implement Tata Metallic' Karnataka project

Steel major Tata Steel is likely to implement the three million tones steel project of Tata Metallic (TML) in Karnataka, a senior TML official said here Friday.

"If you look at the balance steel size, the project has to be done by someone with financial muscle," TML's chief financial officer Koushik Chatterjee said on the sidelines of its annual general meeting.

TML is an associate company of Tata Steel with the later holding 46.66 percent in the company.

This decision has been taken as the parent company has better financial strength.

Tata Metallic in June signed a pact with Karnataka government for an integrated 3 million tone steel project at Haveri district during the Global Investors Meet. "The final configuration of the project and its size would be decided after carrying out a feasibility study," Chatterjee said.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

15th FIRA Robot World Cup being organized in Bangalore

The Federation of International Robosoccer Association (FIRA) organized the 15th FIRA Robot World Cup and Congress here last week. Fifty-two teams from 17 countries participated in the event.

Though the robots are not as swift or big like human beings, yet the way they adapt themselves to the game, there is no doubt that a team of robots could do duty during the FIFA World Cup 2050.

"There is a human robot now ... I think like playing the soccer with the human body and the human body team just won the champion of FIFA, the robot will beat the human in 2050 that is the dream," said Tzue-Hseng S.Li, Professor, National United University, Taiwan.

Prahlad Vedakkepat, who is an Associate Professor and Head of the Robotic Cluster at the National University of Singapore, said the motive behind the event was to provide a platform for the younger generation to share their ideas and talent to make a robotic world a reality.

"The motto of this event is to bring theory and practice together. Most of the engineering colleges we have enough theory or rather we dwell into theory in a very detail manner, but practical aspects are not really put into proper prospective," said Vadakkepat.

"So, the objective of this organization is to attract young minds into engineering and technology where robotics can showcase a variety of multi disciplinary research and studies," he added.

Students from different countries demonstrated their robots to the general public.

Unique Identification numbers to be issued in Karnataka from Oct

For the first time in the country, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) will begin to issue Unique Identification (UID) numbers for citizens in Karnataka, between October and December, as part of its pilot project.

UIDAI Deputy Director General Ashok Dalwai told reporters today the first set of UID numbers were expected to be issued in the first week of October and this project would start in Mysore and Tumkur districts.

The UIDAI has planned to distribute the 12 digit number to citizens in these two districts by using bio-metric system and D-duplicating system. This number could not be duplicated at any cost and it remains for only the person to whom it is allotted. He said these numbers would be issued from the D-duplication centre, which was established in Bangalore for the entire country.

Issue of UDI numbers would also commence in other 28 districts in the state from January, he added.

He further mentioned that the State government had hastened preparations for the launch of pilot project to ensure its completion on time.

Chief Minister B S Yedyurappa in his letter to the authority promised to extend all required infrastructure facilities for the project.

The Authority has also conducted Proof of Concept (PoC) for adults in both the districts where it tested its system recently.

A total of 25,000 bio-metric details were collected for the PoC. In Tumkur, the PoC was conducted in Bukkapatna, Chelur, Bellavi, Dodderi and Kibbanahalli villages, while it was held in Varuna, Hadinaru, Thippur, Hammara Halli, and Gowdagere villages in Mysore.

The UIDAI had chosen people of all sections of the society, including manual laborers to the adult for the PoC.

The Authority's top brass headed by Chairman Nandan Nilekani reviewed the PoC results and had expressed satisfaction over the outcome.

Apart from Karnataka, the UIDAI has also identified two more districts in south, namely Medak and Krishna in Andhra Pradesh - for the pilot project.

In north India the authority is in the process of finalizing the places for launching the project, he added.

Special training for Super Cops for Dasara

The city police have taken up a special training for 50 "super police" to control the huge crowd during the coming famous Dasara Festivities commencing here on October 8. In this connection, a four-day training workshop for Super-50 Police, a batch of specially chosen police personnel from various police stations in the city, began at various police stations here today. The training was being imparted by DCP Rajendra Prasad.

The Super 50 Police are a batch of knowledgeable cops with good communication skills in English, Kannada and Hindi.

