

NEWS ALERT

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HINDU

HINDUSTAN TIMES

INDIAN EXPRESS

PIONEER

STATESMAN

TELEGRAPH

TIMES OF INDIA

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BACKWARD CLASSES

PIONEER, SEP 4, 2018

I&B Ministry urges Pvt TV channels to refrain from using 'Dalit'

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued an advisory to all private satellite TV channels, urging them to refrain from using the nomenclature 'Dalit' for people belonging to Scheduled Castes in compliance with a Bombay High Court directive.

The advisory urges channels that they may refrain from using the term 'Dalit' while referring to people belonging to Scheduled Castes.

The letter, addressed to all private TV channels on August 7, referred to a June directive by the Bombay High Court asking the ministry to consider issuing a direction to the media to stop using the word 'Dalit'.

The court directive had come over a petition filed by Pankaj Meshram before the Nagpur bench of the High Court.

"It is accordingly advised that media may refrain from using the nomenclature 'Dalit' while referring to members belonging to Scheduled Castes in compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble Bombay High Court and the Constitutional term 'Scheduled Caste' in English, and its appropriate translation in other national languages should alone be used for all official transactions, matters, dealings, certificates, etc. For denoting the persons belonging to Scheduled Castes," it said.

STATESMAN, SEP 4, 2018

OBC data to be collected for Census 2021

India, the second most populous country with 1.34 billion people, will soon begin a census operation which will for the first time include a count of the backward classes.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh discussed with officials the roadmap for the 16th decennial count, one of the largest administrative exercises, which will involve 25 lakh enumerators and deployment of a new tool-georeferencing – which makes it possible to locate by physical place, an official statement said.

The last census of 2010 counted the population at 1.21 billion, which was made public as a provisional data in 2011.

The 2021 exercise, the largest single source of a variety of statistical information on different characteristics of the people of India, will use improved technological intervention to ensure that the whole data is finalized within three years, the statement said.

The inclusion of OBC count in the census assumes significance against the backdrop of constant clamour for a share in the pie of reservation and the lack of authentic data about various castes and subcastes. The Mandal Commission had put the OBC at 52 per cent of the population.

Nearly 25 lakh enumerators have been trained and engaged for the gigantic exercise, the statement said.

It was in 1872 the first census was conducted in India non-synchronously in different parts.

The meeting reviewed the functioning of the office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner in which Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijju, Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba and Registrar General of India Sailesh participated.

“Rajnath Singh discussed the roadmap for undertaking the Census in 2021. It was envisaged to collect data on OBC for the first time. Use of maps, georeferencing at the time of house listing is also under consideration,” said the statement.

It was emphasised that improvements in design and technological interventions be made to ensure that the Census data was finalized within three years after the Census operation, said the statement. At present, it takes seven to eight years to release the complete data.

For the latest exercise, Rajnath Singh emphasised the need of improvement in civil registration system, especially on registration of births and deaths in remote areas, and strengthening sample registration system for estimating the data like Infant Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Ratio and Fertility Rates.

The last Census was conducted under the UPA regime in 2011 in two phases – House Listing and Housing Census (April to September 2010) and Population Enumeration (February 9 to 28 in 2011).

Reports released on March 31, 2011 revealed that the Indian population increased to 1.21 billion with a decadal growth of 17.64 per cent.

The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census, a statutory exercise conducted under the provisions of the Census Act 1945, rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Home Ministry.

BANKING

INDIAN EXPRESS SEP 4, 2018

Prime Minister launches India Post Payments Bank



It will accept deposits of up to 1 lakh, offer remittance services, mobile payments and other banking services and third-party fund transfers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, September 1, 2018, launched a payments bank of the Department of Posts that will take banking to the doorstep of every citizen through an unmatched network of post offices and almost 3 lakh postmen and 'Grameen Dak Sewaks'.

The India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) will be like any other banks but its operations will be on a smaller scale without involving any credit risk. It will carry out most banking operations like accepting deposits but won't advance loans or issue credit cards.

The payments bank will accept deposits of up to Rs 1 lakh, offer remittance services, mobile payments/transfers/purchases and other banking services like ATM/debit cards, net banking and third-party fund transfers.

Communications Minister Manoj Sinha said the IPPB would be available through 650 branches and 3,250 access points. Deposits in any account that exceed 1 lakh would be automatically converted into post office savings account.

The government owns 100 per cent in the IPPB, which will offer products and services through multiple channels such as counter services, micro ATMs, mobile banking app, messages and interactive voice response.

Tech platforms to handle transactions

The IPPB will leverage tech platforms. It will use Aadhaar to open accounts, while a QR card and biometrics will drive authentication, transactions, and payments. Grameen Dak Sewaks will be armed with smartphones and biometric devices to handle transactions.

It will offer 4 per cent interest rate on savings accounts. The IPPB has teamed up with financial services providers like the PNB and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance for third-party products like loans and insurance.

The Cabinet, earlier this week, approved an 80 per cent hike in spending on the IPPB to 1,435 crore - arming it with additional ammo to compete in the market with existing operators like Airtel Payments Bank and Paytm Payments Bank.

