

NEWS ALERT

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TRIBUNE

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AADHAAR

HINDU, NOV 7, 2018

‘Oppose mandatory Aadhaar for social benefits’

Right to Food campaign exhorts poll-bound parties

With five States set to go to the polls this month, the Right to Food Campaign has decided to raise the mandatory requirement of Aadhaar for availing social benefits an electoral issue.

‘Amend Aadhaar Act’

“We intend to go to all political parties with a single agenda on Aadhaar, demanding that the Aadhaar Act be amended so that the mandatory or compulsory use of Aadhaar is prohibited,” the Right to Food campaign and a clutch of associated social sector groups said in a joint statement.

In places like Rajasthan and Jharkhand, where biometric authentication has been made mandatory for accessing National Food Security Act benefits, lakhs of people have been affected, the activists said.

“We intend to ask people on the ground who have been the victims of this huge experiment to make it clear during the elections that they will target parties who have thrust the mandatory use of Aadhaar upon them,” the groups said in the statement.

BANKING AND FINANCE

TRIBUNE, NOV 7, 2018

Govt to ‘continue pressing’ RBI to transfer reserve



Keeping up the heat on the Reserve Bank of India, the government will continue to press the bank to relax norms to boost lending and transfer at least a third of its Rs 9.6 lakh crore reserve, sources familiar with the discussions said.

In recent weeks, the rift between the RBI and the government has been widening over various issues.

Citing Section 7 of the RBI Act — an unprecedented move in the 80-year history of RBI — the government wants RBI Governor Urjit Patel to address three prime concerns.

They pertain to transfer of surplus funds, easing of NPA norms to kickstart lending and support growth, and easing liquidity crisis facing non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), sources said. These issues may figure during the RBI’s board meeting on November 19.

CIVIL SERVICE

TRIBUNE, NOV 7, 2018

Bomdila incident: IAS officers' body seeks action against Arunachal Scouts

Days after a large number of Arunachal Scouts personnel vandalised Bomdila police station in West Kameng district, central IAS officers association has alleged that a woman officer was abused and pelted with stones during an attack.

In a letter written to Defence Ministry, Indian Civil and Administrative Services (Central) Association has demanded that "alleged perpetrators should be brought to justice so that such incidents remain as an aberration in the otherwise illustrious legacy of armed forces".

"On November 2, the 2nd Arunachal Pradesh Scouts led by Col FB Firdauz and Adjutant Maj Kaushik Roy vandalised government properties and physically assaulted the District Magistrate-cum-Deputy Commissioner, SP and other officials," said the letter by Rakesh Srivastava who is secretary at the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The letter added that the "use of force in an area that has not been declared as disturbed area can only take place on the requisition of the District Magistrate under the direct supervision of an Executive Magistrate at the spot as per the established law and procedure".

A large number of Arunachal Scouts personnel had vandalised Bomdila police station in West Kameng district, damaged five vehicles and snatched away arms and ammunition after two of its personnel were taken there in connection with an incident of alleged misbehaviour, police said.

Army, however, had differed with the police on the incident. A defence communique had said the two personnel of the Second Arunachal Scouts were picked up by police when they had gone to attend Buddha Mahotsav in Bomdila and were severely beaten up in custody. "The incident is an outcome of highhandedness displayed by the Arunachal Police coupled with the lax attitude of the civil administration," it added.

CLIMATE CHANGE

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

Govt initiating reforms for doubling farmers' income by 2022: PK Mishra

Additional Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, PK Mishra has said the Government is making efforts with an integrated approach and has initiated "multiple reforms" in order to achieve the target of doubling farmers' income by 2022. He also emphasised the need to analyse as to "why the past initiatives could not accomplish the desired results" in the agriculture sector.

Addressing the 78th Annual conference of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics on Thursday, Mishra said that the present Government has for the first time ushered in a paradigm shift in the approach, from growth of production to increase in farmers' income.

Some of the initiatives taken to address price and yield risks in the last four years include setting up of electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM), upgradation of rural haats, new scheme Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

This is a major shift in the approach — a clear focus on farmer and farmer welfare rather than simply production and productivity, he said.

"For this purpose, a holistic strategy for the agriculture sector was visualised. Efforts are being made to follow this with an integrated approach by initiating multiple reforms and programmes with an overall objective of doubling farmers income," Mishra said.

In February 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said farmers' income would be doubled by 2022 to mark 75 years of India's independence. He further noted that, there is a need to analyse as to why the past initiatives could not accomplish the desired results and highlighted the need for agricultural research.

"Policymakers and practitioners need to look at how one could address the farmers' risk — that affects his income and welfare and linking activities of non-agriculture sector. This is also an area of agriculture research," he said.

The senior PMO official said that Indian Society of Agricultural Economics (ISAE) should focus its research on topics like why does farmers distress happen in areas where there is high agricultural growth and how to modernise agriculture.

