



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti called on Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, in New Delhi

Hollowed govt schools should be handed over to pvt players, suggests Niti Aayog

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 /- Non-performing or "hollowed" government schools should be handed over to private players under the public-private partnership (PPP) model, government think tank Niti Aayog has recommended. The Aayog, in its recently released "Three-year action agenda", has recommended that the idea, where the private sector adopts government schools while being publicly funded on a per child basis, can be explored. According to the report, while the number of government schools increased over the years, the enrolment numbers in them have been falling drastically while the number of students enrolling in private schools has been on a rise leading to "hollowing" of state-run schools. High rate of teacher absenteeism, limited time spent on teaching when the teacher is in class and generally poor quality of education are among important reasons for this emptying out. Outcomes are worse in government schools than in private schools, it said. "A working

group should be set up with states participation to explore and pilot other bolder experiments by interested states. These could include education vouchers and local government led purchasing of schooling services. "PPP models could also be explored where the private sector adopts government schools while being publicly funded on a per child basis. This may provide a solution to the problems of schools that have hollowed and are incurring massive expenditures," the Niti Aayog recommended. During 2010-2014, public schools increased by around 13,500 in number but total enrolment in them fell by 1.13 crore. In parallel, private school enrolment rose by 1.45 crore. This shift has been accompanied by hollowing of an alarmingly large number of public schools, the report said. As per statistics cited in the report, there were about 3.7 lakh state-run schools with less than 50 students in 2014-15, which is around 36 per cent of total number of public schools. (PTI)

CPM won't join electoral alliance involving Cong, Yechury

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 /- The CPI(M) will not be part of any electoral alliance involving the Congress though it will continue to be associated with JD(U) rebel Sharad Yadav's 'save composite culture' campaign, joined by opposition parties including the Congress, the Left party said today. CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said his party will attend meetings aimed at "protecting the composite culture for a larger cause", but added that it will not take part in any rally of the "mahagabbandhan" (grand alliance) with the Congress in the future too. Yechury made the comment two days after the Left party skipped the RJD's BJP Bhagao, Desh Bachao (Banish BJP, Save Country) rally in Patna, attended by several key opposition leaders. The CPI(M) leader said that the composite culture movement is not to be confused with "mahagabbandhan" as the former has "got nothing to do with electoral alliance". The CPI(M) had not participated in the rally, citing presence of its arch rival and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. "The question is being raised that the CPI(M) did not take part in Lulu's rally,



but is attending Sharad Yadav's meet on composite culture." The "save composite culture" movement has got nothing to do with electoral alliances or adjustments. Saving the composite culture is a larger issue," Yechury said. According to the CPI(M)'s stated "political tactical line", there should be understanding with the Congress. Referring to that position, Yechury said the Left party is sticking to the stance and that "there is no confusion on that". "But the composite culture movement is not to be confused with mahagabbandhan. Lulu organised the mahagabbandhan rally. There will be several more such rallies, which we will not attend,

but we will attend the composite culture meetings," the Marxist leader added. Besides the RJD chief and Banerjee, several key opposition leaders including AICC general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad, CPI leader Sudhakar Reddy and the party's national secretary V. Raja and NCP's Tariq Anwar had attended the Patna rally. More than a dozen opposition parties had joined hands on August 17 at Yadav's 'save composite culture' meeting, calling for a united fight against the ruling BJP with Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi taking the government to task and accusing it of not fulfilling its promises. Rahul Gandhi, however, skipped the Patna rally as he was abroad. In the 2016 West Bengal assembly election, the CPI(M) had an understanding with the Congress over seat sharing. The CPI(M)-led Left Front, however, faced a drubbing in the polls and was relegated to third position, behind the ruling TMC and the Congress in its erstwhile bastion. The party Politburo, a key decision-making body of the Left party, had rebuked the state unit over the poll result, saying the "electoral tactics" adopted in the state were not in consonance with its political tactical line. Meanwhile, the CPI-M has opposed any move to hold simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. The Niti Aayog has favoured conducting synchronised two-phase Lok Sabha and Assembly elections from 2024 in "national interest". All elections in India should happen in a free, fair and transparent manner to ensure minimum "campaign mode" disruption to governance, the government think-tank said in its report released recently. "We may begin work towards switching to a synchronised two-phase election from the 2024 election to the Lok Sabha. This would require a maximum one-time curtailment or extension of some state assemblies," it said. CPI-M Politburo member Brinda Karat said PTI that her party is not in favour of it. "We are not in favour of it. Each Assembly has its own schedule and the same cannot be cut short," she said. "It (simultaneous LS and Assembly polls) will circumscribe the rights of the people of a state to discuss state-level issues," she said. (PTI)

