

# **NEWS ALERT**

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# AGRICULTURE

PIONEER, SEP 18, 2018

## **Agri Min appeals to farmers not to burn crop residue**

Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh on Tuesday appealed to farmers not to burn crop residue and asked them to adopt new methods to manage it, including using the waste for biogas production. Highlighting the Government's support to the farmers for addressing the crop residue, he said a provision of Rs 1,151.80 crore for two years has been made under a scheme for states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi-NCR. "The Central Government is providing 50-80 per cent subsidy for crop residue management machineries, which help farmers in mixing crop residue with soil to make it more productive", the Minister said while releasing a booklet titled 'NCDC-Assisting Cooperatives. Always!' highlighting the role and activities assisted by National Cooperative Development Corporation in Krishi Bhawan. Farmers groups are being provided financial assistance at 80 per cent of the project cost for establishing Farm Machinery Banks for custom hiring of crop residue management machinery. Under the sub mission on agricultural mechanisation, 40 per cent subsidy is given on straw rake, straw baler, loader, etc. That apart, the Government's agri-research body ICAR's two centres, one at Ludhiana in Punjab and Anand in Gujarat, have developed and installed a plant for biogas production using paddy straw, he said. According to the Minister, the management of crop residue in the field will help the soil become more fertile thereby resulting in the savings of Rs 2,000 per hectare from the farmer's manure cost. By making palette from crop residue, the Minister said that it can be used for power generation. PNS

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 23, 2018

## **Govt plans Rs 65,000-crore project to reduce greenhouse gases from agriculture**

The goal of the project, with a run period 2018-2025, is to “sequesterate” 49.9 million tonnes of carbon gasses through improved agro-ecosystems.

India is set to roll out its most integrated programme yet to cut greenhouse gases from agriculture. The project is primarily aimed at protecting the country’s five biggest vulnerable ecological landscapes, according to a two officials familiar with the matter.

The programme will cover Madhya Pradesh’s Chambal region, Dampa in Mizoram, Odisha’s Similipal, Jaisalmer and Barmer in Rajasthan besides a national wildlife corridor through Uttarakhand, the officials said.

The programme, involving the agriculture and environment ministries, is part of a global initiative of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a partnership 183 countries, including India.

Each of these critical biodiversity zones – home to over a third of India’s 300 million tribals, precious wildlife and forests – face a specific threat from unsustainable agriculture, including large-scale land degradation.

Climate change and agriculture have a two-way relationship. Farming contributes to and is adversely impacted by climate change, according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The goal of the project, with a run period 2018-2025, is to “sequesterate” 49.9 million tonnes of carbon gasses through improved agro-ecosystems.

Carbon sequestration refers to the process of offsetting harmful emissions through mitigation.

“The programme will serve like one national platform to integrate various ongoing schemes for sustainable agriculture,” said agriculture ministry joint secretary Alka Bhargava.

Agriculture activities are widely known to emit three kinds of harmful gases: carbon dioxide from soil cultivation, methane from livestock and nitrous oxide from fertilizers. Greenhouse emissions are a significant driver of climate change by trapping heat in the Earth’s atmosphere and causing global warming, according to FAO.

In the Chambal region, an area covering 97,982 hectares, the main threats include expanding ravines, sparse vegetation and pollution from chemical-runoffs from agriculture, an official document states. Mitigation proposals include organic cultivation and sustainable grazing of cattle.

In Mizoram, the project will span the Dampa Tiger Reserve and the Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary, covering 145,670 hectares in the Lunglei and Mamit regions. Jhum cultivation has been a major threat to land degradation in the state. In Odisha, the project will be spread over 556,900 hectares, including the UNESCO recognized Simlipal Biosphere Reserve.

Jaisalmer and Barmer in Rajasthan have been picked to create an ecologically sustainable “Desert National Park”, spanning 316,200 hectares.

In Uttarakhand, the Corbett Tiger Reserve and the Rajaji Tiger Reserve will be covered, spanning 324,696 hectares in Nainital, Pauri Garhwal, Almora, Dehradun and Haridwar districts.

“The main idea behind the programme is to integrate environmental concerns with agricultural practices and policies,” said Jeffrey Griffin of FAO.

The overall cost of implementing the project is US\$ 902 million ( ₹ 65,000 crore approximately), with a GEF grant of US\$ 33.5 million. The remaining US\$ 868 million will be available through the co-financing route. The GEF, of which India is a leading member nation, works for solutions to the world’s most “challenging environmental issues related to biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, chemicals, and international waters”. The government has decided to increase India’s share of funding to the GEF by 25%, an official said.

# BANKING

INDIAN EXPRESS SEP 19, 2018

## **Explained: Why Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank are being merged**

*Govt announces merger of Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank, amid long-felt need for consolidation rather than fragmentation of state-owned banks. How does it help, and what challenges lie ahead?*

It has been more than 27 years since a committee headed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor M Narasimham first made out a case for pruning the number of government or state-owned banks. That committee, which was appointed in 1991 by Manmohan Singh who was then Finance Minister, had recommended a restructuring of Indian banks, with three or four large banks including State Bank of India that could be positioned as global banks, besides eight to ten with a national footprint or presence, rather than having over two dozen state-owned banks.

On Monday, after the weekend firefighting measures on the rupee front, the government announced the amalgamation of three banks — Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank — aimed at creating the country's third largest bank with a business of Rs 14.82 lakh crore and over 9,600 branches across the country.

### **The rationale**

For long, it has been recognised that having several banks that are majority-owned by the government, virtually doing the same business, and competing for the same pie of customers wasn't a sensible strategy. It also meant a lower return on the capital employed by the government

which has competing demands for funds, and growing competition. The government and banking regulator RBI have also emphasised the changing face of banking marked by technological changes; challenges to raising capital that the owner (the government) has to provide periodically; the need for consolidation in the sector and putting an end to fragmentation.

### **Merger of BoB, Vijaya, Dena Bank to improve efficiency, governance: Moody's**

In the early phase of the UPA government, there were attempts to merge a couple of banks but the move had to be abandoned as the government balked, anticipating political resistance. In 2016, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said that the government would pursue consolidation after first pumping in more capital and putting back on track many banks weighed down by a huge pile of bad loans. To facilitate this, the government last year put in place an Alternative Mechanism on bank mergers, essentially a group of senior ministers led by the Finance Minister to approve mergers. The first such proposal was the one that was announced Monday.

### **Then & now**

In a coalition like the UPA in the past, getting such a proposal through may have been difficult. The NDA government has the strength of numbers, and may also have been emboldened, perhaps, by the experience of the merger of five subsidiaries of the State Bank of India last year to create an entity with a size of over Rs 44 lakh crore — way ahead of the rest of the banking pack. More importantly, the weak state of some of the banks may have been the tipping point. That's the difference between the attempts in 2007-08 and now — at that time the proposal involved a merger of two strong banks riding the wave of

growth, but this time it will feature at least one very weak bank — Dena Bank, which has severe restrictions on lending and expanding its business. For long, governments have said while they would welcome consolidation, they would prefer the banks themselves to make merger moves and get these approved by their boards. This time, the government appears to have made that decision; reports indicate that the bank managements were informed very late.

### **Precedents**

When private lender GTB was in trouble over 15 years ago, the regulator and the government settled on state-owned Oriental Bank of Commerce to step in. There were also the case of United Western Bank and IDBI, Bank of Rajasthan and ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank and Bank of Punjab. But in terms of scale and common ownership, the latest proposal stands out.