They have already been groomed in a preliminary training conducted by Mr. Alok Sharma, DIG, Uttarkhand, at a programme held recently in the City.

Mr. Sharma had been in charge of crowd control and related security measures during the Maha Kumbha Mela at Allahabad.

Mangalore Dasara begins Oct 8 .The nine-day Navarathri Utsav, popularly known as 'Mangalore Dasara' will commence at the famous Sri Kudroli Gokarnanatha Kshetra from Friday October eight and last till 18.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Establishment of 4 Food Parks in Karnataka Okayed

The Centre has approved the establishment of four food parks in Karnataka at Bagalkot, Jewargi, Hirriyur and Malur during 8th to 10th Plan periods at an approved grant of Rs four crore each.

Out of total approved grant of Rs 16 crore, amount of grant released by the Centre till date is Rs seven crore, an official release said here today.

The installments of grant are released, subject to reaching prescribed milestones in the project by the implementing agencies and submission of requisite documents or information as per the scheme guidelines.

Prohibitory orders on liquor sale withdrawn

With the verdict on Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case being stayed by the Supreme Court till September 28, prohibitory orders and ban on sale of liquor on September 24 and 25 in Karnataka has been withdrawn.

"However, the ban on bulk SMSs and MMSs that were provocative in nature, continues," a top police official told UNI here today.

The State Government had also cancelled the two-day holiday for schools and colleges in the state.

Offices, including IT and BT and business establishments will function normally as they will be provided sufficient security in view of prohibitory order in force on September 24 and 25 as a precautionary measure for the verdict on Ayodhya title suit by the Allahabad High Court, City Police Commissioner Shankar Bidari said today.

GE Volunteers plant over 7000 saplings

Volunteers from GE India Technology Center here have undertaken a significant afforestation drive by planting over 7,000 saplings of indigenous trees in the Lakkere Reserve Forests adjoining Bandipur National Park.

This programme launched under a not-for-profit environment project run by GE volunteers in 2008 was aimed at protecting, restoring and enhancing the ecological buffer zones of the region and the livelihood of local communities, according to a release here today.

Under this afforestation drive, it was aimed to convert over 50 acres of degraded forest

scrub land into healthy buffer habitats by substantially increasing the green cover in the eastern fringes of Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

Lokkere lies in an ecologically fragile zone, close to a vital migratory corridor connecting the Western and Eastern Ghats which is used by hundreds of elephants.

In recent years, due to depletion of the forest cover, migratory elephants and other animals have started to raid crop in villages in and around Bandipur National Park.

5 killed due to heavy downpour in North Karnataka

Five people were killed due to heavy downpour lashing Coastal and North Interior Karnataka since the last 48 hours.

According to preliminary reports, Gulbarga, Davanagere, Haveri received eight cm to 19 cm of rain.

Sources told UNI that Gulbarga and Davanagere were the worst affected districts reporting maximum cases of inundation, house collapse and deaths due to lightning.

Afsalpur in Gulbarga district reported loss of standing crop of sugarcane and pulses.

Gulbarga Deputy Commissioner R Vishal said five people died and another five injured since last two days of rain in the district.

In Davanagere district, 55 houses collapsed and five people were severely injured due to wall collapse. In several places flood water had entered houses in the low lying areas causing nightmares to the people.

In Haveri, 70 houses were inundated due to rushing rain water and 35 houses had collapsed. The district reported rainfall of 243 mm last night and today.

According to weather office, Mulki in Dakshin Kannada district received the highest rainfall of 19 cm last night.

Kasturirangan calls for quick mechanism

Planning Commission member K Kasturirangan today called for a mechanism to

evolve a solution for rescue of those affected in natural calamities.

Talking to newsmen here after visiting the flood ravaged North Karnataka Districts, he said " a concerted effort must be made at the national level to create a mechanism that would find a quick fix solution to immediately mitigate problems caused by natural calamities in the country." Dr Kasturirangan said the rehabilitation efforts undertaken by the state government were satisfactory.

The Centre has released Rs 1800 crore from the Central Relief fund for the victims, he added.

Rains lash Bangalore: Jams, water logging

Unprecedented rain in the city since this evening has brought movement of traffic to virtual standstill while the flood waters have entered the low-lying areas. More than four City Transport buses were struck in water under an over bridge and two temples on the outskirts of the city completely marooned in the flood water.

