

What penance will Modi undertake for 'failed' note-ban: Sena

MUMBAI, AUG 31 /-/- In the wake of RBI's report that said 99.3 per cent of the junked notes were returned to the banking system, the Shiv Sena today sought to know what penance Prime Minister Narendra Modi would undertake for plunging the country into "financial anarchy" through demonetisation. The Sena said the note ban caused immense losses to the economy, affected the industry, caused the rupee to fall to its lowest level since independence and made over a hundred people lose their lives, yet the country's rulers were boasting about development. "Since demonetisation plunged the country into a financial anarchy, what penance will Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertake to keep his promise to the country? The note-ban exercise was carried out to gain popularity," the Sena asked in an editorial in the party mouthpiece 'Saamna' today. The Uddhav Thackeray-led party was referring to Modi's

speech in Goa in November 2016, wherein he appealed to people to cooperate with him for 50 days till December 30 and punish him if his intentions were wrong. "I have only asked for 50 days. Give me time till December 30. After that, if any fault is found in my intentions or my actions, I am willing to suffer any punishment given by the country," he had said. Stating that demonetisation spelled troubles for the country, the Sena said, "Decisions relating to the country's economy should not be taken in a hurry. The note ban butchered the country's economy. The Reserve Bank has also put a stamp of approval on this." "Modi had said that demonetisation is meant to permanently bring to an end corruption, black money and fake notes. However, all these things increased in the last two years. The claims that the note ban will bring down the terrorism rate in Kashmir and peace will prevail in the Valley also proved to be hollow," it said. It added that black money and fake currency could not be retrieved as 99.3 per cent currency returned to the banking system. The BJP's spokesman said small-scale industries, housing and service sectors were devastated, farmers had to suffer immensely and people had to stand in queues outside banks for two months following the note ban, it said. "Over 100 people lost their lives in these queues," the party claimed, adding that demonetisation caused the rupee to plunge to its lowest levels in 70 years.

The exercise set the economy on fire. The exchequer had to bear a loss of Rs 15,000 crore to print new notes. Another Rs 700 crore were spent on recalibration of ATMs. Also, Rs 2,000 crore were spent on the distribution of new notes, the saffron party alleged. "All of this is horrible. Yet, if the government is boasting about development, their mortality is like Nero, who played the fiddle while the Rome burnt," it said. According to the Sena, demonetisation was a horrendous experi-

ment that caused losses to the tune of Rs 2.25 lakh crore. "It amounts to robbing the country's coffers. The RBI Governor should be taken to court for not stopping this loot. While the job of the RBI is to safeguard the economy, it has become like an intoxicated monkey under the current regime," the Sena said. It is simple economics that nobody hoards black money and demonetisation cannot bring an end to black money. Those who did not understand it made light of former PM Manmohan Singh then. But the truth has come out now, the party added. The Sena's fresh attack at the Modi government comes days after the RBI said in its final report that 99.3 per cent of the junked notes have been returned to the banking system. Of the Rs 15.41 lakh crore worth Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in circulation on November 9, 2016, when the note ban was announced, notes worth Rs 15.31 lakh crore returned. (PTI)



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu presenting memento to Karnataka Chief Minister Kumarasswamy during his visit to Vijayawada

Civil code 'neither necessary nor desirable': Law Panel

NEW DELHI, AUG 31 /-/- A uniform civil code is "neither necessary nor desirable" at this stage, the Law Commission said in a consultation paper on the last day of its term today and suggested changes in laws relating to marriage, divorce, alimony, and marriageable age for men and women. Issuing a consultation paper instead of a full-fledged report on the contentious topic, the panel held freedom of religion as also to propagate it must be strongly protected in a secular democracy, but it is important to bear in mind that a number of "social evils" such as the practice of triple talaq and child marriage should not be allowed to take refuge under "religious customs." "To seek their protection under law as religion would be a grave folly," it said in the paper titled 'Reform of Family Law'. A bill to ban the practice of instant triple talaq or 'talaq-e-biddat' is pending in Rajya Sabha despite having been passed in Lok Sabha. The panel, whose three-year term ended today, said diversity of Indian culture should be celebrated, but specific groups or weaker sections of the society must not be "disprivileged in the process." "Resolution of this conflict does not mean abolition of difference. This Commission has therefore dealt with laws that are discriminatory rather than providing a uniform civil code which is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage," the document said.