### **How it should help**

Mergers are often advocated on the basis of synergies. These could be in terms of operational efficiency with a large pool of staff in a merged entity being put to work for boosting business, expanding reach and offering more services or products. On a standalone basis, Vijaya Bank had strength in the South while Bank of Baroda and Dena Bank had a stronger base in Western India. That would mean wider access for both the proposed new entity and its customers. From the government's and regulator's point of view, the move will lead to a lower NPA (non-performing assets) ratio for the new bank compared to the NPA ratios of 11.04 % for Dena Bank, 5.40 % for Bank of Baroda and 4.10% for Vijaya Bank. What this could mean down the line is lower requirements of capital from the government and also the ability of a large bank, like the one proposed, to lend more on the strength of its higher capital base

(12.25 %) and to expand business, rather than being dragged down because of weak financials and being forced not to lend.

### **Next step**

The boards of all three banks, being public listed entities, will meet soon and try and get approval for the government proposal. That should not be a problem given the government has the dominant shareholding in all three.

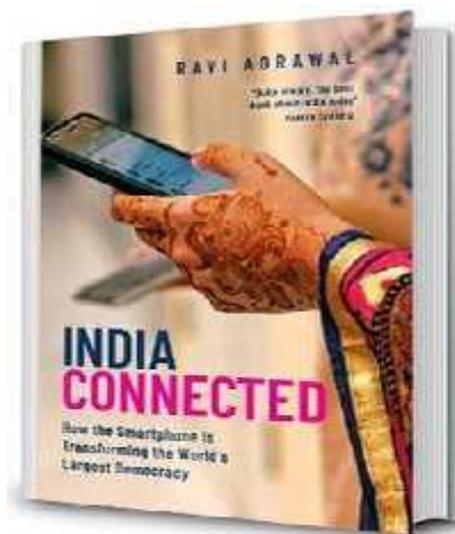
The challenge is integration in a new entity, whether in operations or culture. It helps that the three banks chosen have a common technology platform, which may make it work like in the case of the SBI and its subsidiaries. Human resources can often be a deal breaker: contrasting HR practices and aligning these with employee expectations or aspirations will also test the new management. The other major test will be leadership — choosing one of the CEOs to head the new bank and with a reasonable tenure. Besides that will be addressing the concerns of unions and shareholders.

## BOOK REVIEW

THE HINDU, SEP 16, 2018

### **Touching lives**

Jinoy Jose P.



### **Mapping the impact of Internet-enabled phones on India**

More than 50 crore people use a smartphone in India now. That's almost equal to the population of the entire European Union or even the U.S. More than 50 crore Indian access the web. They shop, sell, stream and socialise online more than they have ever been, thanks to the smartphone, which according to author Ravi Agrawal is doing to India what the automobile did to the U.S. a century ago. "Cars didn't just change how Americans travelled from A to B.," he writes in *India Connected: How the Smartphone is Transforming the World's Largest Democracy*. "They transformed an entire nation," he adds.

Much like the automobile became the epitome of the American dream, he expects the smartphone to embody the new Indian Dream. Over time, Agrawal estimates, the smartphone could be India's great equaliser,

given the way it is giving people access to technologies that were until recently exclusive to the elite. And he is not your run-of-the-mill analyst; Agrawal is managing editor with Foreign Policy and has covered India for CNN. The book is not a typical non-fiction work; it is closer to narrative non-fiction where the author chinks out, in painstakingly detailed and picturesque prose, the transformation India now undergoes, thanks to the smartphone.

Agrawal has divided the book into three parts: Opportunity, Society and the State. The first two parts have three case studies each, while the final carries two stories. In the first part, Agrawal looks into the emerging and evolving opportunities for socio-economic empowerment that the smartphone has introduced in India, while the second part scans the social impacts of web-enabled gadgets. The final, and more serious, part discusses how the state uses and abuses the smartphone (Internet) while mapping the opportunities and threats in digital money.

That said, a major flaw of the book is that in most places it is irritatingly aloof.

Even though Agrawal weaves his stories dexterously, it becomes evident in the very first chapter itself that this is a book that is written for the foreigner, the visiting investor and the like. In most places it ends up stating the obvious about the country and its people and is infested with stereotypes — from village women who look at the smartphone as if it is the Sudarshanchakra and the philosophy-mouthing street vendor. This is the Achilles heel of an otherwise enjoyable work. If your foreign friend is looking for a nice tome on India today, undoubtedly, this is your pick.

## CHILD WELFARE

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 19, 2018

### **18% of all under-15 child deaths occur in India, says UN report**

About 8,02,000 infant deaths were reported in India in 2017, the lowest in five years, but the infant death numbers still remained the highest in the world, according to the report.



A child under 15 years of age dies every five seconds around the world, says the United Nations Child Mortality report released Tuesday, with close to one in every five deaths taking place in India.

Of the estimated 6.3 million children who died in 2017, 1.14 million (18.09%) were from India.

The vast majority of these deaths – 5.4 million – occurred in the first five years of life, with newborns accounting for around half the deaths. India reported close to one million under-five deaths.

Most children under five die due to preventable or treatable causes such as complications during birth, pneumonia, diarrhoea, neonatal sepsis and malaria.

By comparison, among children between 5 and 14 years of age, injuries become a more prominent cause of death, especially from drowning and road traffic.

“More than six million children dying before their fifteenth birthday is a cost we simply can’t afford,” said Timothy Evans, senior director and head, health, nutrition and population global practice, World Bank Group.

“Ending preventable deaths and investing in the health of young people is a basic foundation for building countries’ human capital, which will drive their future growth and prosperity.”

Despite these challenges, fewer children are dying each year worldwide.

The number of children dying under five has fallen dramatically from 12.6 million in 1990 to 5.4 million in 2017. The number of deaths in older children aged between 5 to 14 years dropped from 1.7 million to under a million in the same period.

India’s under five mortality rate — deaths per 1,000 live births — has come down to 39 in 2017 from 124 in 1990.

The government’s latest Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin, released in January this year, showed that for the first time under-five deaths in the country had come down to below 1 million (962, 830) with nearly 120,000 fewer deaths in 2016 as compared to 2015.

The Union health ministry attributes the improvement to several initiatives under the National Health Mission (NHM), including Mission

Indradhanush that was started with the aim to increase universal immunization coverage against vaccine preventable diseases.

“Immunisation is the key to reduce child deaths and our target is to fully immunize more than 90% of newborns in next two years,” said a senior health ministry official.

However, the country is still far behind its neighbours such as Sri Lanka (9), Bangladesh (32), Nepal (34) and Bhutan (31).

“We have improved tremendously over the years, and the rate of decline has also doubled over the previous year. We are working hard to close the gaps,” said the official.

**THE TRIBUNE, SEP 22, 2018**

## **India made significant advancement to eliminate worst forms of child labour in 2017: US**

India is among the only 14 countries to have made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in 2017, an official US report said Saturday.

“In 2017, India made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour,” the US Department of Labor said in its annual ‘Child Labour and Forced Labour’ report.

It said the Findings on the ‘Worst Forms of Child Labour’, mandated by the Trade and Development Act of 2000, is the most comprehensive research product on the state of child labour worldwide.

This year, the report uses more stringent criteria to assess the efforts of 132 countries and territories to address child labour, the report added.