"Agricultural growth has a strong correlation with poverty reduction. In order to alleviate rural poverty, we need to focus on agricultural productivity and farmers' income."

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

Addressing impact of climate change on crops

To address the impact of climate change and variability on crops, horticulture, livestock, and fisheries, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has taken up a flagship programme National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA).

According to Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Radha Mohan Singh, the programme is being taken up in 151 climatically-vulnerable districts across the country by taking one representative village in each district. The predominant climatic vulnerabilities addressed are drought, flood, cyclone, heat wave, cold wave, frost and hail storm.

Officials said the ICAR has conducted climate change impact analysis on crop yields through various centres in different parts of the country using crop simulation models (INFO-CROP and HAD CM3) for 2020, 2050 and 2080. The results indicate variability in temperature and rainfall pattern with significant impacts on crop yields. These studies projected reduction in yields of irrigated rice by about 4 per cent in 2020, 7 per cent in 2050 and 10 per cent in 2080.

Rainfed rice yields are likely to be reduced by 6 per cent in 2020, but in 2050 and 2080 they are projected to decrease only marginally (<2.5 per cent). Climate change is projected to reduce timely-sown irrigated wheat production by about 6 per cent in 2020. In case of late sown wheat,

however, the projected reductions are to the extent of 18, 23 and 25 per cent in 2020, 2050 and 2080 respectively. Yields of irrigated kharif maize may decrease by about 18 per cent in 2020 and 2050 and about 23 per cent in 2080 due to climate change. Rainfed sorghum yields are projected to decline marginally (2.5 per cent) in 2020 scenario and by about 8 per cent in 2050.

Addressing the Inter-Session Meeting of Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Singh said its aim is to develop adaptation and mitigation practices to minimise the losses and to enhance resilience of Indian agriculture.

The Minister also said several States have shown interest in replicating the climate resilient village models. For example, the Government of Maharashtra through World Bank funding formulated a project by the name Project on Climate Resilient Agriculture (PoCRA) with a budget outlay of Rs 4,500 crore being implemented in 5,000 villages in the drought prone villages of Vidharbha and Marathwada regions of Maharashtra. Several other State Governments also initiated similar projects of climate resilient agriculture (Karnataka, Odisha and Telangana).

According to economic survey of India 2018, the change in agricultural productivity patterns as a result of climate change could reduce annual agricultural incomes by between 15 per cent and 18 per cent on average, and between 20 per cent and 25 per cent particularly for unirrigated areas.

CORRUPTION

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

CIC issues show-cause notice to RBI Governor

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has issued a show-cause notice to RBI Governor Urjit Patel for “dishonouring” a Supreme Court judgment on disclosure of wilful defaulters’ list.

The CIC has also asked the Prime Minister’s Office, the Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to make public the letter of former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan on bad loans.

Irked over the denial of information on the disclosure of the names of wilful defaulters who have taken bank loans of Rs 50 crore and above by the RBI in spite of a Supreme Court order, the CIC has asked Patel to explain why a maximum penalty be not imposed on him for “dishonouring” the verdict which had upheld a decision taken by then Information Commissioner Shailesh Gandhi, calling for disclosure of names of wilful defaulters.

Patel, speaking on September 20 at the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), had said the guidelines on vigilance, issued by the CVC, were aimed at achieving greater transparency, promoting a culture of honesty and probity in public life and improving the overall vigilance administration in the organisations within its purview, the CIC pointed out.

“The Commission feels that there is no match between what RBI Governor and Deputy Governor say and their website regarding their RTI policy, and great secrecy of vigilance reports and inspection reports is being maintained with impunity in spite of the Supreme Court confirming the orders of the CIC in the Jayantilal case”, Information Commissioner Sridhar Acharyulu said.

He concluded that it did not serve any purpose in punishing the CPIO for this defiance, because he acted under the instructions of the top authorities.

“The Commission considers the Governor as deemed PIO responsible for non-disclosure and defiance of SC orders and CIC orders and directs him to show cause why maximum penalty should not be imposed on him for these reasons, before November 16, 2018,” Acharyulu said.

DEFENCE

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

Maritime dispute major challenge: Army chief

Against the backdrop of China flexing its muscle in South China Sea leading to tension with other nations located on its rim, Army Chief General Bipin Rawat on Thursday said the disputed sovereignty of maritime territories is threatening international waters.

Making this point here, he also said India has no extra-territorial ambitions, but its aim is to ensure a conducive external and internal security environment for unhindered economic progress and socio-political development.

Speaking at a seminar on 'Evolving Geo-Politics of the Indo-Pacific Region-Challenges and Prospects,' Rawat said contested sovereignty of maritime territories pose a major challenge in East Asia and the South China Sea and these disputed maritime boundaries are threatening international waters.

Stressing that stability in the Indo-Pacific region is essential for economic progress, he also said within the Indo-Pacific, the Indian Ocean Region remains India's primary area of interest adding India is committed to uphold and strengthen the rules-based order in Indo-

Pacific. He also said “we have no extra-territorial ambitions and we have no desire to transplant our ideologies on others.”