Many parts of the city plunged into darkness due to power cuts and people living in low-lying areas were struggling to prevent flood waters entering their houses.

Office goers, who were returning home, were finding it difficult to reach their destinations.

BBMP Mayor S K Nataraj was sitting at the Control Room to receive complaints from the public and giving directions to clear the traffic jam and remove water.

In many places, trees were uprooted. No casualties were reported from any part of the city.

Geo-strategic Issues

Detailed Report/Kerala

Political Issues

Home Minister calls on Karunanidhi

Kerala Home Minister Kodayeri Balakrishnan today called on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi, who was here in connection with a public meeting at Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu. Their meeting took place at the state guest house

Later, Mr. Balakrishnan told reporters that he only called on the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and had no official discussion on any subject regarding the two states during the 15 minute-long meeting.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, who was in the city for the past two days later left for Chennai.

Parties In Search Of Candidates for Reserved Constituencies

Thiruvananthapuram: The political parties are virtually on their heels to identify candidates to field from the reserved constituencies for dalits and tribals.

Although all the leading political parties including the Congress, CPM and the BJP have organizational reach among these sections they are all confined to certain areas. Apart from these there are also 2502 constituencies reserved for scheduled tribes. There is a requirement of over 7500 candidates for the two fronts and the BJP. The candidate shortage is mostly felt in the wards reserved for women among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The number of scheduled caste constituencies reserved for women is 975. Both the fronts and the BJP will have to field over 3000 women in this category. In the case of scheduled

tribe women there are 110 seats and over 3000 women candidates are needed. While scheduled caste women have reservation for chairpersonship of 50 grampanchayats, scheduled tribe women have seven.

Scheduled caste women have chairpersonship reserved for them in eight block panchayats. The Sulthan Batheri block panchayat is reserved for scheduled tribes.

In the present scenario different political parties are forced to approach the same person.

Kerala woman told not to contest over her looks

Thiruvananthapuram, Sep 23 (IANS) A washerwoman picked by the Left to contest Kerala's local bodies polls said Thursday she was told to withdraw from the race because she was 'not beautiful'.

Vijaya Raju had completed one round of campaign when she was reportedly told to back off.

'I feel like committing suicide because this is a shame for me,' said the anguished woman who was to contest from the Shankumughom ward.

'Why did they ask me to contest? Didn't they see me when they selected me as a candidate? Had they told me this before I began my campaign, it would have been fine. But this is too much,' she said.

The ward is reserved for Scheduled Castes. The Communist Party of India is contesting the seat.

Vijaya's friends and family have rallied to her support.

'Is election a beauty contest? What matters is if you have the commitment for hard work. What has been done to her is not acceptable,' said a friend of Vijaya.

But once the news spread, the Left said the decision to make her withdraw from the elections was taken due to political reasons.

The local bodies polls will be held Oct 23 and 25.

Tight security in place across the state

Thiruvananthapuram: In view of court verdict on Ayodhya title suit, the entire state has been put under tight vigil with deployment of rapid action forces, bomb-squad and anti-sabotage forces.

Instructions have been given to authorities to effect preventive arrests if necessary as precautionary measures to prevent any communal trouble, State Home Minister Kodayeri Balakrishnan told reporters here.

Besides the RAP, bomb-squad and anti-sabotage forces, personnel from 'Striking Force'

also would be kept ready to deploy in case of necessity, Balakrishnan said.

To ensure full-proof security and to prevent exploitation of the court verdict by any group, the entire police forces have been mobilized, Balakrishnan said.

Vigil around public places, bus-stands and railway stations has been beefed up. Prohibitory orders under Kerala Police Act had been clamped in Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode for three days from Thursday.

District collectors have been entrusted with powers to pronounce prohibitory orders considering the security situation of respective places, Balakrishnan said. In case of necessity, special protection would be given to places of worship, Balakrishnan said.

Economic Issue

Muthoot Pappachan Group picks 1% in Catholic Syrian Bank

The Kerala-based Muthoot Pappachan Group has picked up under one per cent stake in Catholic Syrian Bank, whose largest shareholder Sura Chansrichawla is under the RBI pressure to bring down his stake to 10 per cent.