“Only 14 countries – including Colombia, Paraguay, and India – met the new criteria for “Significant Advancement”, which this year requires specific legal and policy labour standards to be met,” it said.

The Department of Labor said the Indian government ratified both ILO Convention 182 and Convention 138 and amended the Child Labor Act to prohibit children under the age of 18 years from working in hazardous occupations and processes.

The government also launched the ‘Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour’ to more effectively enforce child labour laws and implement the ‘National Child Labour Programme’.

In addition, the government released a new ‘National Plan of Action for Children’ that implements the ‘National Policy for Children’, which includes a focus on child labourers, trafficked children, and other vulnerable children, the report said.

“However, children in India engage in the worst forms of child labour, including in forced labour producing garments and quarrying stones,” the report rued, adding that children also perform dangerous tasks of producing bricks.

The Child Labour Act’s hazardous work prohibitions do not include all occupations in which children work in unsafe and unhealthy environments for long periods of time. Penalties for employing children are insufficient to deter violations, and the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups is not criminally prohibited, it said.

The report urges the Indian government to collect and publish national-level data on labour law enforcement, including funding, number of

labour inspectors, number of violations found and the penalties imposed and collected for child labour law violations.



“Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18 are comprehensive, especially in the sectors in which children work in unsafe and unhealthy conditions for long periods of time such as in spinning mills, garment production, carpet making and domestic work,” it said.

“These reports represent one of the Department of Labor’s key contributions to the global effort to protect workers in the United States and around the world by defending the rights of all people to live free of child labour, forced labour, human trafficking, and modern slavery,” said US Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta.

Recent International Labor Organization estimates show there are still over 152 million child labourers – one in every ten children – and 25 million forced labourers worldwide, he said. PTI

## CIVIL AVIATION

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 24, 2018

### **Engineering marvel at 4,500 feet: PM Modi inaugurates Sikkim's Pakyong airport**

Sikkim's Pakyong airport, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on Monday, is spread over 990 acres and is the first greenfield airport to be constructed in the Northeast.



Pakyong airport, about 30km from the state capital Gangtok has put Sikkim on India's aviation map. Until now, Sikkim was the only state in the country which did not have an airport, the nearest one being in West Bengal's Bagdogra, 125 km away.

The Pakyong airport, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on Monday, is spread over 990 acres and is the first greenfield airport to be constructed in the north-east India. The project was approved by the Union Cabinet a decade ago.

At an altitude of more than 4,500 feet, the picturesque airport is considered an engineering marvel because of the terrain where it has been built.



State-of-the-art geotechnical engineering including soil reinforcement and slope stabilisation techniques were used because traditional retaining structures and embankments were ruled as unfeasible in the greenfield project, a government official said.

From next month, you can finally fly straight to Sikkim when the Pakyong airport comes into service. Budget carrier SpiceJet will operate the first flight from Pakyong airport with a flight from Kolkata on 4 October.

Currently, one has to fly to Bagdogra airport in West Bengal to reach Gangtok.



The Pakyong Airport has been included in the central government's ambitious UDAN scheme. This is bound to enhance regional connectivity aiding the development of Sikkim's tourism sector, the official said.

On March 5, an Indian Air Force Dornier 228 conducted test flights from the airport. On March 10, SpiceJet conducted test flights of the 78-seater Bombardier Q400 from Kolkata to Pakyong

The Pakyong airport is the 100th functional airport in India.

**THE TRIBUNE, SEP 22, 2018**

## **PM inaugurates new airport at Jharsuguda in Odisha**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated a new airport at Jharsuguda, which he said will attract investors to the mineral-rich area and would act as a lifeline in the western region of the state.

The prime minister said the airport would go a long way in transforming the state into a modern and developed one.

Noting that only one major airport existed in Odisha for so many years, Modi said Kutch district in Gujarat alone has five airports. “Now, the second airport of the state would act as a lifeline in western region of Odisha and attract investors to the mineral-rich region,” he said.

Asserting that the BJP-led government has been taking concrete steps for strengthening the aviation sector, he said only 450 aircraft operated in the country since Independence, while steps have been taken for 950 new aircraft during the last one year.

Highlighting the importance of Jharsuguda Airport, Modi said it would act as a junction for neighbouring Raipur and Ranchi and strengthen connectivity.

Development of eastern Indian states, including Odisha, West Bengal and Assam, is essential for achieving balanced development of the country, the PM said.

Modi said the new airport is named after freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai, as demanded by the Odisha government.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, while addressing the ceremony, thanked the prime minister for naming the new airport after Sai, and said steps should be taken for quick introduction of regular commercial flights from Jharsuguda.

He said the state government has provided land and free power for setting up the airport.

Modi also inaugurated the Garjanbahal open cast mine of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL), which has coal block reserves of 230 million tonne with an annual production capacity of 13 million tonnes. It will generate direct employment opportunity for 894 people and indirect job opportunities for 5,000.

The prime minister also launched the 53.1-km long Jharsuguda-Serdega railway line constructed by the MCL, and said it would strengthen connectivity in the tribal-dominated region.

Modi also dedicated to the nation Dulanga Coal Mining Project of NTPC in Sundargarh district. This is the second mine of the state-run company to be operational and its first in Odisha.

Coal produced from this mine shall be used in the under-construction 1600-MW Darlipali Super Thermal Power Plant of NTPC in Sundargarh district, officials said.

The Jharsuguda Airport has been developed by the Airports Authority of India in collaboration with Odisha government at an estimated cost of Rs 210 crore, with Rs 75 crore contribution from the state. The airport has been developed under the Centre's UDAN scheme.

Spread across over 1,027.5 acres of land with a 2,390-metre long runway, the area of terminal building of the airport is 4,000 sqm.

The airport has been developed for all-weather operations, including night operations for A-320 type of aircraft. PTI

## **CIVIL SERVICE**

PIONEER, SEP 18, 2018

### **Sanjay Agarawal appointed Agricultural Secy**

The Centre on Monday effected a major bureaucratic reshuffle. Sanjay Agarawal will be the new Agriculture Secretary while Sanjeev Ranjan will be the new chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and Tarun Kapoor the new Vice Chairman, Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

According to an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Agarawal, a 1984 batch officer, who is at present serving in his cadre State Uttar Pradesh, will be Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare on superannuation of S K Pattanayak, on September 30.

Ranjan, a 1985 batch IAS officer, will be the Chairman of the NHAI in the rank and pay of Secretary. He is at present serving in his cadre state Tripura.

Kapoor, a 1987 batch IAS officer of Himachal Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the Vice Chairman, DDA on superannuation of Udai Pratap Singh this month end.

Director General of National Archives of India, Pritam Singh, has been named Secretary, National Commission for Scheduled Castes. He is a 1984 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre.

Anita Bhatnagar Jain will be Secretary, Central Information Commission (CIC). She is at present serving in her cadre state Uttar Pradesh.

Rajeev Ranjan, a 1985 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, will be Special Secretary, GST Council Secretariat under the Department of Revenue.

Sudha Krishnan, who belongs to Indian Audit and Account Service, has been named Member Finance, Space Commission. She would also hold additional charge of Member Finance, Earth Commission and Atomic Energy Commission (with headquarters at New Delhi), the Personnel Ministry order said.

Besides, over 20 officers have been promoted to the rank of additional secretaries from joint secretaries. Gyanesh Kumar and Govind Mohan have been made Additional Secretaries in the Home Ministry. They are joint secretaries in the same ministry.