Humanitarian And Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, Search and Rescue (SAR) missions, protection of vital Sea Lanes of Communication, and robust defence of India’s island territories are major aspects on which the Army is investing in capability development towards tri-services efforts, Rawat said.

Australia High Commissioner to India Harinder Sidhu, said in her address if invited, Australia is willing to join the Malabar Exercise.

“It makes sense for Australia to exercise with whom we work closely in Indian and Pacific Oceans,” Sidhu said.

Malabar is a trilateral exercise between India, the US and Japan, and Australia is keen on joining the naval drill. She said with shared interest, its strategic location in the Indo-Pacific, Australia should also be considered in the top ranks of India’s partnerships.

Referring to the maritime disputes in the Indo-Pacific, Sidhu said Australia has been concerned by the pace and scale of China’s activities in the South China Sea, including the use of disputed beaches and artificial structures for military purpose.

Batting for a greater military cooperation with India, she said for the first time, in its 2017 Foreign Policy White paper, Australia placed India in the front rank for international partnership. While India has always been an important partner for Australia, she said the strategic partnership between the two nations is stronger than it has ever been.

Highlighting Australia's strategic location in the Indo-Pacific, Sidhu said Australia should also be considered in the top ranks of India's partnerships and called for India and Australia to agree on a Mutual Logistics Support Agreement between the two militaries.

On Quad, a group comprising India, Australia, the US and Japan formed to promote shared interests in the Indo-Pacific, the envoy said she is often asked whether it is achieving its objective.

"In my view, it is doing exactly what it was intended to do. The purpose of any dialogue is to build understanding and deepen shared interest. The Quad is intended to do no more and no less than that," she said.

HINDU, NOV 7, 2018

PM celebrates Diwali with soldiers near India-China border

Mr. Modi recalled his visit to the border every year on Diwali ever since he was the Gujarat CM.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached Harsil near the India-China border in Uttarakhand to celebrate Diwali with Army and ITBP personnel on Wednesday.

Greeting the jawans on the occasion, the Prime Minister said their devotion to duty in the remote icy heights, is enabling the strength of the nation, and securing the future and the dreams of 125 crore Indians, a statement from his office said.



He said that Diwali is the festival of lights, it spreads the light of goodness and dispels fear. He said that the jawans, through their commitment and discipline, are also helping to spread the sense of security and fearlessness among the people.

Mr. Modi recalled that he has been visiting soldiers on Diwali ever since he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. He also spoke of his interactions with the jawans of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), years ago when he was part of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

The Prime Minister said India is taking great strides forward in the defence sector. He spoke of various measures being taken for the welfare of ex-servicemen, including implementation of 'one rank, one pension' (OROP).

Mr. Modi said that the Indian Armed Forces draw admiration and appreciation across the world, in UN peacekeeping operations.

The Prime Minister offered sweets to the jawans. He also interacted with people from nearby areas who had gathered to greet him on Diwali.

Harshil is a cantonment area situated at a height of 7,860 feet close to the India-China border in Uttarkashi district.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to go to Kedarnath later in the day to offer prayers and review the progress of reconstruction projects at Kedarpuri.

Kedarpuri, the township situated close to the Himalayan shrine, had bore the brunt of the catastrophic floods of 2013 which killed thousands of people.

Responding to Diwali greeting from Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday night, Mr. Modi had said, “Every year, I visit our border areas and surprise our troops. This year too, will spend Diwali with our brave troops. Spending time with them is special.”

HEALTH SERVICES

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

‘Possible to take Ayushman Bharat to 6L villages’

Even as the Centre is yet to include the old systems of medicine (AYUSH) in its biggest medical insurance policy (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna), Union Minister Mahesh Sharma, who also happens to be an allopathic doctor, vouched on Sunday for its efficacy saying that through alternate system of medicine, it is possible to take the Ayushman Bharat scheme to over six lakh villages across the States.

During the inaugural session of the two-day national seminar on ‘Entrepreneurship and Business Development in Ayurveda’, Sharma said, “Through Ayurveda, it is possible to take Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Ayushman Bharat scheme to over six lakh villages of the country.”

Sharma also hoped that the AYUSH Ministry can make significant contribution to the economy of the country by expanding existing market of Ayurveda and AYUSH products and therapies. The ministry has aimed to expand the current size of Ayurveda and AYUSH business of around USD 3 billion to USD 10 billion by 2022.

Earlier, Minister of State for AYUSH Shripad Yesso Naik said that the ancient Scriptures of Ayurveda have at least 1.25 lakhs formulations which are collected in Traditional knowledge Digital Library. Each one

of these formulations can be used to treat 20 to 30 different diseases. In this way we have 20 lakh medicines which is an incredible and unimaginable figure for entrepreneurs, he said.