While the Thiruvananthapuram-based diversified Muthoot Pappachan Group, which is into non-banking financial services, gold loans, realty, power and hospitality among others, did not deny the development, one of the independent directors of the Thrissur-based private lender said he is unaware of any such development.

"I cannot comment on this particular piece of news. Only the chairman can speak on this," the Muthoot Group spokesperson told PTI from the Kerala capital.

"I am not aware of any such development," Prakash G Thole, an independent director on the Catholic Syrian Bank (CSB) board, told PTI over phone from Pune.

But sources in the know of the development said the Muthoot Group has picked up 0.9 per cent stake in the bank, and is keen to take it to 5 per cent. However, the source could not ascertain the size of the deal.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

Kerala Christians form coalition to fight 'organized forces'

Major church denominations in Kerala have formed a coalition to counter the various forms of challenges facing Christians in the state.

Representatives of the CMI, CSI, Syrian Catholic and Orthodox Churches on Sunday gathered in Kozhikode for the first meeting of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) that has come in the wake of the unsavory act of cutting the palm of a Christian professor in Kerala.

The Christian Democratic Union feels that unorganized Christians were facing stiff challenges from other 'organized forces', according to the Indian Express

The Union has expressed apprehension over Christians being converted and sent to Kashmir to fight the Indian army.

In a note distributed before the meeting, the CDU further said political parties and the ruling class were hunting Christians and their institutions. "They want the support of the communities whose population graph shows an upward trend," it rued.

Referring to the attack on Joseph, the note continued, "Nobody reacts when the hands and legs of Christians are being chopped off."

In addition to this, CDU expressed concern over the decline of Christians in the state. "The population of Christians came down from 30 percent in 1950 to less than 20 percent in 2010." Advocate Babu Benedict has been elected the president and Advocate Joy Abraham general secretary.

Kerala's declining birth and death rates creating imbalance; state has more females than males

Thiruvananthapuram: A visitor driving through Pathanamthitta district in south Kerala, crowded with ATMs, premium car showrooms and swanky jewelry outlets, may be forgiven for mistaking it as a land of young and upwardly mobile people.

However, the demographic reality of the district lies in the less noticeable signposts: A string of hospitals, plentiful medical shops and a number of old-age homes.

Welcome to the heartland of an ageing society that is Kerala, and perhaps the most-acute

case of societal ageing in the whole country. A Planning Commission-UNDP study prepared by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) here and coordinated by the state planning board reveals that 14.6% of Pathanamthitta's population is over 60.

Pathanamthitta also leads the state, and perhaps the country, in the old-old (above 70 years) and the oldest-old (above 80 years) with 6.8% and 2.1% of its population, respectively, falling in these two brackets.

Pathanamthitta's story may present the most severe picture of an ageing society, but the district is also representative of the general direction of the state's demography.

While Kerala's birth rate (per 1,000 population) declined from 31 in 1970 to 14.7 in 2007, its death rate also declined in the same period from 9 to 6.8, contributing to an age pyramid that has a shrinking base (of children) and a swelling top (of senior citizens).

The ageing population has also brought with it a new gender dimension: Kerala is one of a handful of states which has more females than males, but in the ageing society of the state the number of elderly females is considerably higher than those of males, owing to the higher life expectancy among females.

In 2001, for instance, as many as 59% of women in the 60-plus group had lost their husbands as against only 10% of men who were widowers.

Social scientists feel that one reason for the number of widowers being small is the higher incidence of remarriage among widowers, as against the remarriage of widows. What is more certain is that older women in the state are doubly marginalized due to the joint effect of ageing and widowhood.

Pathanamthitta happens to be one of the leading beneficiaries of NRI remittances, and so the senior citizens of the district may be relatively better off, but majority of seniors in Kerala face the challenging odds of dependencies and healthcare expenses.

HP to organize ayurveda mela

Shimla: To highlight the superiority and quality of Ayurveda over other systems of medicine, a three-day Arogya Mela would be organized by the Himachal Pradesh Ayurvedic Department in Una district from September 25, State Health Minister Rajiv

Bindal has said.