Gujarat-cadre IAS officer K Srinivas and Lok Ranjan have also been appointed Additional Secretaries in the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). They are Joint Secretaries in the DoPT.

IAS officer Sujata Chaturvedi, who is at present serving in her cadre state Bihar, has also been appointed Additional Secretary in the DoPT.

Uttar Pradesh cadre IAS officer Devesh Chaturvedi will be Additional Secretary in the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare. He is Joint Secretary in the same department. There are some other officers who have also been promoted to the Additional Secretary ranks.

THE HINDU, SEP 16, 2018

## **11 bureaucrats transferred**

## **The Maharashtra government on Saturday transferred 11 senior bureaucrats.**

As per an order issued today, 1992 batch IAS officer Sanjay Sethi, CEO, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) will take charge as Additional Municipal Commissioner, BMC, in place of Sanjay Mukherjee who will be Secretary, Medical Education and Drugs Department in Mumbai.

TELEGRAPH, SEP 20, 2018

## **First woman IAS officer dies at 91**

India's first woman IAS officer, Anna Rajam Malhotra, died at her home in suburban Andheri on Monday, her family said. She was 91.

India's first woman IAS officer, Anna Rajam Malhotra, died at her home in suburban Andheri on Monday, her family said. She was 91.

The last rites were performed in Mumbai, the family said.

She was born as Anna Rajam George in Kerala's Ernakulum district in July 1927. She shifted to Chennai after her schooling in Kozhikode to pursue higher education at the University of Madras.

Malhotra joined the civil services in 1951 and opted for the Madras cadre. She served in the Madras state under then chief minister C. Rajagopalachari.

She married R.N. Malhotra, who served as Reserve Bank governor from 1985 to 1990.

Malhotra is known for her contribution in setting up the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) near Mumbai. She was the chairperson of the JNPT when it was being built.

In 1989, she was honoured with the Padma Bhushan.

Malhotra had worked closely with Rajiv Gandhi when he was in charge of the 1982 Asian Games in Delhi. PTI

TELEGRAPH, SEP 20, 2018

## **Court summons Arvind Kejriwal in chief secretary assault case**

Additional chief metropolitan magistrate Samar Vishal also issued summons to 12 other AAP leaders

Delhi court on Tuesday summoned as accused Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia and 11 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs in the chief secretary Anshu Prakash assault case.

Prakash was allegedly assaulted during a meeting at Kejriwal's official residence on February 19 night.

Additional chief metropolitan magistrate Samar Vishal issued summons after taking cognisance of the chargesheet filed by Delhi police on August 13.

The court said there were sufficient grounds to establish the charges against the accused in the case.

The chargesheet has also named 11 AAP legislators — Amanatullah Khan, Prakash Jarwal, Nitin Tyagi, Rituraj Govind, Sanjeev Jha, Ajay

Dutt, Rajesh Rishi, Rajesh Gupta, Madan Lal, Parveen Kumar and Dinesh Mohania — as accused.

The court had on August 25 reserved the order while rejecting a plea moved by Kejriwal, his deputy and other AAP MLAs seeking to restrain police from sharing with the media information on the chargesheet.

The court had said it needed time to go through the 1,300-page chargesheet, in which the police had alleged that Kejriwal, Sisodia and others had criminally conspired to threaten the chief secretary with death or grievous hurt, obstructed him in discharging his public function and caused hurt.

The chargesheet had also accused the AAP leaders of other offences punishable under sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including wrongfully confining any person, assaulting or using criminal force to deter a public servant from discharge of duty, insulting him to provoke breach of peace and abetment to the offence.

They were also charged under Section 149 of the IPC, which says if an offence is committed by any member of an unlawful assembly, every other member of such assembly shall be held guilty of the offence.

Delhi police had on May 18 questioned Kejriwal for over three hours in connection with the case.

Two of the party MLAs, Amantullah Khan and Prakash Jarwal, were arrested in the case.

The alleged assault had triggered a bitter tussle between the Delhi government and its bureaucrats.

# **CORRUPTION**

THE HINDU, SEP 16, 2018

## **Lokayukta raises questions on ACB formation**

The Lokayukta on Saturday raised several questions before the Karnataka High Court on the legality of formation of an Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) by the State government by withdrawing the power granted to the Lokayukta to probe corruption cases. It also pointed out serious lapses or illegalities in the powers vested with the ACB.

“...Formation of another bureau, department, wing or any other team, which is not under the supervision and control of the Hon’ble Lokayukta, does not align with the object of the Karnataka Lokayukta Act,” which has empowered the Lokayukta to initiate prosecution, said a written statement submitted on behalf of the Lokayukta to the High Court during the hearing of PIL petitions, which questioned the legality of constituting ACB.

## **DATA SECURITY**

PIONEER, SEP 18, 2018

### **FB data breach: CBI writes to Cambridge Analytica, GSR**

The CBI has written to UK-based Cambridge Analytica and Global Science Research (GSR) besides US-based Facebook, seeking information into alleged data theft of Facebook users of India. About a month ago, on a reference from the IT Ministry, the agency had instituted a preliminary enquiry to determine whether GSR and Cambridge Analytica had illegally harvested and misused the data of Facebook users of India.

In the letters sent to the companies, the CBI has sought the details of data collection exercise adapted by them. After reference from the Centre, the investigative agency had initiated a preliminary enquiry against Cambridge Analytica and Global Science Research last month over the alleged data theft.

It is alleged that Cambridge Analytica received data from Global Science Research which employed "illegal means" of personal data harvesting of Indians using Facebook, CBI said. Facebook has over 20 crore users in India.

A preliminary enquiry is the first step to decide whether the allegations deserve a full-blown investigation through an FIR or not, CBI added.

Data mining and analysis firm Cambridge Analytica earlier faced allegations that it used personal information harvested from 87 million Facebook accounts to help Donald Trump win the 2016 US presidential election.

Union Law and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had told Rajya Sabha in July that the probe will be handed over to the CBI.

He had said there were also reports that user data was "illegally accessed by hardware manufacturers who had tie-ups with Facebook. In regard to this issue, Facebook has reported that they are not aware of any misuse of information, including Indian users' information". The Mark Zuckerberg-owned company had said that the data of about 87 million people — mostly in the US — might have been improperly shared with Cambridge Analytica.

## DEFENCE

THE HINDU, SEP 18, 2018

### **Chinese intrusions declined by 10% this year, says official**



**According to him, there was enhanced cooperation along the China border and many incidents were not being reported**

There has been a 10% decline in the number of Chinese transgressions this year, a senior government official told The Hindu.

The official said the presence of Chinese troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has also reduced by around 30%. The manpower has been substituted with powerful surveillance equipment, he said.

Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre informed the Rajya Sabha on February 5 that the number of transgressions was 426 in 2017.

The official claimed that the transgressions dropped after the 73-day standoff between the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army at Doklam on the China-Sikkim-Bhutan tri-junction near Nathu La last year. "The transgressions continue to take place due to the difference in perception of the actual boundary. But after Doklam, the diplomatic manoeuvring and dialogue with the counterparts at the border ensured there was no steep increase," he said.

According to him, there was enhanced cooperation along the China border and many incidents were not being reported.

### Sorting out disputes

"There are many incidents of border transgressions that are not being recorded by both sides. If it's reported, then it becomes part of the official record. The troops on both sides are communicating more and sorting out the differences," said the official.