In, fact, the Ministry has already initiated pilot projects in few districts to integrate traditional healing by using medicinal herbs with Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) in hospitals. “The aim is to show efficacy of herbal drugs to treat non-communicable diseases like diabetes and thyroid. We have drugs like BGR-34 developed by scientific bodies such as CSIR to treat diabetes cases which is on increase,” said a senior official on the sidelines of the event.

CEO of Niti Ayog Amitabh Kant too pitched for providing platform to Ayush which, he said, is “the best and purest” source of rejuvenation and there exists a “great opportunity” to create knowledge and business based on it.

Rajiv Vasudevan who heads Bangalore-based AyurVaid, a chain of Ayurveda in-patient hospitals focused on medical management of serious chronic diseases said that going back to basics of authentic ayurveda treatment and leveraging its capabilities comprehensively is an imperative. He also called for inclusion of AYUSH in the PMJAY to reach out to the people in the country.

JUDICIARY

PIONEER, NOV 6, 2018

Andhra to have separate HC from Jan 1: SC

In the New Year, the State of Andhra Pradesh will have a separate High Court as the Supreme Court has given the green signal for issuing the notification to this effect.

It will be the 25th High Court in the country and will initially function from a temporary building till the permanent building comes up in the ambitious Justice City complex in the State's Capital Amaravati.

Since the bifurcation of the state on June 2, 2014, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have had a common High Court situated at Hyderabad, the latter's Capital city.

A bench of Justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan said that since all the requirements have been fulfilled, there is no embargo for the competent authority to issue a notification bifurcating the courts into the High Court of Telangana and High Court of Andhra Pradesh respectively.

"We expect such a notification to be issued by January 1, 2019, so that the two High Courts start functioning separately and High Court of Andhra Pradesh also starts functioning in the new building at the earliest", the bench said.

The court noted the submission of the State that the building, where the Andhra Pradesh High Court would be temporarily shifted would be ready by December 15.

"It is also clear that the Judges of the High Court, who would become Judges of High Court of Andhra Pradesh, are satisfied with the facilities in the said building inasmuch as Full Court of the High Court has approved the proposal after Inspection Committee of Judges submitted a report in this behalf," the bench said after perusing the affidavit of Andhra Pradesh said.

Senior advocate Fali S Nariman, appearing for state of Andhra Pradesh, said that the government would be hiring villas to take care of the residential needs of the judges at Amaravati.

"We may place on record that in Amaravati a very big complex known as Justice City is under construction where the High Court and subordinate courts and even some tribunals would be accommodated and there is a provision for construction of residential complex for the Judges of the High Court and judicial officers of the subordinate courts," the bench said.

It said that hiring villas for residences of judges is an ad hoc arrangement till the Justice City gets completely constructed.

With the enactment of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into two states, viz., State of Andhra Pradesh and State of Telangana.

The Act, which had come into effect from June 2, 2014 has also a provision for separate High Courts for State of Telangana and State of Andhra Pradesh.

Hyderabad, which was the capital of erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh is now part of Telangana and has become its capital. The existing High Court is located at Hyderabad and it would be housing the High Court of State of Telangana.

Insofar as State of Andhra Pradesh is concerned it has decided to create and construct new city known as Amaravati which is going to be the capital of the State and the new High Court of Andhra Pradesh would be located in that city.

MONSOON

PIONEER, NOV 5, 2018

Monsoon reasonably distributed across country: Met Dept

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) claimed that southwest monsoon 2018 was reasonably distributed across the country barring East and North East India.

“The acreage data of the Ministry of Agriculture suggest that overall crop acreage during the Kharif season is higher by 2.6% as compared to the highest ever acreage/record food production that India experienced during 2017. The resultant acreage is largely manifested by the good soil moisture distribution across the country. Adequate soil moisture available over northern parts of India may help the Rabi crops during 2018- 19,” the IMD report said.

The southwest monsoon that ended with 9 percent deficient rainfall this year, witnessed 10 monsoon low pressure systems including one cyclone, one deep depression, four depressions and two depressions and two well marked low pressure areas and two low pressure areas. This may be reasons for scattered rainfall this year.

In its report, the IMD said that the number of Low Pressure System (LPS) had been 50 as against the normal of 57. The IMD also stated the

all India weekly rainfall anomalies during 13 of the 18 weeks of the monsoon season were negative. “Out of the 5 positive rainfall anomaly weeks, 2 weeks were from July (weeks ending 4th & 18th) and one week each from other 3 months (weeks ending June 13, August 22 & September 26). The highest negative weekly rainfall anomaly was recorded during the week ending September 19 (-55%) followed by the week ending 30th September 30th,” the IMD report said.

According to IMD, the first low pressure system of the current monsoon season formed over northeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining Bangladesh coast on 10th June. It crossed Bangladesh coast and weakened over the land during the same night. Also this had been the only intense low pressure system during June.