IPPB services will be available at 650 branches and 3,250 access points from September 1, but will be quickly scaled to all 1.55 lakh post offices

by December. Of these, 1.30 lakh access points will be located in rural areas, taking it to a vast untapped market. The IPPB also has permission to link around 17-crore postal savings bank (PSB) accounts with its own set-up.

CIVIL AVIATION

TRIBUNE, SEP 4, 2018

India to construct 100 airports in next 10 to 15 years: Prabhu



India plans to construct 100 airports at an estimated cost of USD 60 billion (about Rs 4.2 lakh crore) in the next 10 to 15 years, Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu said on Tuesday. The country's aviation sector is one of the fastest-growing in the world and has recorded 50 months of double-digit traffic growth.

As many as 100 new airports would be built in the next 10 to 15 years for about USD 60 billion. These airports are to be constructed through public private partnership, Prabhu said.

He said the government is also working on a cargo policy.

CITIZENSHIP

TRIBUNE, SEP 2, 2018

Demand for citizen's register in other North-Eastern states too

Movements seeking publication of a National Register of Citizens (NRC) on the lines of that in Assam are gaining momentum in other North-Eastern (NE) states as well with some of the student vigilante groups putting up check points at various places to stop “illegal migrants” from entering their areas. Organisations in Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram have already raised demands for publication of the similar NRC in their states. The demand for an NRC in Tripura has turned out to be an issue that has brought the tribal opposition and the ruling parties, INPT and the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura, together.

While the BJP, the IPFT's ally in the ruling coalition, has said the state does not need an NRC, its other partner has been very vocal in the demand for a citizen's register.

The leaders there say the regular influx from Bangladesh has led to a threat to the indigenous life in their states.

While there have been regular protests over the past weeks for demand of an NRC, some parties are also seeking the withdrawal of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016. The proposed amendment seeks to grant citizenship to migrants belonging to religious minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In Meghalaya, the influential Khasi Students Union has also sought action similar on the lines of NRC in Assam. Unlike Nagaland and

Arunachal Pradesh, who have the Inner Line Permit provisions, Meghalaya does not have such facilities to detect influx. In Mizoram, student body Mizo Zirlai Pawl has been keeping vigil and pushing people back into Assam whose names do not appear in the NRC.

CURRENCY

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 6, 2018

Currency woes: Rupee at new low, yields trend higher

Rupee edges closer to the 72 mark vs the dollar, ends session at fresh closing low of 71.75.

The rupee on Wednesday slipped to yet another record low of 71.97 against the dollar in intra-day trades before ending the session at a fresh closing low of 71.7562. Dealers said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had stepped in to intervene though the quantum of dollar selling was not known. The rupee has given up 2.3% in the past six sessions alone.

Meanwhile, the yield on the benchmark bond rose to a near four-year high of 8.111%, in intra-day trades. However, they retreated somewhat in sync with the recovery in the rupee to close at 8.049, two basis points (bps) lower than Tuesday's close of 8.063%.

The yield has now hardened by 15 bps in the past seven trading sessions as the markets are convinced the central bank will raise the key repo rate by at least 25 basis points if not 50 bps between now and March 2019. Fears of the rate hike have led to a sharp fall in banks' stocks in the past couple of sessions as investors apprehend losses on lenders' bond portfolios.

The sharp decline in the rupee even without any strengthening of the dollar has left the currency markets jittery.

Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic advisor, State Bank of India (SBI), believes much of the correction is now done and any sharp depreciation from here on might result in costs outweighing benefits. “The fall may have been initially triggered by global headwinds but the pace of depreciation in the last couple of days has rattled the markets,” Ghosh said.

Ashutosh Khajuria, ED and CFO, Federal Bank, observed the depreciation would have been welcome had it come over a period of five to six months rather in just about a month. “This has cause pain to the real economy,” Khajuria said.

The rupee has now lost 11% since the beginning of 2018. It continues to be Asia’s worst performing currency and the has yielded the third worst returns amongst the emerging market (EM) currencies. The currency markets remain anxious because crude oil prices have shot up sharply over the last two weeks and India imports approximately three-fourths of its requirements of crude oil.

With the rupee inching toward the 72 mark currency experts said companies had started hedging any residual unhedged forex exposures. Analysts estimate that more than 50% of the foreign exchange liabilities of the companies in the BSE 500 universe have a natural hedge in the form of forex revenues.

With oil prices remaining elevated, economists now expect the CAD (current account deficit) to widen to around 2.7-2.8% of the GDP in 2018-19 from 1.9% in 2017-18. The RBI said in its annual report on pointed out that the CAD was expected to be largely financed by FDI (foreign direct investment) flows.

DISASTER

PIONEER, SEP 4, 2018

Rat fever toll mounts to 59 in flood hit Kerala

Communicable diseases including leptospirosis, an infection also known as rat fever and caused by direct contact with body fluids of infected animals, seem to be scouring flood-ravaged Kerala despite the precautions taken by the State Health Department.

With eight more persons including two who had participated in flood relief operations dying with symptoms of rat fever on Monday, the death toll in the disease outbreak in the past eight days has risen to 42, though confirmation is yet to come in many of the cases. As many as 59 people have died of leptospirosis in the State since August 1, as per to unofficial estimates.