Would peruse privacy verdict before hearing Aadhaar plea: Apex court

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 /- The Supreme Court today said it would first go through the crucial judgement on privacy before taking a call on Congress leader Jairam Ramesh's challenge to the Lok Sabha Speaker's decision to certify a bill to amend the Aadhaar law as a money bill. The plea was mentioned before a bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices P C Pant and D Y Chandrachud for an early hearing, but the apex court would first peruse the judgement deliv-

ered by its nine-judge constitution bench declaring the right to privacy a fundamental right. "You mention it on Friday (September 1). We will also read the judgement," CJI Misra said. The apex court had in February observed that it was "tentatively not convinced" with the grounds taken by Ramesh to challenge the Lok Sabha Speaker's decision to certify the bill to amend Aadhaar law as a money bill. Observing that the issue was "important and serious" and it did not

Sharad's 'save composite culture' meeting in Indore today

CPM among other Opp parties to join

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 /- Taking his battle against the BJP to the states ruled by it, rebel JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav is organising the opposition's "save composite culture" meet in Indore tomorrow. Yadav said opposition leaders, including Digvijay Singh and Amand Sharma of the Congress, Sitaram Yechury of the CPI-M and Tariq Anwar of the NCP besides representatives of major Opposition parties will attend the meeting in Madhya Pradesh tomorrow. The BJP ruled state had recently witnessed violent protests in Mandaur by a section of farmers, and opposition leaders hope to build a campaign against the saffron party in the state that has emerged as its bastion. It has been in power there for the last 14 years. The state will face the assembly polls by the end of next year along with Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, two other states ruled by the BJP. "I will hold a similar campaign in Gujarat and Rajasthan. I will go to other states too," he said. "The 'save composite culture' movement will be held at the national level on August 17 in which Yadav had made clear his intentions to defy his party chief Nitish Kumar's move to ally with the BJP, claiming that the country's secularism and pluralism was under attack in the NDA government. "The country's youth need to be told and made aware about the values of our Constitution when issues like cow and love jihad have become part of our public discourse," he said. (PTI)

UP on high alert amid fears of violence by dera supporters

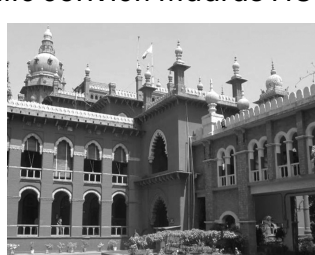
LUCKNOW, AUG 29 /- Security has been stepped up in western Uttar Pradesh districts, bordering Haryana and Delhi, to check any spill over of the violence by the supporters of Dera Sacha Sauda chief who has been sentenced to 20 years in jail for raping two women. There are 18 'Deras' run by the sect across the state and most of them are located in Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, Amroha, Agra, Ghaziabad, Bulandshahr, Baghat, Hapur and Meerut districts - all in western UP, which falls under the Meerut zone, having proximity with Haryana. "Orders have been issued to employ adequate police force at all the Deras to ensure that there is no law and order problem. While district police officers have been told to remain vigilant, Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) will be assisting them in maintaining peace," IG Vijay Singh Meena said. After conviction of Dera Sacha Sauda head on August 25 for committing rape on two women and incidents of large-scale violence that followed in Haryana, an alert has been sounded in UP to check spill over of the violence in the state. With police going hammer and tongs after Dera followers in Haryana, many of them might try to sneak into UP. "An alert has been sounded in UP, especially in districts bordering Haryana and Delhi to check spill over of trouble in UP by strict checking on borders. No person or group should be allowed to foment trouble in UP. Administrative machinery has been geared up in western UP." Additional Director Gen-

Convicted Baba skipped dinner in jail

ROHTAK, AUG 29 /- Convicted Dera Sacha Sauda sect head Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh did not have food last night in the Sunaria jail. The 50-year-old in Rohtak after he was sentenced to 20-year jail for raping two of his followers, a prison official said today. The 50-year-old self-styled godman drank only some water during the night and took milk in the morning, the official said. Ram Rahim did not talk with anyone and was seen roaming in the cell. The Dera sect chief has been kept in the approved cell at Sunaria jail in Rohtak. A special CBI court yesterday sentenced Ram Rahim Singh to 20 years in jail for rape of his two followers, holding he acted like a "wild beast" who did not even spare his own "pious" female disciples. Judge Jagdeep Singh in his 9-page order had pronounced two sentences of 10 years rigorous imprisonment in each of the two rapes that date back to 2002.

Produce entire medical report of Rajiv case life convict: Madras HC

CHENNAI, AUG 29 /- The Madras High Court today directed prison officials to produce the entire medical report of Rajiv Gandhi assassination case life convict Murugan after his niece claimed that he is observing fast unto death in prison and sought the court's intervention to save him. Justice Selvam, heading a division bench also comprising Justice Pon. Kalaiyarasan, gave the direction when the habeas corpus petition by Murugan's niece, Thenmozhi came up for hearing. Justice Selvam asked the Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) why permission has been refused to visitors to meet the convict, to which the APP submitted that as per the prison manual, if any inmate goes on a fast, no one is allowed to meet him and all facilities made available to him are cut. The judge then sought to know about the food given to Murugan also the treatment, to which the APP replied that he had been given necessary medical treatment and also subjected to periodical check-ups. The bench after directing the prison authorities to file the medical report, adjourned the matter to August 31. Murugan has reportedly