The second system of July had been a well-marked low pressure area, during July 13-19. Under the influence of a cyclonic circulation, a low pressure area formed over northwest Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood on July 13.

The third system of July formed as a low pressure area over northwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining Gangetic West Bengal and Odisha on July 19 which concentrated into a Depression on July 21, morning.

The second system in August formed as a low pressure area over North West Bay of Bengal and adjoining Coastal areas of West Bengal & Odisha on August 13. The third system in August was a Low Pressure area which formed over northwest Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood on August 19.

It subsequently moved west northwestwards before it became less marked over northwest Madhya Pradesh and neighbourhood on August 22. Under its influence, widespread very intense rainfall activity had been reported from parts of central India and adjoining peninsular India.

The last low pressure system formed as a low pressure area over East Central Bay of Bengal and adjoining Myanmar coast on 18th September, evening. It concentrated into a Depression over east central Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood during the night of September 19. It then intensified further into Cyclonic Storm 'DAYE' over 8 northwest Bay of Bengal on 20th September and crossed south Odisha.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT – ARUNACHAL PRADESH

HINDU, NOV 7, 2018

Sitharaman, Rijiju take stock of Army-police clash issue in Arunachal Pradesh



“I appeal everyone not to treat it as Army versus police and civil administration issue,” Mr. Rijiju said

Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday took stock of the situation arising out of clashes between Army and [Arunachal Pradesh](#) Police personnel in Bomdila.

Some soldiers had allegedly vandalised the Bomdila **police** station and assaulted police personnel and civilians last week.

“The Defence Minister [Ms. Sitharaman] and I looked into the ongoing conflict between the Army and State police personnel. I appeal everyone not to treat it as Army versus police and civil administration issue,” Mr. Rijiju, the Union Minister of State for Home, told *PTI*.

Mr. Rijiju, who hails from Arunachal Pradesh, said the unfortunate incident that happened at Bomdila on November 2 should be settled amicably through proper understanding.

“Both the Army and the police are serving the nation with utmost dedication. An incident can’t be allowed to tarnish the image of the great institutions,” he said.

Both Ms. Sitharaman and Mr. Rijiju also met members of the civil society as part of confidence building measures.

Ms. Sitharaman is visiting Arunachal Pradesh to celebrate Diwali along with soldiers posted in the forward areas along the Sino-Indian border.

The incident happened when a group of soldiers allegedly misbehaved with civilians and police personnel at the Buddha Mahotsav celebrations in Bomdila, officials said.

Following this, the local Station House Officer went to the spot and two soldiers were brought to police station.

After that some soldiers allegedly vandalised the Bomdila police station, assaulted police personnel and civilians, they said.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT - MIZORAM

PIONEER, NOV 6, 2018

Jolt for Cong in Mizoram, Speaker quits party, joins BJP

Ahead of the Assembly polls, in a big jolt for the ruling Congress, Mizoram Assembly Speaker Hiphei on Monday resigned from his post and the party before joining the BJP.

Hiphei is the fifth legislators of the ruling Congress in Mizoram to have resigned from both the House and the party since September.

Mizoram is the only state out of eight in the north-east to be ruled by the Congress. Polls are due for the 40-member Mizoram assembly on November 28.

On Monday morning, the seven-time Congress legislator said he sent his resignation letter to Deputy Speaker R. Lalrinawma, who accepted it.

Hiphei then went to Congress Bhavan, the state party headquarters, and resigned from the primary membership of the party.

"I was kept in an uncertain position even after the AICC announced my name to contest the assembly polls from Palak constituency (in Siaha district)," Hiphei later told the media, expressing his resentment against Chief Minister and Mizoram Pradesh Congress President Lal Thanhawla.

"I would be contesting from the Palak constituency on a Bharatiya Janata Party ticket," he said, adding the BJP in alliance with the local parties would form a coalition Government in the State.

"The Congress would be defeated. The BJP would secure at least five seats in the polls to the 40-member Mizoram assembly," the Congress-turned BJP leader said.

Hiphei was elected to the Mizoram Assembly from Palak constituency in 2013 and he won the assembly elections six times between 1972 and 1989 from Tuipang.

In Guwahati, convenor of the BJP-led North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) and Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said : "Hiphei is a very senior leader in Mizoram. His joining the BJP would greatly strengthen the party."

BJP leaders in Mizoram have confidently declared that they would make all-out efforts to vote out the Congress in the State to "paint the North-East with the saffron colour."

The BJP has undertaken intensive efforts to win the Christian-dominated State, after having formed Governments on its own or in alliance with allies in the remaining six northeastern States.

Meanwhile, the ruling Congress, which is governing the State, except for ten years — 1998-2003 and 2003-2008 — since it became a full-fledged State in 1987, during the past two months has suffered a major setback.

POLLUTION

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

NBCC issues guidelines to clean Delhi's toxic air

Against the backdrop of deteriorating air quality in the national Capital due to pollution, the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) has come out with guidelines to curb pollution from construction sites, including keeping the ground at construction sites wet and covering vehicles that carry construction material.