SC adjourns to January next year hearing on pleas challenging Article 35 A

NEW DELHI, AUG 31 /-/- The Supreme Court today adjourned to January next year the hearing on a batch of petitions challenging the Constitutional validity of Article 35 A, which provides special rights and privileges to natives of Jammu and Kashmir, after taking note of submissions of the Centre and the state government that there was a law and order problem in the state. A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra was informed by Attorney General K K Venugopal and Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir government respectively that in view of the impending eight-phased local body elections and law and order situation in the state, the hearing be deferred. The bench also said there is a law and order problem. "If the local body elections are not held then a fund of Rs 4,335 crores meant for local bodies will lapse," he said while seeking adjournment of the

hearing and referred to the prevailing law and order situation in the state. The argument seeking adjournment was advanced after the bench indicated that it would hear the petitions in September itself to decide as to whether the petitions challenging the validity of Article 35 A can be referred to a five-judge Constitution bench. "Large number of paramilitary forces are there. Let the elections go on calmly and thereafter hear these petitions in January or March. This issue has been very sensitive," Venugopal said. The ASG said that though this Article relates to "gender discrimination" it is not the right time to hear the petitions. Senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, appearing for a group opposed to the constitutional scheme, raised the issue and said persons who migrated to Jammu and Kashmir and are living there for last 60 years, do not get benefit of employment or admissions in medical and engineering colleges

despite living there for so long. "Political parties, including the National Conference and the CP(M), have moved the Supreme Court in support of Article 35 A that empowers the state assembly to define "permanent residents" for bestowing special rights and privileges to them. An NGO, 'Ikkjut Jammu', has also filed a plea seeking quashing of the provision. It has said that Article 35 A furthers the "two nation theory which is against the theory of secularism." The state government, while defending the Article, had cited two verdicts of the constitution benches of the Supreme Court in 1961 and 1969, which had upheld the powers of the President under Article 370(1)(d) of the Constitution to pass constitutional orders. The article was incorporated in the Constitution in 1954 by an order of President Rajendra Prasad on the advice of the then Cabinet headed by Jawaharlal Nehru. (PTI)

SC notice to Centre, BJP six states on violation of public advertisement guidelines

NEW DELHI, AUG 31 /-/- The Supreme Court today sought responses from the Centre, six state governments and the BJP on a plea which has alleged that they have violated the apex court's directions on issuance of public advertisements. Besides the Centre and the BJP, the apex court issued notices to the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Telangana on a plea filed by an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA from Delhi. Except Telangana, the other five states are ruled by the BJP. A bench headed by Justice Ranjan Gogoi asked them to file their responses within four weeks on the plea by Sanjeev Jha, an MLA from Burari constituency here. The petitioner has alleged that the Centre, BJP and these states have issued public advertisements in violation of the apex court's directions given earlier. He has sought a direction from the top court that a committee constituted on this issue by the Centre should be asked to take cognizance of these alleged violations and initiate appropriate proceedings against them.

On May 13, 2015 the apex court had passed a slew of directions including the order asking Centre to constitute a three-member committee "consisting of persons with unimpeachable neutrality and impartiality" to regulate the issue of public advertisements. However, on March 18, 2016, the apex court modified its order and said the pictures of Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, Governors and State Ministers can appear in government advertisements. That verdict came on pleas by Centre and states including the then poll-bound West Bengal and Tamil Nadu which had sought a review of the Supreme Court judgment bearing publication of leaders' photos in advertisements except those of the President, Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of India, saying it infringed on fundamental rights and federal structure. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing NGO Common Cause which had filed the original PIL on review petitions filed by the States, had told the bench that certain state governments were violating the apex court's orders. (PTI)

Haryana to hold events as part of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary

CHANDIGARH, AUG 31 /-/- The Haryana government will organise various events to commemorate the birth anniversary throughout the state and the celebrations will continue for the next two years, it said. A special Vidhan Sabha session would be convened next year, the government said. Besides, a 'Pada Yatra' would be organised involving 150 youth at a time walking 10 km per day for 150 days covering every village of the state. A 'Cycle Yatra' would also be organised and during these yatras, awareness would be generated against violence and crime against women and later sections, the state-

ment said. (PTI) film competitions and international conference would be organised on Gandhi. In schools, essay writing, painting and quiz competitions would be organised, it said. Other events include promotion of Khadi, villages and cottage industries and public programmes to promote non-conventional energy resources. Several activities would be organised for social and economic upliftment of weaker sections of the state. A 'Cycle Yatra' would also be organised and during these yatras, awareness would be generated against violence and crime against women and later sections, the state-

Commission of Inquiry will probe Rafale if Cong comes to power: Anand Sharma

LUCKNOW AUG 31 /-/- The Congress today said if its demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to probe the Rafale scam is not met, the party will set up an inquiry commission if it comes to power. The Rafale deal is the biggest scam of the century, senior Congress leader Anand Sharma said here. He said there was a 'hike' in the price of the fighter aircraft which India is buying from France, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi needs to answer the many doubts that have been raised. Why is the BJP government so afraid of setting up a JPC on the issue? the

deputy leader of Congress in Rajya Sabha said. If this is not done, we will constitute a National Commission of Inquiry to probe the Rafale scam, Sharma added. The apparent reference was to a probe under the Commissions of Inquiry Act. He claimed the scam had global ramifications as there were five other bidders for the deal. Sharma, who is a former commerce minister said the Rafale deal and demonetisation are the two biggest scams of the Modi government and will also be the main issues in the coming polls. Congress president Rahul Gandhi recently de-



Security personnel patrolling at Budshah Chowk in Srinagar on Friday, as all the shops and business establishments were closed due to two-day strike called by separatists to protest against alleged attempts being made to abrogate Article 35 A.