Obvious symptoms of leptospirosis were found in about 700 of the nearly 1,000 persons who had approached hospitals and infection was confirmed in over 370 patients since August 1, as per reports. Kozhikode is the worst-hit district with 19 succumbing to suspected rat fever since August 26. About 200 people were undergoing treatment in the district currently.

However, official estimates put the number of people who died with rat fever symptoms in the State since August 15 at 37, and nine of these were said to be confirmed cases of leptospirosis. While 523 persons had sought medical assistance with symptoms of rat fever in the past 34 days, the disease was confirmed in 196 cases, as per official estimates.

State Health Minister KK Shailaja, who presided over an urgent meeting of Health Department officials in Kozhikode on Monday, said the coming three weeks would be considered as a period for keeping high alert in the context of the spread of leptospirosis close on the heels of the deluge that had ravaged the State between August 8 and 20.

Shailaja asked Health officials to intensify disease-prevention works considering the possibility of the incidence of dengue, cholera and jaundice in the aftermath of the deluge. She said the Health Department was prescribing only allopathic medicines for rat fever and asked the people to be cautious about false campaigns against the scientific treatment methods.

The Minister said that examinations had shown that some of those who had died of suspected leptospirosis had not taken preventive medicines. “There is need of caution but there is no need to panic. Medicines have been supplied to hospitals in required quantity. We have also started leptospirosis corners in hospitals and health centres,” she said.

Though presence of leptospirosis has been observed in almost all flood-affected areas, Health Department officials said there was no need to panic as the State had the capacity to cope with the situation. “Nobody should attempt self-medication with drugs like paracetamol when symptoms are seen,” said a Health official.

Among the eight persons who died on Monday with rat fever symptoms were two flood-relief workers – NT Anilkumar (54) of Eranjikkal, Kozhikode and Ranju (30) of Ayiroor in Pathanamthitta district – while a 48-year-old woman volunteer, Kumari of Chamakkala near Perumbavoor, 45 KM east of Kochi, had died of suspected infection on Sunday.

Anilkumar, Congress Mandalam secretary in Elathur, had actively taken part in the rescue and relief operations after several divisions of the Kozhikode Corporation were flooded. His death has caused anxiety in the Eranjikkal area. However, confirmation on the actual cause of his death was yet to come though he had shown the symptoms of rat fever.

Ranju, who died of leptospirosis on Monday, had been active in the relief works in the flood-hit areas of Ayiroor. His relatives complained that he had not been provided with timely medical assistance. Kumari, who died on Sunday, had participated in the post-flood cleaning works along with other women at Koovappadi, Nedumbassery and other places in Ernakulam district.

ENERGY RESOURCES

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 7, 2018

India's crude import bill jumps 76% in July as rupee falls to its record low

Burgeoning oil prices have pushed up India's monthly oil imports to more than \$10 billion in each of the three months through July. They were as little as \$5.8 billion in both June and July last year.

Forget Turkey and Argentina. The Indian rupee's real bugbear is the price of oil. India's currency had its worst month in three years in August as crude rallied on speculation sanctions on Iran will shrink global supplies. The crude import bill for the world's fastest-growing oil user surged 76 percent in July from a year earlier to \$10.2 billion. That pushed up the trade deficit to \$18 billion, the most in five years.

"Dollar demand for crude heading into Iran sanctions is not helping with rupee pressures," said Vishnu Varathan, head of economics and strategy at Mizuho Bank Ltd. in Singapore. "Demand for dollars is large, lumpy, and has been on an upward trend given the confluence of rising oil prices and actual demand pick-up for oil."

The rupee is Asia's worst-performing currency this year, sliding 11 percent and setting a string of record lows, most recently 71.96 per dollar on Wednesday. The pace of the decline has analysts scrambling to revise forecasts, with Mizuho changing its year-end estimate to 70.50 from an earlier prediction of 68.80.

Brent, the benchmark of half the world's oil including India's, has jumped by more than 70 percent from a low set in the middle of last

year. The commodity is currently trading at \$77.10 per barrel, a whisker below a three-year high of \$80.50 reached in May.

Burgeoning oil prices have pushed up India's monthly oil imports to more than \$10 billion in each of the three months through July. They were as little as \$5.8 billion in both June and July last year.

Elevated oil prices are exerting pressure on both the current account and the fiscal deficit, and that's weighing on the currency, according to Commerzbank AG.

"Last week, there were reports of strong month-end dollar demand, which may have accentuated the rupee's decline," analyst Charlie Lay wrote in a research note published Monday. Commerzbank is in the process of revising its rupee forecast and will probably lower it, he said. Rising oil prices will probably see India's current-account deficit widen to 2.6 percent of gross domestic product in the financial year through March 2019, from 1.5 percent a year earlier, according to Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd.

"With the rupee having reached our year-end forecast of 71.5, the question is how much lower it can go," head of research Khoon Goh and strategist Rini Sen wrote in a note on Wednesday. "The currency is still on the expensive side" and current fair value is around 73 per dollar, which suggests it will weaken further, they said.

The rupee's slide has fueled speculation the Reserve Bank of India may revisit a policy employed in 2013 of opening a foreign-exchange swap window to meet the entire daily dollar requirements of the nation's oil-marketing companies.