NBCC CMD Anoop Kumar Mittal on Thursday directed its contractors not to use open trucks and to transport building materials only in steel containers, as part of efforts to reduce dust pollution.

According to reports, around 8 to 10 per cent of the total pollution in the city was due to construction sites. NBCC is engaged in the redevelopment of Pragati Maidan into a state-of-the-art integrated exhibition-cum-convention centre that cost Rs 2,254 crore and redevelopment of seven Government colonies in Delhi. Besides it is also engaged in several projects here.

NBCC -- which has an order book worth Rs 80,000 crore -- has directed that transportation of sand, grit, cement and other construction materials would only be in permanently closed vehicles covered by tarpaulin sheets.

“NBCC has made it mandatory to seek approvals of the environmental management plan, inclusive of dust mitigation measures, before the implementation of any building or infrastructure project requiring environmental clearance,” Mittal said.

The transportation and storage of cement and fly ash would be in closed silos, besides absolute prohibition of grinding and cutting of building materials, as per the guidelines.

Sprinkling of water, using black top for paving the roads leading to construction site, washing of truck tyres in addition to controlling the speed limit of the vehicle and proper barricading at project site as per CPCB norms are among the other directions.

The guidelines also issued for removal of construction wastages from the work site immediately after completion of concerned work(s) at site; sprinkling of water; using black top for paving the roads leading to construction site; washing of truck tyres in addition to controlling the speed limit of the vehicle; proper barricading at site as per CPCB norms; and availability of Pollution check machines at all work sites to monitor the pollution level of diesel/petrol/CNG operated vehicles.

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RELIGION

PIONEER, NOV 1, 2018

Make law, acquire land for Ram temple: RSS

Mounting pressure on the Narendra Modi Government on the issue of Ram Mandir, RSS Joint General Secretary Manmohan Vaidya on Wednesday said the Centre should enact a law to acquire the land and hand it over for the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya.

Following up on RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's Vijayadashami rally exhortation to the Modi Government "to clear the path for construction of a grand temple through appropriate and requisite law", Vaidya rooted strongly for early construction of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya

"Ram temple is a matter of national pride and glory. Just like Sardar Patel got Somnath temple rebuilt, the government should acquire the land and hand over it for Ram temple construction. The Government should make law for that," Vaidya said. Vaidya recalled as to how the Somnath temple came to be re-constructed in 1951 during the tenure of former Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. "It was a matter of national pride," he said.

Talking to mediapersons after Bhagwat inaugurated a three-day All India working committee meeting at Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini at Uttan in the neighbouring Thane district, Vaidya reminded the Modi dispensation about the "promise" made in 1994 to the Supreme Court

that it would be on the side of the Hindu community if any evidence was found of a pre-existing temple before it was razed to build the Babri Masjid.

The Congress had said all parties should abide by the court verdict. The BJP too has maintained that it would respect the verdict of the court.

“The court has said a mosque is not mandatory for namaz and the prayers can be performed on the streets as well. Besides, namaz is not accepted if it is performed on a forcibly acquired land. The court has also said that this (acquiring of land) was not a religious deed,” Vaidya said.

“Now, we have the evidence... Also, this issue has long been pending in the court without a decision. The issue is now only that of acquiring the land and handing it over for the construction of the temple. The Government should make a law for that,” Vaidya said.

The RSS leader said the issue was no more limited to Hindus and Muslims or a temple or a mosque, but about the restoration of the pride of the country. “The Government should now fulfill the promise made in 1994,” he added.

Vaidya’s remarks came two days after the Supreme Court noted that an appropriate bench would start hearing the matters relating to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute from January 2019. The delay in the start of hearing has triggered demands within the RSS and ruling BJP for a law for an early construction of the temple on the disputed site.

Responding to repeated questions on Ram janmabhoomi-Babri masjid issue, Vaidya said, “Our position is known now The sarsanghchalak (RSS chief) has already said. Nothing needs to be added”.

Addressing the RSS cadres at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur on the occasion of Vijayadashami on October 18, Bhagwat had charged that there was “an obvious game-plan” of a few elements to stall the judgment on the Ram Mandir issue by presenting various newer interventions in the judicial process. He, however, stressed that the construction of Ram temple was necessary from the self-esteem point of view.

“It (Ram temple) will also pave the way for an atmosphere of goodwill and oneness in the country. This matter of national interest is being obstructed by some fundamentalist elements and forces that play communal politics for selfish gains. Despite such machinations, the decision regarding ownership of the land should be expedited, and the Government should clear the path for construction of the grand temple through appropriate and requisite law,” Bhagwat had said.

Meanwhile, referring to the unveiling of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s statue by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Gujarat earlier in the day, Vaidya -- during his interaction with the media -- hit out at the Congress, for politicising the issue.