As per an internal report accessed by *The Hindu*, from August 1-19, as many as 19 incidents of transgressions were reported, out of which 13 were in the Leh sector.

At least three intrusions were reported in Leh, Uttarakhand's Barahoti and the strategically sensitive Asaphila in Arunachal Pradesh on August 15 when the two armies held a special Border Personnel Meeting at Nathu La in Sikkim.

An analysis of the report reveals that the transgressions are anywhere from 300 metres to 19 km in the Indian territory.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 17, 2018

### **‘Govt. has taken steps for financial**

**Almost cleaned up NPA mess: official**

The government has put in place necessary policy measures to bring about financial stability, an official said, while claiming that the administration has “almost cleaned up the NPA mess.”

The transaction cost in Indian exchanges, including commodities transaction tax and securities transaction tax, is higher than international market places such as Singapore and Hong Kong, added C.S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs. He said over a period of time, transaction costs must be reduced.

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 19, 2018

### **Need to shun populism, balance subsidies, says Arun Jaitley**

*Arun Jaitley’s comments come on the back of political demands to ease sharply rising fuel prices by cutting taxes. A large hike in minimum support prices announced in July by the central government itself forms a big part of farm subsidies.*

Benefits from populist policies are short-lived and subsidies alone can’t sustain a sector for long, unless “blended” with investments, finance minister Arun Jaitley said on Friday.

Jaitley was speaking largely in the context of India's crisis-prone agriculture, while releasing the book, "Supporting Indian Farms the Smart way" by economists Ashok Gulati, Marco Ferroni and Yuan Zhou, but his comments also come on the back of political demands to ease sharply rising fuel prices by cutting taxes. A large hike in minimum support prices announced in July by the central government itself forms a big part of farm subsidies.

"How do we choose between when to stop at subsidies and when to concentrate on investment and I think that's an eternal choice before policymakers," he said. Making a case for a focus on investments rather than only subsidies, the finance minister said the country's public expenditure traditionally was geared more towards subsidies because of cash crunches. That's not the case anymore. "The state of inadequacy of resources in India which used to be cited as a reason for limiting investments...I think we are growing out of it," he said.

Governments — in states and at the Centre — are armed with more resources because of greater tax compliance and increasing formalisation of the economy, he said. "Public discourse occasionally gets impacted by populism; it gets impacted by sentiments that a particular move will generate, even though the impact of that move or that policy or decision will not be long-lasting enough."

The book by edited by Gulati, chair professor at the think-tank ICRIER, concludes that farmers are tied to poor incomes mainly because of higher spending on inefficient subsidies but declining capital investments, frequent ban on farm exports and low spending in research for new technologies in agriculture.

For instance, gross capital formation in agriculture -- a measure of spending on fixed assets -- has dwindled from 18% levels about six

years ago to 13% currently, Gulati said. Most growth theories posit that GDP growth is a direct result of investment, necessary for new capital requirement and to replace old worn-out assets, known as depreciation.

“To have a model which sustains indefinitely only on subsidies may not be a sustainable model, investment will make the Indian farmer self-sufficient in the long run... that with much lesser subsidies, a self-sufficient farmer will be able to serve the cause of India’s agriculture and the country as a whole much better,” Gulati wrote.

The workforce that shifted to service and manufacturing and various other sectors of the economy were “certainly much better placed than their counterparts who continued to stay in agriculture”. “Therefore, good politics will have to be blended with sound and rational policy”.

# ELECTION

TELEGRAPH, SEP 20, 2018

## No glitches in poll paper trail devices: EC

The Election Commission on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that it had been established through the use of voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines in 843 Assembly constituencies across states that there were no glitches in the functioning of electronic voting machines as alleged by the Opposition.



**New Delhi:** The Election Commission on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that it had been established through the use of voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines in 843 Assembly constituencies across states that there were no glitches in the functioning of electronic voting machines as alleged by the Opposition.

In an affidavit filed before the apex court on Tuesday through advocate Amit Sharma, the poll panel said that since September 2017, mandatory verification of paper trail counts had been conducted in 843 Assembly constituencies in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura,

Meghalaya and Karnataka, "and in all cases, the slip count has tallied with the electronic count."

Paper trail or VVPAT machines allow voters to check if their vote went to the intended candidate and have become crucial following allegations of voting machine tampering in several recent elections. The Opposition had demanded a return to paper ballots.

The EC's affidavit comes against the backdrop of two petitions filed by Congress leaders Kamal Nath and Sachin Pilot alleging large-scale discrepancies in the voter lists in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, where Assembly elections are scheduled to be held this year-end.

The two leaders had urged the Supreme Court to issue directions to the EC to conduct VVPAT verification in at least 10 per cent randomly selected polling stations in each Assembly constituency to ensure free and fair elections. The leaders had also sought a directive to the EC to publish voter lists in the "text format" and the prohibition of deletion of voters from lists without intimating political parties.

The commission said that on January 1 this year it had directed its field-level functionaries to put only the "image PDF" of electoral rolls in the public domain. The PDF format cannot be tampered with, unlike the text format. The commission has also decided not to use the photos of voters on the electoral rolls, publishing only the names instead. The poll panel said the twin steps were aimed at preventing profiling of voters by vested interests.

"The Election Commission of India has taken a conscious policy decision in issuing these guidelines in order to protect the privacy of the electors as well as to prohibit profiling of electors in view of certain complaints... as well as the global challenges to electoral integrity," the EC said.

The poll panel said the objective was to utilise the most advanced technological tools to prevent manipulation of electors' data.

The EC said nobody had the legal right to demand the publication of electoral rolls in a particular format.

The commission assured the court that there would be no shortage of VVPAT machines for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The EVMs required for the polls will be procured by September 2018 and the VVPAT machines before November.

"The commission would like to allay any unfounded apprehensions regarding the supply of VVPATs for the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. The commission is committed to the 100 per cent deployment of VVPATs at all polling stations in future general elections, as well as bypolls to Lok Sabha and state legislative Assemblies," the EC said.

The commission asserted that no political party or individual could dictate terms to the EC, which is a constitutional body.

The commission termed Nath's petition "misconceived and malafide", viewing it as an attempt "to instruct/direct the Election Commission of India, which is a constitutional authority, to conduct elections according to his personal whims and fancies and that of the political party to which he stands affiliated".

"It is submitted herein that under Article 324 of the Constitution, the Election Commission of India is the custodian of the electoral process... and is vested with the powers of superintendence, direction and control of all elections in India," the EC said, adding that it had "always upheld the integrity of the election process... and has committed itself to the cause of holding free and fair elections".

## HEALTH SERVICES

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 24, 2018

### **Ayushman scheme's Rs 5 lakh insurance cover turns saviour for poor and needy**

Over a dozen people were treated under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) at different hospitals of Jharkhand on the very first day of the launch of Ayushman Bharat scheme, officials said.



Manju Devi, 42, who works as a domestic help in Ranchi, was the first to receive the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna e-health insurance card from Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Sunday.

Modi launched the flagship scheme in Ranchi that provides an annual cover of Rs 5 lakh per poor and vulnerable family.

“Ayushman Bharat is a boon for poor people like us as any health problem in the family takes away our hard earned savings. We underwent an acute financial crisis in 2011 when my husband met with an accident and my daughter was hospitalised with typhoid,” Devi said. “We had to bear over Rs 1 lakh as hospital cost, as there was no such scheme to support us then.”