Free medical camps will be organized during the Mela where specialists in various disciplines of Ayurveda like yoga, nature care, Unani and Homeopathic system of medicine will be present, he said. Research and development activities in field of Ayurveda would also be highlighted at the Mela where new inventions by different institutions of the state and central governments would be highlighted, Bindal said.

The government would also launch another special programme to promote Ayurvedic health care system under the Ayush Department with the central government's assistance. Doctors in the state are being trained in Panchakarma and Himachal Pradesh would be second state after Kerala to introduce this system, Bindal said.

However, he ruled out promoting Panchakarma to boost tourism. Bindal said the state government has also decided to start Ayurveda B. Pharmacy Degree College and Ayurveda nursing Degree College at Paprola in Kangra district and each four years degree course will have 30 seats. The department has started the process to establish a Centre of Excellence in Dravaguna and Medicinal Plants at the cost of Rs 5 crore and a Centre of Excellence in Geriatric Healthcare at Paprola.

Food, Environment and Energy Issue

Amma calls for hygiene in public places

Kochi: Mata Amritanandamayi has said that the Mata Amritanandamayi Math was ready to take up the responsibility of cleaning schools and public places if it gets the support and cooperation of state governments and other organizations.

"It is said that India is growing and developing. However, in matters of environmental cleanliness and hygiene, we are lagging behind by centuries. The lack of cleanliness on our roads, public bathrooms and toilets is proof of this," the Amma said at Amritapuri. Western countries maintain high standards of cleanliness on roads, at public places, as well as in public bathrooms and toilets. In contrast, the standard of cleanliness on roads and public toilets in India is appalling. It has become a habit for the people to urinate at roadsides and to spit on public roads and pavements. Though there are waste bins, people are not in the habit of disposing of the litter and food waste in the bins. They discard them at the roadside or even in the middle of the road.

Environmental cleanliness and hygiene are a part of development and cultural refinement. For this to happen, we need to plan widespread awareness campaigns. We should erect more signboards on environmental cleanliness at public places, bus stands and roadsides. Amma also stressed that the sincere support and cooperation of the television and the print media were vital to the success of the mission.

Amma said the Math was ready to construct public toilets in schools and public places if state government, school management committees and the local people collaborate. The project will be implemented through proper blueprints, planning and the cooperation of students and the general public. The project will be initiated in Kerala. Thereafter, it will be implemented gradually in other states. Doug E Fresh, one of the first stars of hip hop, will perform during the birthday celebrations of Mata Amritanandamayi on September 27 at the Amritapuri Ashram.

A regular attendee of Amma's New York programmes, Fresh had performed at her programmes there, in 2009 and 2010. Fresh considers his performances 'a gift to Amma.'

Rain springs green hope for Gurgaon

Gurgaon: Gurgaon, the city of steel and glass, has never been — since its inception a little over 20 years ago — as green as it is now.

Thanks to a Kerala-style monsoon, thick foliage covers the open spaces between and around the city's high-rises. Even bare concrete walls are covered with a thick carpet of ivy.

Environmentalists, however, say it is too early to say whether tree cover in the city has increased. "For several years now, Gurgaon has never got a monsoon as good as this. Though we have to wait till October-November to assess the increase in green cover, what we see now is a good sign," said former conservator of forests R P Balwan. "The greenery is more visible because of the revived Aravalis."

The Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon, on the other hand, has been doing a shoddy job of tree plantation. Last year it was given a target of planting 10,000 trees — it has managed 890 saplings so far.

Revenue department reports show Gurgaon could have already received more rainfall this month than all of August. Gurgaon district has already got about 1,064mm rainfall this year.

"With the lakes and ponds full of water, the recharge of groundwater has also improved. This will have a positive impact on trees in the city and also in the Aravalis," said a forest department official.

Geo-strategic Issues

Tamil Nadu

Political Issues

Cong-DMK combine will sweep polls: TNCC Chief

Reiterating that the ties between the ruling DMK and the Congress were strong, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee(TNCC) President K V Thangabalu today said the alliance would sweep the ensuing Assembly Elections securing a two-third majority.