“The country is proud of Sardar Patel’s achievements....The Congress has the habit of criticising everything, but they cannot prove anything. This is an issue of national pride. Sardar Patel had played a big role in

uniting the country after Independence and therefore, he was known as the Iron Man,” Vaidya said.

TEXTILES

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

Khadi witnesses 37.1% growth in production in last 4 years: KVIC

The introduction of higher and multi-dimensional innovation in the Khadi sector by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has scripted a major success story as the signature fabric of India has made an average jump of 37.1 per cent in Khadi fabric production in the last four years, i.e. from 103.22 million square meters to 141.52 million square meters.

The increase of 39.30 million square meters happened after the KVIC encouraged the registration of new Khadi Institutions and started artisan-centric programmes including distribution of 31,000 New Model Charkhas and 5,600 modern looms since 2015.

During this span of time, Khadi has rolled 376 new Khadi institutions and added 38,684 new Khadi artisans. This has resulted in an average jump of 61 percent in Khadi fabric production's share with respect to the mills' fabric production - in the last four years .

As per the website of Ministry of Textiles, in the fiscal 2013-14, the mill sector fabric production was 2,531 million square meters. On the other hand, as per KVIC's Audit Report, the Khadi sector fabric production

during the same fiscal was 103.22 million square meters - which was a bit higher than 4 percent of the overall production.

Interestingly, after four years, i.e. financial year 2017-18 — the production tally witnessed a steep jump of 38.30 million square meters (average jump of 37.10 percent) in Khadi sector fabric production. In the fiscal 2017-18, while the mill sector fabric production was 2, 157 million square meters, the Khadi sector fabric production was 141.52 million square meters — which was more than 6.5 percent share of the overall fabric production in the country. And, it indicates that a growth 61 percent in Khadi sector fabric production's share since 2015.

Explaining the factors behind this success story, KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said, "First and foremost, this steep rise in Khadi sector fabric production is due to the repeated appeals of Prime Minister Narendra Modi — to adopt Khadi. And then, the credit goes to the Ministry of MSME, who outlined and implemented many policies and programmes — to attract the artisans — basically the back-bone of Khadi sector."

Saxena further said that the numbers of artisans are progressively increasing in the Khadi sector because of the new policies and initiative taken by the KVIC in the recent years.

TRANSPORT

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

Govt thrust on public transport

The Government's focus is on boosting public transport as the number of people hailing taxi aggregators may swell to 1 crore daily in the next two-three years from 35 lakh daily at present, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday.

The Government wants to discourage people from buying private cars due to rising pollution levels, the Minister said.

Gadkari said the Government's focus was also on promoting alternative fuels like ethanol and methanole besides giving a push to electric vehicles. Four pilot projects were on anvil in Pune, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Guwahati for methanol buses, he stressed.

"Public transport system should be popular...Almost 35 lakh people take aggregators on a daily basis and the numbers could swell to 1 crore in next two to three years," Gadkari said at the launch of 'Ease of Moving Index India Report' by Ola Mobility Institute.

He said aggregators should come out with bike services for single travellers also that could provide employment to people and besides could look into investing in aeroboats in view of the upcoming Kumbh Mela at Allahabad.

Replying to a query regarding flexi fares by aggregators, the Union Road Transport Minister said that aggregators would be forced to be competitive and reduce prices when there would be more companies in the field.

He said given the high pollution and spurt in vehicles, the Government wanted to discourage people from using private cars and suggested launch of double decker buses for long distance travels like Delhi Jaipur, Delhi-Agra, Delhi-Chandigarh etc.

Besides, he urged people to prefer cycling and use some newly built cycle tracks like that on Delhi-Meerut highway. The Government intended to rope in some celebrities to popularise cycling, he added.

He also said that using existing infrastructure, some innovative steps could be taken on the pattern of proposed Nagpur metro on existing roadway network of the railways where the cost will be barely 3 crore per km against metro's cost of Rs 350 crore per km.

Though the Minister did not provide the timeline for the project, he said the this would be cheaper and faster than existing railway as well as buses.

Giving the details of the pilot projects of buses running on methanol, the Minister said, "Four pilot projects involving 10 buses each have been planned at Mumbai, Pune, Navi Mumbai and Guwahati. These will run on methanol with the help of Assam Petrochemicals, RCF, Gujarat Fertiliser and Deepak Fertiliser."

Once such buses are popular, pollution could be curbed, he said adding that for Delhi his Ministry has proposed to the Delhi Government for a logistic park outside Delhi and added that once the entire ring road road is completed it would help arresting at least 50 per cent of the automobile pollution.

In reply to a query, the minister said that five contracts have been awarded for Delhi Mumbai express highway project on a green alignment which has resulted in savings to the tune of Rs 16,000 crore on land acquisition and his ministry was in talks with the Railways Ministry for use of extra land.

The minister also released the Ease of Moving Index 2018 report which suggested that around 80 per cent of citizens believe that the transport ecosystem has improved over the last five years.