Devi said they lost all their savings and had to borrow from relatives and neighbours. “With Ayushman Bharat, now we are free from the worry of disease and hospital cost,” said Devi.

Devi’s husband runs a cycle repair shop and both of them earn Rs 5,000-Rs 6000 a month. Devi’s son and daughter study at a Ranchi college. Another recipient, Ruby Rani, 18, said her family had to sell land for her operation, which cost them around Rs 3 lakh. “Had there been Ayushman Bharat like scheme, my father, who works as a casual worker in a private firm, would not have sold the property.” She said meeting the Prime Minister was like a dream come true and Ayushman Bharat would prove to be a blessing to the poor. Mukesh Kumar, a physically-challenged man, said he had to sell land for treatment of his brother, Manoj Kumar, who met with an accident a few years back.

“Doctors are now saying the rod that has been fitted in his leg would have to be taken out. But we do not have enough money for the operation. We thank Modi for introducing Ayushman Bharat.”

Over a dozen treated under PMJAY

Over a dozen people were treated under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) at different hospitals of Jharkhand on the very first day of the launch of Ayushman Bharat scheme, officials said. Altogether 12 patients underwent operations at Ranchi’s Rajendra Institute of

Medical Sciences (RIMS), while a successful caesarean section was performed at Sadar Hospital, East Singhbhum.

Dr Veena Singh, who performed the caesarean section of one Poonam Mahto, said, “Her operation was performed under PMJAY at around 1 pm and she delivered a baby girl.”

State health secretary Nidhi Khare said that treatment under PMJAY would pick up from Monday. “Despite being Sunday, operations were performed by the doctors in different districts. Majority of the patients who underwent treatment had been enrolled under the scheme today,” she said.

Fifty-year-old Bachulal Tiwary said, “Ayushman Bharat has come as blessing in disguise to me, as I had only two options for treatment- either sell property or take loan. I would like to thank Modi for such scheme.”

Tiwary was admitted to the hospital under PMJAY on Saturday. He was detected with 90% blockage in an artery of the heart on September 15.

Doctor had told him that the operation would cost nearly Rs 75,000, which felt like a financial blow to this private tutor, who earns meager Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000 a month.

Tiwary said doctors at RIMS suggested him to try for availing the benefit of Ayushman Bharat. “Doctors told me, if I am enrolled under the scheme, my operation would be done free of cost, as I would get health insurance coverage up to ~5 lakh.

I visited the Ayushman Bharat kiosk at RIMS and submitted the required documents and thus got enrolled under the scheme,” he said. Cardiologist Dr Prshant Kumar said, “The angioplasty procedures of both the patients were done successfully.”

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PIONEER, SEP 16, 2018

## Radicalisation: New manifestation of terror in US

MANAN DWIVEDI



In the age of lone-wolf attacks gaining prominence, the focus of counterterrorism has shifted to the phenomenon of radicalisation on the American soil. Now the challenge is not to locate terrorist hideouts in the rugged caves of Tora Bora, but to spot the potential ultras from among the millions of innocent civilians in the US

Whether it is the South Asian firmament or any other territorial nationality, the theme of mainstreaming the younger generation has always been a pet peeve in the Indian and the American policy mindset.

However, the growing radicalisation has drawn the attention of the security and intelligence establishment. Radicalisation is the bane of an ordinary civilisational narrative. Going by the organic conception of the State, if the sinews and the arteries of nation state are blocked or the life blood of functionalism vitiated, then it is a matter of worrisome introspection on the part of the nation and its population.

The United States has been an avid target of terror mongers and violent Islamic anti-state actors, especially since America created Frankenstein in Afghan conundrum along with its interventions in West Asia since the days of the Persian Gulf conflicts, where the battlelines were finally drawn with the radical and Wahabi Islam. The United States of America has been known since the days of its founding days in the seventeenth century to stay away from the entangling alliances of the world polity. Still, the American interventions in Cuba and the US-Spanish wars initiated a trajectory of never-to-look-back pathway to a coincidental world domination with the replacement of Great Britain by the United States of America, as the world's sole surviving superpower.

In the contemporary context, since the September 11 attacks, the American Homeland Security Act and the Patriot Act were legislated in order to restore parity with the ministrations of the non-state actors. The American literary bestseller titled "Terrorist" has hewn an interesting narrative upon the rising and expanding throes of radicalisation in the suburbs and the educational institutions of the American nation. The narrative of the fictional work provides a glimpse into the lives of a Muslim student and his single mother, along with the Jewish mentor in the high school. Witnessing the racial and social segregation, which misguided Muslim youngsters feel in the American schools and the sequestration leading them to empty parking lots and Basketball courts, is a theme which has received its much deserved attention in the

contemporary time span. The issue of undocumented aliens can be taken up here as it is this corpus of population from Latin America and South Asia which poses a rankling security threats to the American homeland. This is what has resulted in the brass tacks of a talk about a Mexican wall and the scrapping of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) immigration policy, which separates minors from their undocumented alien parents in the form of initiating limits on the H1 visas for the employers in the United States.

Radicalisation is more of a mind game in the United States. The containment of terror attacks by disillusioned youths, till the Boston Marathon attack, speaks volumes about the effectiveness and efficacy of the American security establishment in the aftermath of the plane's deep dive on Pentagon in September 11, 2001. The Oxford English Dictionary attempts a stolid definition of radicalisation, "The action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues."

There was a vehicular attack in Manhattan in November 2017, which was traced back to a migrant from Uzbekistan. New York Daily News reported, "Sayfullo Saipov, a 29-year-old from Tampa, Florida, reportedly emigrated to the US from Uzbekistan in 2010. The investigation is in its early stages, but if previous cases are any indication, it is likely that Saipov did not come to this country — legally or illegally, that is still unclear — as a violent extremist. Odds are he was radicalised here."

This is a matter of worrisome analysis and efficacious introspection by the American establishment as the old storyline of pre-radicalised migrants spoiling the American Dream is the cause of all trouble. How can an ordinary starry-eyed youth takes up cudgels against the system or the entity of the American establishment after getting radicalised in

America and its school and university system? It is not a matter of ungainly criminalisation due to poverty and impoverishment, but an ideologically driven and madrasa hewn narrative, which catches them young in the homeland in the United States of America. It is this deleterious vitiation of the national and patriotic narrative that the United States guards against by relying on psychotherapists and mentors to wean away youngsters from the glare and attraction of rebellious strife. Now, it is part of an institutional striving in the United States.

The United States Homeland Security committee report in 2016 reported, “Now at this juncture, the homeland faces the highest threat from the ISIS and fundamentalism since the September 11 attacks.” The Department of Homeland Security has already reminded the security establishment against the threat of vehicular ramming attacks which pose a challenge to the institutional effectiveness in tackling terror and the sentient invincibility of the United States. What the terror mongers are attaining to achieve is to point out in a gladiatorial contest, the invincibility theme of the American security and make it part of a larger jihad to civilisationally vituperate the grandiloquent American Dream and its spectacularity which is part of the soft power approach of the American Foreign Policy. It is this sheen and the larger-than-life one-uppance of the American manifest destiny and the fable of America being the sparkling city on Camelot which the global terrorist organisations are attempting to strike against. Also, the entire exercise is part of the tenet of “Super terrorism” where terrorists strategise to utilise as a true blue utilitarian, the nodes and inter nodes of the American infrastructural superstructure. It aims to utilise the American web of infrastructure such as its oil depots, refineries, highways and the transport and communication network through locally trained agents who have their origins in the schools and madrasas of the nation despite the multicultural rubric which America takes pride upon.