For now, state-owned refiners Indian Oil Corp., Bharat Petroleum Corp. and Hindustan Oil Corp. are not worried. The RBI hasn't asked them to defer or stagger their dollar purchases for oil payments, an Indian Oil official familiar with the matter said last month.

FOREST

PIONEER, SEP 7, 2018

India sets record in forest restoration

In the last seven years (2011-2017), India has restored 9.8 million hectares of degraded land, with Government agencies playing a major role in the green initiative, restoring 95 per cent while the remaining 5 per cent was done by NGOs and private companies.

The restoration work is part of the Bonn Challenge, a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. At least 46 countries have signed the Challenge and pledged their commitments for green covers.

India has now submitted its report titled, 'Bonn Challenge and India: Progress on Restoration Efforts Across States and Landscapes,' a first-ever publication from any country in the world, giving detailed progress on forest landscape restoration under the global treaty.

India had pledged to restore 13 million hectares of degraded land by 2020 and an additional 8 million hectares by 2030. On this, the report says while restoration commitments are achievable, additional efforts to comprehensively capture the restoration efforts needs to be undertaken by all actors in future stocktaking reports.

The report is co-published by the India Country Office of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. At the first Bonn

Challenge roundtable in Asia, held last May, restoration pledges for the region crossed the 150 million hectare milestone.

Among "transformational changes" brought about by public restoration programmes, the report notes increased biodiversity and forest productivity linked to the Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) approach. Some of the benefits listed include the creation of livelihood opportunities in remote areas by linking villages to markets for sale of non-timber forest products, better irrigation facilities for crop production, and improved transport and health care facilities.

The report is in full praise of the JFMC which has "ushered in a new era of forest protection in the country" by making forest restoration "socially more inclusive."

"By providing villagers with opportunities to participate in micro-plans, the JFMC model has ushered in a new era of forest protection in the country by successfully involving communities in the protection and sustainable harvesting of natural resources and bringing in expertise and aligned interests of multiple stakeholders in forest restoration, thereby making it socially more inclusive, " says the report.

On the role of the private sector, the report notes that many afforestation and restoration activities undertaken by private companies are often a result of legal compliance, or form part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) obligations. "Out of the total 193,290.3 hectares of land restored and afforested by the surveyed private companies, around 97 per cent was under mixed plantations containing fast-growing exotic tree species as well as cash crops."

It has called for "a more bio-centric approach" to motivate private firms to adopt more sustainable and ecological models of restoration based on

native species that are adapted to local conditions and better suited to the recovery of faunal diversity.

Similarly, NGOs have played a "small but active role" in the restoration of degraded lands. Of the total 352,677.9 hectares restored by the surveyed NGOs, the report notes that a total of 322,610.9 hectares (91.5%) was restored using mixed plantation model, while 8.5% of restoration activities were based on using a mono plantation model, mainly in coastal areas planted with mangrove.

NGOs featured as best practices include Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) and Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology (GUIDE).

The report has dwelled five case studies across seven states including a government-funded JFMC in Nagaland, NGO-led grassland and rainforest projects in Gujarat and Valparai respectively, and efforts by Tata Power to reverse environmental degradation in Lonavala region caused by the construction of the Valvan Dam.

Siddhanta Das, Director General of Forests and Special Secretary in the Ministry said, "This report is a first of its kind from any of the Bonn Challenge countries. It is an ongoing process and will continue to be updated.

He further said, "As per the latest Forest Survey of India report, present forest and tree cover is 24.39% of the country's geographical area.

Therefore, to bring a minimum of onethird of the total land area of the country under forest and tree cover, an additional 27.8 million hectares of land area would need to be brought under green cover. This means that we need to start looking beyond designated forest lands and business as usual scenarios.

GST

ECONOMIC TIMES, SEP 6, 2018

Finance Ministry simplifies GST refund claim process for businesses



GST Policy Wing said the proper officer shall not insist on the submission of an invoice (either original or duplicate) the details of which are present in GSTR-2A of the relevant period submitted by the claimant.

Easing compliance burden for businesses, the Finance Ministry has said GST refunds can be claimed by simply submitting a printout of 'GSTR-2A' form to tax authorities instead of giving all purchase invoices of a month.

GSTR-2A is a purchase return auto-generated by the system based on the transaction between a business and its supplier.

"The proper officer shall rely upon form GSTR-2A as an evidence of the

account of the supply by the corresponding supplier in relation to which the input tax credit has been availed by the claimant.

"...There may be situations in which Form GSTR-2A may not contain the details of all the invoices relating to the input tax credit availed, possibly because the supplier's Form GSTR-1 was delayed or not filed.

"In such situations, the proper officer may call for the hard copies of such invoices if he deems it necessary for the examination of the claim for refund," the Ministry said in a clarification.

In the clarification to Principal Chief Commissioners, the GST Policy Wing in the Ministry said the proper officer shall not insist on the submission of an invoice (either original or duplicate) the details of which are present in GSTR-2A of the relevant period submitted by the claimant.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 7, 2018

New industrial policy to help link industry with global supply chains: Suresh Prabhu

The commerce ministry in August last year had floated a draft industrial policy with an aim to create jobs for the next two decades, promote foreign technology transfer and attract USD 100 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) annually.