It said that 60 per cent of respondents reported using public modes of commute and a majority of Indians are willing to adopt electric mobility and are in agreement that electrification will reshape the transportation segment.

The report surveyed over 43,000 respondents from 20 cities across the country.

Cab aggregator Ola in a statement said 75 per cent of respondents believed that electric vehicles could replace conventional vehicles by 2030.

TERRORISM

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

Time to review AFSPA, says Manipur CM

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh has said it is time the imposition of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, or the AFSPA, in the northeastern State is reviewed but added security concerns over the State sharing borders with foreign countries should also be considered.

The Army said that though the situation in the State was now under control, the AFSPA is a requirement to ensure peace. "Manipur is a peaceful state now, but the country's security must be a priority... The financial health and arms supply by foreign countries cannot be ruled out," Singh told a group of visiting journalists here on Wednesday.

Major General V K Mishra, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 57 Mountain Division of the Army, which spearheads counter-insurgency operations in Manipur, said the AFSPA is a prerequisite for the Army to operate for maintaining peace in the militancy-affected state.

Citing the example of seizure of sophisticated arms from an insurgent camp, he said it takes two months of efforts and lengthy operations — from intelligence gathering to locating and search of suspects — to recover arms and ammunition. Such operations can be carried out only with the AFSPA in place.

"If we do not have AFSPA, how do we do this?... It is not just an enabler, it is a prerequisite. AFSPA is a requirement for the Army to function."

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

TRIBUNE, NOV 7, 2018

Faizabad district is Ayodhya now

Airport, hospital to be named after Lord Ram, Dashrath, announces Yogi



Amid the growing chorus for building of Ram temple, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday renamed Faizabad district as “Ayodhya” on the eve of Diwali, which commemorates Lord Ram’s return home after 14 years in exile.

Speaking at a function, CM Yogi said: “Ayodhya is the symbol of our honour, pride and prestige. Ayodhya gets its significance from Bhagwan Ram. From today, this district would be known as Ayodhya.”

Faizabad is the third district after Mughalsarai (renamed Deen Dayal Upadhyay Nagar) and Allahabad (renamed Prayagraj) to have been rechristened by the Yogi government. Ayodhya was until now a municipality in Faizabad district.

Yogi announced that an airport would come up in Ayodhya and named after Purushottam Bhagwan Ram. Also, a new medical college would be named after Raja Dashrath, father of Lord Ram, said the Chief Minister.

Describing the four-and-a-half-year rule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as nothing short of “Ram Rajya”, Yogi listed his development initiatives of creating 36 lakh Jan Dhan bank accounts, toilets, Ayushman Bharat and other schemes for the poor.

“What is the vision of Ram Rajya? Is it not reaching out to the poorest of the poor and alleviating their poverty. This is exactly what the Modi government has achieved during its tenure,” said the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister.

WILD LIFE

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

31 deer die in TN park due to high intake of subabul leaves

As many as 31 spotted deer have died at a park near here in the past few days due to indigestion caused by excessive intake of leaves containing toxic amino acid, a Forest Department official said.

The deer died of excessive consumption of subabul tree leaves, which are rich in protein and have mimusin, a toxic amino acid, since November 1.

Too much intake of the leaves had resulted in digestion problems leading to the death of the animals, the official said Sunday.

While 17 deer died on November 1, eight perished the next day. Another six died on Saturday. Twenty-five of them were female and some were also pregnant, the official said.

There were about 180 deer in the park which were taken care of by their keepers. Officials were now keeping an eye on the rest.

Postmortem of a couple of deer revealed the cause of the deaths, following which the keepers have been asked not to feed subabul leaves to the remaining, the official said.

According to the official, the keepers overfed the deer in their enthusiasm as the animals ate the leaves with relish.

Officials were now providing certain type of grass, besides a concoction, including powdered pepper, and drinking water for the rest of the herd as a preventive measure, the official said.

Any symptoms of illness would be noticed only after a deer would isolate itself from the group and no deer has done so since Saturday night, she said.

“Therefore, there may not be anymore casualties,” the official added.

WOMEN

PIONEER, NOV 2, 2018

Lucknow gets nod for Safe City project

The Union Home Ministry on Thursday approved a Safe City project for Lucknow at a total cost of Rs.194.44 crore under the Nirbhaya Fund Scheme. The project would be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with Centre and State sharing the funding in 60:40 ratio.

Under this project, Lucknow will have integrated control room, special unit for women protection and pink out posts to tackle atrocities against women, special desks for women in each police stations in the city.

“This approval is a part of MHA’s plans to implement Safe City projects in eight selected cities, namely, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow under Nirbhaya Fund with the purpose of strengthening safety and security of women in public places. The projects are being implemented in consultation with Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Urban Development,

Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology, respective Municipal & Police Commissioners of the cities and civil society organisations,” the Home Ministry said in a statement.

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