In the age of lone-wolf attacks gaining prominence, the focus of counterterrorism specialists has shifted to the phenomenon of radicalisation. After the incidents like the terror attacks in San Bernardino and Manhattan, the challenge is not to locate terrorist hideouts in the rugged caves of Tora Bora. The challenge is to spot the potential terrorist from among the millions of innocent civilians loitering around the streets of New York City, Boston or any other city in America.

*(The writer teaches International Relations at Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi)*

INDIAN EXPRESS, SEP 19, 2018

## **India at UN: ‘World doesn’t need lessons on democracy, human rights from Pakistan’**

*India also criticised Pakistan for its "repeated and malicious propaganda" to distract the world from the human rights violations in its own territory.*

India Tuesday said it was ironic that Pakistan, a country founded on religious fundamentalism, spoke of communal disharmony and religious intolerance. India was exercising its right of reply after Pakistan raised the UN report on Kashmir in the Human Rights Council.

“The world does not need lessons on democracy and human rights from Pakistan which has not enjoyed any true democracy since its existence,” First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India in Geneva Mini Devi Kumar said. “The real problem in Jammu and Kashmir is cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.”

“The nature and extent of cross-border terrorism is evident from the number of Pakistan terrorists who have been apprehended by our security forces, the huge amount of arms and ammunition recovered and the continued existence of infrastructure of support for the internationally proscribed terrorist groups in Pakistan controlled territories,” Kumar added during the 39th session.

THE HINDU, SEP 18, 2018

## **India urges Pakistan to create environment for talks**



### **MoS V.K. Singh responds to Islamabad’s Foreign Minister’s comments during Kabul visit**

India on Monday urged Pakistan to create a ‘conductive’ environment for restarting dialogue.

The Indian response came from the Minister of State for External Affairs V. K. Singh, days after Pakistan's new Foreign Minister spoke about holding talks with India.

“Our policy is very clear that dialogue will happen provided the environment is made conducive,” Mr. Singh said while speaking to the media here on the sidelines of an event.

### **Meeting at UNGA**

Mr. Singh's statement comes days before Indian and Pakistani Foreign Ministers are expected to interact during the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session which will begin this week. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made clear India's expectations from Islamabad, when he had urged in a letter to Prime Minister Imran Khan that he should help foster a terrorism-free South Asia.

Earlier last week, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi during a visit to Kabul said the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan desired dialogue with India.

## MINORITIES

TELEGRAPH, SEP 20, 2018

### **Instant triple talaq to be punishable offence**

The Narendra Modi government on Wednesday approved an ordinance to make an instant triple talaq a punishable offence.

The ordinance, cleared by the cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, has to be passed in Parliament within six months.

The move triggered allegations of vote-bank politics from the Congress and several Muslim leaders.

Announcing the cabinet clearance for the ordinance, law and justice minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the move had become necessary as cases of the instant triple talaq were being reported even after the Supreme Court last year declared it unconstitutional.

He accused Congress leader Sonia Gandhi of blocking the bill on the instant triple talaq because of vote-bank politics. "I am making this charge with full sense of responsibility that the distinguished woman leader who is the ultimate leader of the Congress party did not allow the bill to be passed by Parliament for pure vote-bank politics," Prasad claimed.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights of Marriage) Bill, 2017, which makes the instant triple talaq a cognisable and non-bailable offence and provides for up to three years in jail for the

husband, was passed by the Lok Sabha but got stuck in the Rajya Sabha as the government had introduced amendments on the last day of the monsoon session.

Sources said the amendments would be part of the ordinance.

Under the amendments, an FIR against a man for invoking the instant triple talaq will become cognisable only if it is lodged by the victim or a blood relation. The bill passed by the Lok Sabha had allowed anyone to file such a complaint.

While the practice of instant triple talaq will continue to be a non-bailable offence, another amendment allows a magistrate to grant bail after hearing the wife.

A third amendment relates to the dropping of charges. If the wife and the husband agree to settle their differences, the magistrate can compound the offence, or drop the charges, on appropriate terms.

The provision of the offence being non-bailable has been retained as a deterrent.

# NUTRITION

THE HINDU, SEP 18, 2018

## **Ministry clarifies on supplementary nutrition guidelines**

In response to the report titled 'Maneka Gandhi bypassed, nutrition norms cleared' (September 09, 2018), the Ministry of Women and Child Development has issued the following clarification:

“The finalisation of Supplementary Nutrition Guidelines is still under the consideration and no final decision has been taken yet. There is no difference of opinion in the matter as to what constitutes supplementary nutrition as the same has been defined under the NFSA. The Nutritional entitlements under the Anganwadi Services Scheme are provided under Section 4, 5 and 6 of NFSA. These are to be governed by the Supplementary Nutrition (SN) Rules as provided under the Section 39 of NFSA. These rules were formulated and modified by the Ministry on 20.02.2017.

The Ministry is proposing to issue detailed guidelines to help the state/district level functionaries in order to ensure that supplementary nutrition is provided to all beneficiaries as per NFSA and SN Rules 2017. Presently, the implementation of Supplementary Nutrition Programme by the States/UTs has to be in accordance with the NFSA 2013, SM Rules 2017 and the Nutrition Norms issued by the Ministry on 24.02.2009. The Supplementary Nutrition guidelines prepared as per the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) need the approval of the Minister, WCD ."

## POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT – TRIPURA

INDIAN EXPRESS, SEP 19, 2018

### **Tripura: BJP wins 96 per cent of panchayat bypoll seats uncontested, Oppn raises objections**

*The opposition parties have demanded to defer and reschedule the poll process, giving enough time to them for filing nomination papers. However, the State Election Commission has denied any such chance.*



Tripura's ruling BJP has emerged victorious in 96 per cent seats of the three-tier gram panchayat bodies without contest, amid allegations of violence from opposition CPM and Congress.

The opposition parties want the poll process to be deferred and rescheduled, giving enough time to them for filing nomination papers. However, the State Election Commission has denied any such possibility.

State Election Commissioner G Kameshwara Rao told reporters on Tuesday that by-elections in 3,207 seats of gram panchayats, 161

panchayat samiti seats and 18 seats of zilla parishads were announced on September 1. More than 96 per cent of these seats went uncontested and BJP won these seats. Only 132 gram panchayat seats are now open to by-elections along with 7 seats of panchayat samiti.

All seats of zilla parishad were won uncontested.

Following allegations by CPM and Congress of large-scale violence by BJP supporters, Rao said there was no “scope” of deferring or postponing the by-elections. He also rubbished allegations of violence and said that no complaint was filed against any returning officer engaged in the poll process. “September 11 was the last date of filing nomination papers while scrutiny of submitted nominations was done on September 14. After withdrawal of nomination papers, 296 candidates are now in the fray across 132 seats of different gram panchayat bodies,” Rao said.

He also said the authorities were not aware of any complaint against Block Development Officers, who are acting as Returning Officers. District Magistrates function as RO for Zilla Parishad polls. There is no complaint against police personnel either, he added.

Earlier this month, the CPM said they were able to submit nomination papers in only eight of 35 blocks of the state that will witness by-elections on September 30.

Ruling alliance partner IPFT and opposition Congress also made similar allegations and demanded that the poll process be deferred. Later, the BJP and IPFT reached an agreement and formed a 14-member coordination committee to quell differences among themselves.