The proposed new industrial policy, to be released soon, would help link domestic industry with the global supply chain, Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu Wednesday said. He said that the auto component industry has successfully used this linkage to promote the sector's growth.

“We are coming out soon with the new industrial policy. We are giving final touches to it. It has many components. One key element is how do you link industry with global supply chains,” he said here. The new policy will replace the industrial policy of 1991, which was prepared in the backdrop of balance of payment crisis.

The proposed policy aims at promoting emerging sectors and modernising the existing industries. It will also look to reduce regulatory hurdles and encourage adoption of frontier technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence.

The ministry in August last year had floated a draft industrial policy with an aim to create jobs for the next two decades, promote foreign

technology transfer and attract USD 100 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) annually.

Prabhu also said that the ministry is looking at ways to increase exports of auto components.

Further, he added that to deal with the hurdles of logistics related issues, the ministry is preparing a plan.

The India will become USD 5 trillion economy in the coming years, and USD 1 trillion would come from manufacturing, he said, urging the auto industry to participate in this growth.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TRIBUNE, SEP 7, 2018

2+2 talks take Indo-US ties to new high : Defence, trade, terror top agenda | Concerns on Russia, Iran sanctions highlighted



India and the United States on Thursday sought greater political convergence with a long-term view of relations and enhanced synergy between respective foreign and defence ministries through the inaugural 2+2 dialogue.

Defence Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and James Mattis and Foreign Ministers Sushma Swaraj and Michael Pompeo sat down for separate discussions before the 2+2 dialogue.

Three sessions on energy and people-to-people ties, defence and regional security were part of the dialogue that included all four principals and their delegations.

Followed by lunch and joint press statements, the leaders collectively called on PM Modi. According to sources, there was no laundry list of irritants to be resolved overnight, rather shared understanding of mutual concerns as regards trade ties, reducing the deficit, visas, US sanctions against Iran and Russia as well as counter-terrorism cooperation and Indo-Pacific strategy.

Pompeo shared notes following his meetings with Pakistan PM Imran Khan and Army Chief Bajwa in Islamabad en route Delhi and the missives shared to act on terror and towards reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan.

“On the 10th anniversary of the 26/11 attacks, we recognised the importance of justice and retribution for the masterminds behind this terrorist attack,” said Swaraj.

“India supports President Trump’s South Asia Policy. His call for Pakistan to stop its policy of supporting cross-border terrorism finds resonance with us,” she added.

Pompeo reportedly mentioned that “it is too early to judge the new Imran Khan government, but Pakistan has been asked to step up counter-terrorism efforts and encouraged to take right decisions and actions”.

“Pompeo assured the ministers that ‘we have a long ask of the new Pakistan government’, while sharing concerns about Hafiz Saeed roaming freely,” said an official privy to discussions.

India has asked the US to sustain pressure on Islamabad to crack down on terror entities, sources say.

The sentiments are reflected in the joint statement issued after talks in a significant tweak.

India impressed upon the US to use “under Pakistan control, instead of territory” referring to terror groups operating out of PoK and driving home territorial integrity issue, pointed out officials. “The ministers denounced any use of terrorist proxies in the region, and in this context, they called on Pakistan to ensure that the territory under its control is not used to launch terrorist attacks on other countries,” underlines the statement that was work in progress till late into the night.

Ties with Iran and Russia came up for discussion from the Indian side during the dialogue, but without any specific mention of the S400 missiles purchase, sources said.

Americans reportedly shared India’s position that its defence security systems or energy suppliers could not be switched overnight to US platforms. But India assured it was working to reduce high bilateral trade deficit that Donald Trump has disapproved of openly.

Indian officials sounded hopeful of a carve out on Chabahar port, given its strategic importance to Afghanistan, to avoid heat of US sanctions against Iran.

JUDICIARY

INDIAN EXPRESS SEP 4, 2018

CJI Dipak Misra recommends Justice Ranjan Gogoi as successor



Justice Gogoi will be sworn in as the next CJI on October 3.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra on Tuesday, September 4, 2018, sent a letter to the Central government recommending Justice Ranjan Gogoi as his successor.

Justice Gogoi will be sworn in as the next CJI on October 3.

The CJI has written to the Ministry of Law and Justice endorsing and recommending the name of Justice Gogoi, senior-most judge, as the next CJI.

It may be noted that last week, Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad wrote to the incumbent CJI Dipak Misra to recommend the name of his successor.

Justice Misra retires on October 2 and as per the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) governing the appointment of the CJI, the Law

Minister asks the outgoing Chief Justice of India to recommend the next CJI.

Chief Justice Misra is retiring on October 2. Convention demands the recommendation letter from the incumbent be sent at least a month before his date of retirement. Convention also requires the senior most judge of the Supreme Court be appointed Chief Justice of India.

The recommendation letter of the incumbent is the first step in the process of appointment of the next Chief Justice of India.

INDIAN EXPRESS SEP 4, 2018

Supreme Court judge Indira Banerjee flags bid to influence her



Justice Banerjee cautions against such attempts.

Supreme Court judge Justice Indira Banerjee has revealed in an open court that an effort was made to influence her in a case related to Hotel Royal Plaza.