been observing 'jeva samadhi', a ritual of fast unto death, in the central prison at Vellore since August 19, his niece has claimed. In her August 24 plea, Thenmozhi had claimed her uncle was determined to attain 'jeva samadhi' in the prison and sought the court's intervention to save him. She had also sought permission to meet him. Citing various news reports about Murugan's fast, she had said that it was the duty of the prison authorities to save his life. She said Murugan was in the prison for the last 26 years. The officials had rejected her August 22 representation to meet Murugan, she said and claimed, that even his wife Nalini, a co-convict in the case, was also not allowed to meet him. Murugan, an LTTE cadre, was initially sentenced to death along with five others in the case related to assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by an LTTE suicide bomber at Nripurambudur on May 21, 1991. The Supreme Court had in 2014 commuted his sentence and two members to life imprisonment citing the delay in deciding their mercy plea. Nalini is also serving a life term after her death sentence was commuted by the state government. (PTI)

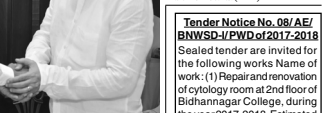
Butan welcomes end of Doklam standoff

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 /- Bhutan today welcomed the end of the 73-day standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in Doklam and hoped it would help in ensuring peace and tranquillity at the tri-junction. "Bhutan welcomes the disengagement by the two sides at the face-off site in the Doklam area," the Bhutanese foreign ministry said. In a major diplomatic breakthrough to end the prolonged standoff between their troops, India and China yesterday disengaged their border personnel at Doklam. "We hope this contributes to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity and status quo along the borders of Bhutan, China and India in keeping with the existing agreements between the respective countries," the Bhutanese foreign ministry said. Troops of the two countries had been locked in a standoff in Doklam since June 16 after Indian troops stopped the Chinese Army from building a road in the disputed area. India has deployed about 350 Army personnel in the area. Bhutan and China have a dispute over Doklam, a strategically key area at the Bhutan-China tri-junction in the Sikkim sector. (PTI)

institution seeking extension shall not be entertained," the bench said. The DGHS, which is the responsible for conducting the counselling informed the court that over 5,500 seats are still vacant in deemed universities. The court directed that 5,500 seats should be filled up from a pool of qualified 55,000 students to maintain the ratio of 1:10. Counsel for the deemed universities urged the court that if necessary and in order to maintain the ratio of 1:10 in case of deficit in the list meant for these institutions, the names from the larger National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) list may be provided. "As long as, for the seats which have fallen vacant. If 1:10 ratio is not sufficient, the Director General of Health Services is granted liberty to get into the larger NEET list. We order accordingly," the bench said. (PTI)

Govt expresses concern on pendency of cases under SC/ST PoA Act

NEW DELHI, AUG 29 /- Union minister Thawarchand Gehlot today expressed his concern over the pendency of cases under the amended SC/ST Prevention Atrocities Act and instructed states to develop mechanisms like setting up of special courts for their quick disposal. Inaugurating the Regional Conference of the Social Welfare Ministers of Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, Gehlot stressed on the implementation of the amended Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in true letter and spirit. The social justice and empowerment minister expressed concern over the pendency of 28,031 cases under the Act in courts in 2015 in Uttar Pradesh and 2,278 cases in Chhattisgarh. As per the data given by the states for 2015, 171 cases under the Act were pending in courts in Delhi while no data was available from Jammu and Kashmir.



Vice President and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, M. Venkiah Reddy presiding during the swearing-in ceremony of Rajya Sabha members at the Parliament House, in New Delhi.

Tender Notice No. 08/AE/BNWSD-1/PWD of 2017-2018
Sealed tender are invited for the following works Name of work: (1) Repair and renovation of cytology room at 2nd floor of Tribhuvan College, during the year 2017-2018. Estimated Amount put to Tender (Rs.): 4, 84, 385/- Earnest Money - 2, 42, 192/- (2) Provision for additional glazed aluminium partition wall within Office Block of Education Directorate (under the DPI West Bengal) at 8th Floor, Bhawan, during the year 2017-2018. (R & B Works) Estimated Amount put to Tender (Rs.): 1, 39, 454/- Earnest Money - 2, 78, 908/- (3) Provision for additional glazed aluminium partition wall within Office Block of Education Directorate (under the DPI West Bengal) at 8th Floor, Bhawan, during the year 2017-2018. (R & B Works) Estimated Amount put to Tender (Rs.): 1, 39, 454/- Earnest Money - 2, 78, 908/- (4) Provision for additional glazed aluminium partition wall within Office Block of Education Directorate (under the DPI West Bengal) at 8th Floor, Bhawan, during the year 2017-2018. (R & B Works) Estimated Amount put to Tender (Rs.): 1, 39, 454/- Earnest Money - 2, 78, 908/- Last date of time limit for dropping of Tender - 06.09.2017 up to 12.00 Noon. Last date of time limit for opening of Tender - 06.09.2017 at 12.30 P.M. All other details information will be had from the office of the undersigned. Assisted by: G. Gole, E.W.D. Bidhannagar West Sub Division-I.