Talking to reporters after calling on DMK President and Chief Minister M Karunanidhi at his Gopalapuram Residence, Mr. Thangabalu said the relationship between the two parties was strong and the combine would emerge as victorious in the ensuing polls.

The TNCC Chief's reassuring statement came two days after Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, also in charge of party affairs in the State, predicted a thumping win for ruling DMK-Congress in the ensuing elections.

Describing his meeting with the Chief Minister as a courtesy call, Mr. Thangabalu said it was a regular meeting based on the strong relationship between the Congress and the DMK.

Referring to Former Union Minister and Senior Congress Leader E V K S Elangovan's remarks that a section of Congress workers were not interested in continuing the alliance with the DMK, Mr. Thangabalu refused to attach any significance to it and said a final decision had to be taken by AICC President Sonia Gandhi and Mr. Karunanidhi. "There was no need to give importance to Mr. Elangovan's comments," he added.

To a question, Mr. Thangabalu said the issue of Mr. Elangovan's remarks did not figure during his talks with the Chief Minister.

"AICC General Secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad, who visited Chennai a couple of days ago, had also said that our alliance (Congress-DMK) is very strong.

"We will jointly face the Assembly Elections and surely win two-thirds of the seats," he added.

AIADMK's Madurai rally: Jaya receives 3 more threat letters

Opposition AIADMK General Secretary J Jayalalithaa today received three more threat letters, warning her against addressing a rally in Madurai.

'Vaigai Puyal' Baalu from Madurai, who had twice sent threat letters, sent a third letter warning the AIADMK leader against visiting Madurai.

The other two letters were sent by one "Naxalite" Nagaraj and "Siruthai" K Srinivasan, warning Ms Jayalalithaa that she would not return alive if she visited Madurai and addressed a rally.

In their letters addressed to Jaya TV, the three also warned that her office would be bombed.

Presenting copies of the handwritten threat letters in Tamil, Jaya TV lodged a complaint with the police, seeking necessary action and enhanced security to Ms Jayalalithaa.

The former Chief Minister is already under Z plus category of security cover. Jaya TV had received seven threat letters for Ms Jayalalithaa so far. Ms Jayalalithaa had received the first two letters last month and early this month, while two more letters were sent on September 18.

An unperturbed Ms Jayalalithaa declared that she would go ahead with her plan to visit Madurai on October 18 and address the proposed rally.

In the run-up to the Assembly elections, she had addressed two massive rallies in Coimbatore and Tiruchirappali.

She had been receiving the threat letters after she announced that the next venue was Madurai.

After lodging a complaint with the state Director General of Police, the AIADMK MPs took up the matter with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and demanded that the party leader be provided with highest security.

Economic Issue

Thailand paint group mulls plant in Chennai

Thailand-based paint group TOA Friday announced plans to set up a plant here and start marketing operations in 2013.

Speaking to reporters here Friday, country head Brijesh Menon said: "Our strategy is to build volumes first in south India and then set up the plant. Initially we will be importing the premium-end decorative paints from Thailand. We are planning to produce 40,000 litres per year."

He said the TOA India will be focused on reaching the products to hardware stores and sensitize the painters about its brand.

"Once we distribute our products to 800 outlets then we will start our advertisements. Till then it will be only below the line advertising," Menon said.

According to him, the premium decorative market in south India is estimated to be around Rs.4, 200 crore.

"For the calendar year 2011, we hope to earn around Rs.50 crore and the next year target is Rs.100 crore," Menon said.

He said by 2013 the company will be expanding its product basket by importing medium-end decorative paints.

Tamil Nadu CM's plea to PM on cotton exports

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi today urged Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh not to allow export of cotton until the domestic needs were met.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, a copy of which was made available to the media here, he said, "Considering the low stocks of cotton available in the country and the rise in the price of cotton in recent weeks, export of cotton may not be allowed until we have ensured a situation in which cotton substantially reached the market to meet the domestic needs.

"Unless availability of cotton at a reasonable price to our domestic producers of textiles is ensured, our value-added textile products such as cloth hosiery and garments, will become uncompetitive in the global context," he said.

"It is also of the greatest importance to ensure that the best cotton is available at reasonable prices to our domestic textile producers for this helps to keep cloth prices under control, thus, reining in inflation," he suggested.