A Bench comprising justices Arun Mishra and Banerjee was hearing the matter on August 30 in court number 8 when the revelation was made.

Justice Mishra said the attempt to influence the judge amounted to contempt of court. Senior lawyer Shyam Divan requested Justice Banerjee not to recuse herself from the hearing as it might be used by others as well to ensure recusal of judges from hearing cases.

Justice Banerjee also said during the hearing that sometimes even senior members of the bar start talking about pending cases after customary meetings.

She said any attempt to influence the court would be viewed seriously, while hinting that somebody had telephoned her for the same.

The Bench then heard the matter and reserved its verdict.

Justice Banerjee, who was the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court has recently been elevated to the apex court.

TRIBUNE, SEP 1, 2018

Prez blames adjournment culture for pendency

CJI Misra emphasises need to strengthen judiciary, says fiscal constraints can't be an excuse

Holding the “culture of seeking adjournments” responsible for judicial delays, President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday expressed confidence that “the members of the entire legal fraternity will resolve not to seek adjournments except in absolutely unavoidable circumstances”.

“There are many reasons for such delays. There are infrastructure gaps and considerable vacancies, particularly in subordinate courts. There is a culture of seeking adjournments as a norm rather than an exception. New thinking is gradually taking place on frequent adjournments. I have been told that the judiciary is making sincere efforts to curb this practice,” the President said at a conference organised by the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association here. Noting that India’s judiciary is respected across the world as an upholder of justice for the defenceless, Kovind said it was also true that the judges were overburdened by the sheer volume of cases. “As a consequence, the Indian legal system is marked by long delays. There is a backlog of 3.3 crore cases in various courts of the country. Of these, 2.84 crore cases are in the subordinate courts. Another 43 lakh are in the High Courts and about 58,000 in the Supreme Court,” he said in the presence of Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, senior judges and lawyers.

MIGRATION

TRIBUNE, SEP 7, 2018

India flags concern over H1B visa issue



During the inaugural 2+2 dialogue on Thursday, India flagged its concerns about pending changes in the US Congress to H1B visas and H4 visas for spouses that could severely impact Indians working in America.

Sources said External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj raised the issue ‘forcefully’. India made a case of the track record and contribution of its diaspora to American society, asking the Donald Trump administration to take a favourable view on the matter.

“Specifically, I conveyed our expectation for a non-discriminatory and predictable approach to the H1B visa regime,” said Swaraj in her press statement.

Officials privy to the discussion mentioned that the American delegation led by Secretary of State Pompeo and Defence Secretary James Mattis, acknowledged the positive role of the diaspora.

“I have mentioned this to Secretary Pompeo that on the basis of the friendship which exists between President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indians believe that America will not work against their interest,” Swaraj said.

“The US leaders assured it is review of the entire US immigration system and not specifically targeted at one country... there have been no significant reductions in the number of H1B visas so far,” said a highly placed source.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT- JAMMU & KASHMIR

PIONEER, SEP 4, 2018

Article 35A: PDP decries ASG remarks in Apex court

The Jammu and Kashmir People Democratic Party on Monday condemned the remarks of the State counsel before the Supreme Court in a litigation related to Article 35-A of the Constitution, and said Governor SP Malik should ensure "a bias-free" and strong legal position of the State administration.

"The PDP has time and again raised the demand for retaining as well as empowering the constitutional powers (accorded) to Jammu and Kashmir and we strongly condemn the remarks made by the leading counsel in the matter," PDP chief spokesperson Rafi Ahmad Mir said in a statement.

He was reacting to the stand taken by Additional Solicitor General (ASG) of India Tushar Mehta, who was representing the state of Jammu & Kashmir, in the Supreme Court last week.

During the hearing, the ASG agreed to the contention that Article 35A and certain aspects needed to be debated upon and said, "It can't be denied that there is an aspect of gender discrimination in it (Article 35A)".

Article 35-A, which was incorporated in the Constitution by a 1954 Presidential Order, accords special rights and privileges to the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir and bars people from outside the State from acquiring any immovable property in the State. It denies property rights to a woman who marries a person from outside the State. The provision, which leads to such women from the State forfeiting their right over property, also applies to their heirs.

Mir said the previous government led by the party had engaged top lawyers to ensure that the State Government has a strong legal position while defending Article 35-A. "The former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti periodically reviewed the progress of the case, directing the State's law department to file appropriate and crystal clear response to ensure that the sentiments of the people are honoured," he said.

The PDP spokesman said while the proceedings of the case related to Article 35-A were pending, the power of taking the legal recourse of the State Government was transferred directly in the hands of the Governor after the fall of the PDP-led Government and now the Governor of the State was "morally bound to ensure that the stand of the ASG is in accordance to the will of the people".

"Earlier, PDP, while in Government, ensured that country's top lawyer Fali S Nariman is engaged to defend the State and assisted by the Advocate General. Our (party) president refused to compromise on safeguarding the State's special status. Her bold stand to refuse any compromise on the State's special status and a strong legal position in the apex court is what is necessary for the State Government to follow today"

TRIBUNE, SEP 7, 2018

S P Vaid removed as J-K police chief; Dilbagh Singh to take charge

In what has taken the administrative circles in Jammu and Kashmir by surprise, the state government has removed senior IPS officer S P Vaid as the state police chief and appointed 1987 batch officer, Dilbagh Singh as Incharge DGP.