8-yr-old dies after school gate falls on her

GORAKHPUR (UP), AUG 31 /-/- An eight-year-old girl died after the gate of her school fell on her in Batalpur area of Deoria district today, police said. Harshita, a student of upper KG in Career Academy school was entering the building when the accident occurred in the morning. The victim's father, Santosh Mishra, who works as an auto driver in the school took her to a hospital where doctors declared the girl brought dead. Santosh informed police that the school manager, Anup Kumar Yadav had got the gate constructed six months back using cheap material. Despite his com-

plaints, no action was taken to fix the gate. Mishra said he blamed Yadav's "negligence" for his daughter's death. A case was registered against Yadav who has gone missing after the incident. The police have launched an operation to nab him. "The body of the girl was sent for post-mortem and a case under Section 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing buildings) and 304 A (punishment for causing death by negligence) of the IPC has been registered against the school manager," SO, Gauri Bazar police station, PS Yadav said. (PTI)

There is no compulsion to stay here. Our aim is to build this facility to ensure the women could have a decent life," she said. She urged local MP and actress Hema Malini to ensure that the proper maintenance of the hosiery that it remains safe and comfortable place for the widows. She also urged the centre management to ensure that temple and garden committees are formed that involve the widows. Gandhi said she has asked the district magistrate to start an antirickshaw service that would

Many widows apprehensive about moving to newly-inaugurated Krishna Kutir in Vrindavan

VRINDAVAN, AUG 31 /-/- The sprawling 1000-bed Krishna Kutir in Vrindavan, which was inaugurated today, currently has only 23 occupants, but many widows are apprehensive about moving to the home as they say it is too far from the city and it will restrict their movement. Krishna Kutir was inaugurated by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi but widows present in the audience said they were not ready to move into this 'jail'. "We will not live here. We have our temples, our Krishna in Vrindavan. We do not want to move to this locality," said Phoolan Devi, a 62-year-old widow who has

been living at Chetan ashram for the past nine years. Many of them believed that the centre located on the outskirts of Vrindavan would restrict their movement and prevent them from frequently going to Vrindavan to pray. Another 82-year-old widow, Sushila Kamal, said she was too old to start over again and wanted to continue with her life in the Vrindavan ashram. The Union minister tried to allay their fears and said the facility would be run by widows and they could come and leave whenever they want. "This facility is twice the size of a five-star hotel and is equipped with all modern facilities," she said. She also assured the widows that the perception that it would act as a jail for them is wrong. "They can come and leave whenever they want. There is no compulsion to stay here. Our aim is to build this facility to ensure the women could have a decent life," she said. She urged local MP and actress Hema Malini to ensure that the proper maintenance of the hosiery that it remains safe and comfortable place for the widows. She also urged the centre management to ensure that temple and garden committees are formed that involve the widows. Gandhi said she has asked the district magistrate to start an antirickshaw service that would help in easing their movement to the city. The women would also be given a pocket money to stay in the centre, she said. "It is a win-win situation for them. They would get to learn skill development that would help them earn their livelihood," L S Verma, the manager of the facility, said. He also said they were trying to allay the apprehensions of the widows by spreading awareness. "We are putting up posters, we are telling them how things can get better and they will not need to be anyone," he said, noting it would take some time for the widows to realise its utility. Sumaya Khatri, a 45-year-old from Ranchi, was one of the women who moved in the centre, but she was hopeful that it would help her get back on her feet and believed that she could make the place her home. "I always wanted to learn to stitch and this place would help me with that," said Kumari She moved here 12 years back at an age of 33. Gandhi also said a brand should be created through the skill development programmes that will motivate the widows to learn the skills taught here and make a living out of it. "Krishna Kutir" has been developed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development under the 'Swadhar Greh' scheme. It has been constructed on 1.4 hectares of land through the National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC), at a cost of nearly Rs 57 crore. The facility is also equipped with a large modern kitchen and a skill-cum-training centre. The centre has 100 room and 200 bathrooms and equipped with amenities like ramps and lifts for senior citizens and differently-abled people. The building's construction has been funded by the Centre and will be managed by the state government, according to a WCD official. The number of widows living in the Vrindavan is estimated to be around 3,000. Currently, there are five other government-run homes in the town. The shelter home will jointly be operated by the ministry and the state government. While the Centre will provide food, medicine, clothing and other related staff, power supply, sewage, drinking water and cooking gas facilities will be arranged by the state government. However, despite all these facilities, the widows are apprehensive of the home. Many believe that the location of the centre would prevent them from frequently going to Vrindavan to pray. A WCD official said the government is trying to allay their fears and has made provision of a rickshaw service to take them to cities. (PTI)