Social/Humanitarian Issue

TN CM announces 10 per cent DA to state govt employees

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi today announced payment of ten per cent Dearness Allowance to the State Government employees, teachers, pensioners and family pensioners, with retrospective effect from July 1.

An official release here said the Government's decision to pay the DA was in line with the Center's announcement providing a similar quantum to its employees.

The release said all the Government employees, teachers, pensioners and family pensioners would receive ten per cent DA from July one.

The arrears would be paid in single payment in cash and this would entail an additional expenditure of Rs 2,190 crore per annum to the state government.

Tamil Nadu Govt enhances funds for provisions in noon meal centers

A week after ordering supply of five eggs a week for students taking noon meal in schools, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi today ordered enhancement of funds to the tune of Rs 74.33 crore, to increase the quantity of rice, vegetables, oil and other provisions for noon meal centers in the state.

The Chief Minister had on September 17, ordered an increase in the supply of boiled eggs from three to five to students at an annual expenditure of Rs 120 crore.

The Chief Minister today ordered an increase of amount spent on each child in Anganwadis and noon meal centers in schools, entailing an additional annual expenditure of Rs 74.33 crore, an official press release here said.

Presently, the government spends 44 paise per child on vegetables, condiments and fuel. This would be increased to 56 paise for children in the age group of two to five years, 70 paise for children from one to standard five and 80 paise for students from sixth to tenth standard, the press release said.

For school students from first to tenth standards, the government was presently giving one gm of oil per student. This would be increased to three gm per student, the release

said.

The quantum of rice for students from sixth to eighth standards (100 gm per student) and from sixth to tenth standard (120 gm per student) is increased to a uniform 150 gm per student, the release said.

This would benefit 11.26 Anganwadi children and 57.75 lakh school students, the press release added.

Puducherry prepared to tackle swine flu cases: health minister

The Puducherry administration has taken all precautionary measures to tackle swine flu cases in the union territory, Home and Health Minister E Valsaraj said today. Talking to newsmen he said as many as 110 suspected cases were reported in different hospitals here with 29 proving to be positive. Twenty five people recovered and were discharged, while four who were in a serious condition, died.

Two of those who died, were from Puducherry and the other two from Tamil Nadu. He said the administration would soon start vaccinating people.

Initially, the vaccine would be administered to students. The health department had a stock of 50,000 doses.

The 8000 doses received earlier from the Centre had been administered to doctors and para-medical staff.

Mr. Valsaraj said the Ayurveda medical college at Mahe was ready and would be opened this year with an intake of 50 students. Seven seats would be earmarked as NRI quota and Puducherry will get 43 seats, he added.

KHIS has evoked tremendous response: Minister

The Kalaignar Health Insurance Scheme (KHIS) for life-saving treatments has evoked tremendous response among people in Tamil Nadu and a total of 11,819 patients with neurological disorders have undergone surgeries under the scheme so far in the state, according to Tamil Nadu Health Minister M R K Pannerselvam.

Inaugurating the three-day 18th National Conference of Indian Academy of Neurology (IAN) here last night, he said the number of people with neurological disorders was on the rise in the state.

The state government attached priority for curing neurology related ailments which had all been included under this insurance scheme, he added.

He said the government had permitted every neurosurgeon to impart training to two medical students, against the previous norm of one student, to meet out the acute shortage of neurosurgeon.

In the wake of growing incidence of road accidents all over the state, the Health Department had sanctioned Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan for all the Government Medical College Hospitals in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, State Transport Minister K N Nehru recalled the services rendered by the renowned neurosurgeon Ramamurthy, who had successfully persuaded Chief Minister M Karunanidhi to start an exclusive Neurology Department at the Government Headquarters Hospital here a few years ago.

Mr. Chandrasekhar M Meshram, Secretary, IAN, said the academy had planned to bring out guidelines on the management of neuro disorders to benefit both the medical fraternity and the patients.

The Academy would also float a research group to evolve remedies for neurological problems. A total of 172 papers would be presented during the course of the conference.

M A Aleem, Organizing Secretary of the conference, said the Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme had ensured a second lease of life to many people.

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