Vaid has been shunted out to the insignificant post of Transport commissioner. According to an order issued by Principal Secretary to Government Home Department, R K Goyal, Dr S P Vaid, DGP J&K is transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of General Administrative Department (GAD) for further posting as Transport Commissioner.

Dilbagh Singh who is currently DGP Prisons, will hold the charge of the post of DGP, J&K in addition to his own duties, till a regular arrangement is made” said an order issued which issued late Thursday evening.

For the last couple of days there were speculations about change of guard in the Police Department due to prevailing situation in the Valley, especially after killings of cops and kidnapping of their family members.

On Tuesday, Jammu and Kashmir government had appointed B Srinivas as the new Additional Director General (ADG) of Criminal Investigation

Department (CID). Srinivas has replaced Abdul Gani Mir, who was transferred to police headquarters.

Meanwhile former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that there was no hurry to replace S P Vaid. “There was no hurry to replace@spvaid. He should have been changed only when a permanent arrangement had been worked out. @JmuKmrPolice has enough problems without having to deal with confusion of leadership”, Omar tweeted.

“Changing the DG is the prerogative of the administration but why a DG as a temporary arrangement? The current DG won’t know if he’s going to stay or others who would like his job will be trying trying to replace him. None of this is good for @JmuKmrPolice”, Omar earlier tweeted.

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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT – TELANGANA

DECCAN HERALD, SEP 7, 2018

Telangana Assembly dissolved; stage set for early polls

The Telangana state Cabinet on Thursday unanimously resolved to recommend dissolution of the four years and three-month-old Assembly, hoping for an early election along with four other states. The Cabinet that met at the Pragathi Bhavan, the official residence of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, around 1 pm took less than 10 minutes to vote in favour of the dissolution. The Cabinet had during an earlier meeting left the decision to Rao.

The chief minister immediately left for Raj Bhavan along with some of his Cabinet colleagues and handed over the resolution to Governor E S L Narasimhan. The governor asked Rao to continue as the caretaker chief minister

In a communiqué issued by the Raj Bhavan soon after the chief minister met the governor, Narasimhan asked Rao and his council of ministers to continue in their positions as caretakers

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

PIONEER, SEP, 4, 2018

CAG: Govt failed to achieve rural drinking water scheme target

The Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) has found that the Union Water and Sanitation Ministry has failed in achieving the targets of the 12th Five year plan (2012-2017) under its central flagship National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP).

Under the programme, the Ministry had announced to make safe water accessible to all rural habitations, Government schools and anganwadis, potable water to 50 per cent of rural population and 35 per cent of rural households to be provided household connections by 2017.

However, as on December 2017, only 44 per cent of rural habitations and 85 per cent of government schools and anganwadis could be provided access to safe drinking water. Also, only 18 per cent of rural population could be provided potable drinking water by piped water supply while a mere 17 per cent of rural households had household connections.

The overall coverage of rural habitations increased only by eight per cent at 40 lpcd and 5.5 per cent at 55 lpcd after incurring expenditure of Rs 81,168 crore during the period 2012-17, said the CAG in its report tabled in Parliament in the recently concluded session.

It further pointed out that community water purification plants could be set up in only five per cent of quality affected habitations and

sustainability plans were either not prepared or not included in annual action plans.

The CAG listed several reasons for the Government's failure that kept it from meeting its target.

“ There was inadequate focus on surface water based schemes and a large number of schemes (98 per cent) including piped water schemes continued to be based on ground water resources. Further, operation and maintenance plans were either not prepared in most of the States or had deficiencies leading to schemes becoming non-functional. As a result, incidence of slip-back habitations continued to persist,” said the report.

Further, lack of requisite number of States/district/sub-divisional level laboratories resulted in shortfalls in prescribed quality tests of water sources and supply thereby diluting the objective of providing safe drinking water to the rural population, it added.

Lastly, institutional mechanisms for inspection, vigilance and monitoring were either not established or were not functioning in the manner envisaged and the overall monitoring and oversight framework lacked effectiveness, said the report.

The performance audit covered the period from 2012 to 2017 and examined various aspects of the Programme such as planning, delivery mechanism, fund management, implementation including coverage of partially covered and quality affected habitations, water quality monitoring and surveillance.

SANITATION

TRIBUNE, SEP, 4, 2018

India made rapid progress in increasing access to sanitation in schools: UN report

India has made rapid progress in increasing access to sanitation in schools, the United Nations said in a report, noting that the proportion of schools without any sanitation facility had decreased at a fast pace in the country.

A new joint UN agency study, 'Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools: 2018 Global Baseline Report', says that good hygiene facilities in schools provide the basis of a healthy learning environment, and that girls are more likely to attend when they are on their period.

The annual report is produced by the World Health Organisation/UN Children's Fund Joint Monitoring Programme, or JMP, which has been monitoring global progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) since 1990.

It looks at the progress made towards reaching the targets of two of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), and Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).

WASH in schools programmes provide an entry point for the education, awareness-raising and behaviour change required to achieve the SDG6 target of ending open defecation by 2030, the report said.