The CPM is trying to infiltrate the ruling parties, which caused the “confusion” and led to clashes, coordination committee chairperson and Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Devvarma said.

# POVERTY

HINDUSTAN TIMES, SEP 19, 2018

## **Education, healthcare can win global war on poverty: Goalkeepers report**

One billion people worldwide have come out of poverty since 2000, but rapid population growth in the world's poorest countries threatens to slow or even reverse the decline, according to The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Goalkeepers: The Stories Behind the Data 2018 released on Tuesday.



One billion people worldwide have come out of poverty since 2000, but rapid population growth in the poorest countries, particularly in Africa, threatens to slow or even reverse the decline, according to The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Goalkeepers: The Stories Behind the Data, 2018, released Tuesday.

Investing in health and education of young people can unlock productivity and innovation, create opportunities and cut poverty,

leading to a “third wave” of poverty reduction in Africa — after the first and second waves in China and India.

The report says China, India and Ethiopia have achieved “historic growth” over the past 30 years despite being once considered hopeless at cutting poverty. Ethiopia, which was once the global poster child for famine, is projected to almost eliminate extreme poverty by year 2050.

“We believe — and history proves — that poor countries can chart a new course by investing in their young people. If young people are healthy, educated, and productive, there are more people to do the kind of innovative work that stimulates rapid growth,” write Bill and Melinda Gates in the introduction.

“India has already shown tremendous progress on this front. We are no longer home to the largest number of poor people in the world. In fact, the number of extremely poor falls by 44 people a minute, according to World Poverty Clock,” said Nachiket Mor, national director, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation India.

With the population in Africa projected to nearly double by 2050, even halving the percentage of poor in the continent would result in the number of poor people staying the same. Investments in health and education in sub-Saharan Africa could increase the gross domestic product by more than 90% by 2050.

### **Learning milestones**

While India has pushed back poverty and pushed up primary school enrolment to 97%, it needs a clearer strategy to improve outcomes to ensure children acquire the skills needed to succeed, said the report, which tracks 18 data points from the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including child and maternal deaths, stunting, access to

contraceptives, HIV, malaria, extreme poverty, financial inclusion, sanitation.

“Early school years are very important for cognitive development, and if children below the age of five are malnourished and education is of poor quality, they are likely to miss development opportunities. Quality education must give them the competence and confidence to meet the changing skill requirements in the new world. They must have skills that make them competent to migrate between jobs, as the world no longer works in silos,” said Dr Srinath Reddy, president, Public Health Foundation of India.

Innovations such as grouping students based on what they know, rather than by age or grade, and providing personalised instruction in an online environment help improve performance on tests.

According to the Annual Status of Education Report, only a quarter of Class 3 students can read and understand a short story or subtract two-digit numbers. Making foundational learning by Class 3 a priority is needed to excel, as exemplified by Vietnam, where foundational skills in maths and reading in primary school led to students outperforming peers from wealthy countries like the UK and the US on international tests (the US’s GDP per capita is 27 times than that of Vietnam’s), writes Ashish Dhawan, chairman, Central Square Foundation, a Delhi-based think-tank.

## **Health for all**

A person can never reach his or her potential without quality education and healthcare. “Catastrophic illnesses push 60 million people into poverty in India, and by providing ~5 lakh hospitalisation cover under Ayushman Bharat, at least 40 million will come out of poverty,” said

Dileep Mavlankar, director, Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar

While vaccines are lowering deaths from diarrhoea and pneumonia, bed nets have prevented more than 500 million cases of malaria, according to the report.

“It [Goalkeepers report] is also an opportunity for us to look at the positive strides we have made in India, and while we continue on this trajectory, how we can also share our lessons and experiences and leverage them to support other developing economies, and help them enable and mainstream those in need,” said Mor.

Apart from education, this year’s report examines three other topics: family planning to empower women to choose when, with whom, and how many children they will have; HIV modelling for what Zimbabwe’s HIV epidemic might look like in 2050; and doubling agricultural productivity in Ghana to create jobs and cut poverty by half.

“If we invest in human capital today, young people wearing sandals in the poorest, fastest growing countries will be riding bicycles tomorrow — and inventing cheaper, cleaner, safer cars next week. That’s good for everyone,” write Bill and Melinda Gates in the report.

# SANITATION

HINDU, SEP 16, 2018

## PM launches cleanliness campaign



Says sanitation coverage in India has increased from 40% to over 90% in four years of ‘Swachh Bharat’

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the “Swachhata Hi Seva” (“cleanliness is service”) campaign on Saturday, and took up a broom to clean a school named after Dalit icon B.R. Ambedkar. Union Ministers and BJP leaders and workers participated in similar exercises across the country.

In a nearly two-hour video interaction with people from across the country, including religious leaders, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and noted personalities such as Amitabh Bachchan and Ratan Tata, Mr. Modi said the sanitation coverage in India had increased

from 40% to over 90% in the four years of the “Swachh Bharat” (Clean India) project.

He said few would have thought that nine crore toilets would be built and 4.5 lakh villages declared free of open defecation in four years.

He launched the “cleanliness is service” exercise to push for greater public participation in one of his government’s centrepiece programmes launched on October 2, 2015. It will continue till Mahatma Gandhi’s birth anniversary next month.

All sections of society and every part of the country had joined the cleanliness drive, he said, exhorting people to rededicate themselves to fulfilling Gandhiji’s dream of a clean India.

“Had anybody imagined that more than 450 districts would be open-defecation-free (ODF) in four years or that 20 States and Union Territories would be open-defecation-free in four years,” he said.

Mr. Adityanath said Uttar Pradesh, the country’s most populous and among the most poor States, would be ODF by October 2.

Pat for Adityanath

He said his government was working to ensure that every family had a toilet by October 2019. His government’s emphasis on cleanliness had led to a drastic fall in vector-borne diseases, Mr. Adityanath said. Mr. Modi lauded Mr. Adityanath for his government’s efforts.

The Prime Minister spoke to people in States such as Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Haryana. He also interacted with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel involved in cleaning the Pangong Lake and its surroundings in Leh, besides religious

and spiritual figures, including Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Mata Amritanandamayi.

He interacted with Sikh religious figures from Patna Sahib gurdwara, Muslim custodians of Ajmer Sharif and those from the media group Dainik Jagran .

## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

INDIAN EXPRESS, SEP 19, 2018

### **Kerala nun rape case LIVE: Bishop Franco Mulakkal to be interrogated today, arrives at Crime Branch**

*Kerala nun rape case LIVE: This is the second interrogation that bishop Mulakkal will face in connection with the alleged crime. Earlier, a police team from Kerala had travelled to Jalandhar to question him.*



The Kerala police on Wednesday will question Jalandhar bishop Franco Mulakkal for allegedly raping a nun. A five-member team led by Vaikom Dy SP K Subhash will interrogate the priest at the Crime Branch.

This is the second police interrogation that bishop Mulakkal will face in connection with the alleged crime. Earlier, a police team from Kerala had travelled to Jalandhar to question him. When asked why Mulakkal was not arrested, the team head, DSP K Subhash, said the senior priest had “cooperated” during questioning and that they would return to Bishop’s residence “if required”.

Mulakkal, on Tuesday, approached the Kerala High Court seeking anticipatory bail plea before the questioning began. “Arrest of the bishop would happen only if there is required evidence in the case, reporting of which was delayed by nearly two years,” sources said.

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