It said India “has made rapid progress in increasing access to sanitation facilities in schools”. Between 2000 and 2016, the proportion of schools in India without any sanitation facility decreased even faster than the proportion of the population practising open defecation, it said.

Based on these trends, the JMP estimates that almost all schools in India had some type of sanitation facility in 2016, while 10 years earlier half the schools in India reported having no sanitation facility at all. Between 2000 and 2016, the number of school-age children in India increased from 352 million to 378 million.

The report said that a recent survey in India also collected information on the availability of facilities for menstrual hygiene management. The proportion of schools with bins with lids for the disposal of sanitary materials varies widely across states in India, from 98 per cent in Chandigarh to 36 per cent in Chhattisgarh. Mizoram is the only state where more than 50 per cent of schools have a functional incinerator for the disposal of sanitary waste.

It said the Government of India issued national guidelines on menstrual hygiene management in 2015 but a survey in 2016-2017 showed that only two-thirds of schools in India provide menstrual hygiene education with wide variations between states.

The report further said millions of children globally are going to school without basic hygiene facilities, and the goal of universal access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene remains “a huge challenge”.

Over 30 per cent of schools worldwide do not provide safe drinking water; a third of schools do not provide the most basic of toilet facilities (such as septic tank, pit latrines or composting toilets); and nearly 900

million children go to schools with no handwashing facilities with soap and water.

It said children who pick up good hygiene habits at school can reinforce positive life-long behaviours in their homes and communities, says the report.

Global Chief of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene at UNICEF Kelly Ann Naylor said that if education is the key to helping children escape poverty, access to water and sanitation is key to helping children safely maximize their education. “To neglect this is to be careless with the well-being and health of children,” Naylor said.

Universal access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene in schools is part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but achieving this ambitious target presents a huge challenge. The JMP has designed tools to make it easier to track progress across countries, towards a basic level of drinking water, sanitation and hygiene service. PTI

TOURISM

TRIBUNE, SEP, 2, 2018

India on top of tourism index in South Asia

The number of people travelling abroad hit record levels in 2017 with a total of 1,323 million international tourist arrivals recorded in destinations around the world, with India leading the growth in the South Asian region, according to data from the UN's tourism organisation.

The latest edition of its Tourism Highlights shows international arrivals reached 1,323 million last year. The figure represents an 84 million increase over 2016. Europe and Africa led the regions with growth of 8 per cent and 9 per cent.

In India, international tourist arrivals grew from 14.57 million in 2016 to 15.54 million in 2017 and receipts from \$22.42 bn in 2016 to \$27.36 bn last year. — PTI

SOCIAL WELFARE

FINANCIAL EXPRESS, SEP 7, 2018

Financial inclusion: Jan Dhan Yojana offer more benefits

The Cabinet on Tuesday reinforced its flagship financial inclusion scheme, by doubling the overdraft limit to Rs 10,000 under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and allowing holders of such no-frills accounts to withdraw as much as Rs 2,000 without any conditions. The age limit for availing of such overdraft facility has also been raised to 65 years from 60 earlier.

The PMJDY, under which 32.54 crore accounts have been opened since inception, would now be an open-ended scheme, finance minister [Arun Jaitley](#) said. According to him, the PMJDY accounts, 83% of which are Aadhaar-seeded, collectively have deposits of about Rs 81,200 crore now.

Separately, financial services secretary Rajiv Kumar tweeted that free accident insurance cover on RuPay card for new Jan Dhan accounts has been doubled to Rs 2 lakh.

As per the existing scheme, an overdraft facility of up to Rs 5,000 is available to one account holder per household after six months of satisfactory conduct of the PMJDY account. The objective of PMJDY, which was launched in August 2014, is to ensure access to various financial services through these basic savings accounts.

Kumar said as much as 80% of India now has a bank account under the PMJDY and “a bank account for every adult” is the new goal. The

scheme has covered all the households in the country, so now the target is to cover all the adults, said a finance ministry official.

As per the existing scheme, an overdraft facility of up to Rs 5,000 is available to one account holder per household after six months of satisfactory conduct of the PMJDY account. The objective of PMJDY, which was launched in August 2014, is to ensure access to various financial services through these basic savings accounts.

About 53% of the Jan Dhan accounts are held by women and 59% are in rural/semi-urban areas. Direct benefit transfers (DBT) have been made to as many as 7.5 crore of these accounts. Commenting on the issue of rising fuel prices in the country, Jaitley said it is due to external factors and that in the last few months, dollar has strengthened against all currencies. “However, among the overall package of currencies we trade in, only dollar has strengthened against the rupee,” he added.

The global oil prices have risen around 10% in the last two weeks on the back of declining inventories and Iranian exports due to US sanctions. This has led to domestic petrol and diesel prices rocketing to all-time highs. “Since we are net buyers of oil, if artificial shortage of oil is created, we are impacted,” he said.

Jaitley, however, clarified that there is no need for the fastest growing economy of the world to panic and take knee-jerk reactions. “There has been no straight line movement in global crude oil price as it has moved up and down. We are hopeful that these fluctuations will calm down and the Indian economy will show its strength. Also, [RBI](#) will do whatever needed if required,” he added.

For Limited Circulation
