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Manmohan Singh set to lose SPG cover

The Hindu contacted several government agencies, including the Cabinet Secretariat, the Ministry of Home Affairs and intelligence agencies, in order to prepare this report, but received no official response. Dr. Singh also declined to comment on the development.

Plans for the move raised some eyebrows within the security establishment.

One official said that while the government was technically within the law to withdraw SPG cover to any former Prime Minister, it had chosen not to do so for Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who demitted office in 2004 and had SPG protection until he passed away in 2018.

A prolonged illness had kept Vajpayee home-bound for the past decade, while Dr. Singh is more “exposed” as he frequently travels for political engagements and was just re-elected a member of the Rajya Sabha, the official explained.

A retired SPG officer said

the SPG cover would only be reduced on the basis of threat levels as defined in the SPG Act of 1988.

“No govt. in power would take the risk of scaling down security without analysing the threat perception closely. No govt. would like to be discredited in taking a decision purely for political considerations,” he said, citing former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination, which brought much criticism to his successor V.P. Singh, whose government had withdrawn Mr. Gandhi’s SPG protection.

The SPG was set up in 1985 after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and Parliament passed the SPG Act in 1988 dedicating the group to protecting the Prime Minister of India.

At the time, the Act did not include former Prime Ministers, and when V.P. Singh came to power in 1989 his government withdrew SPG protection to the outgoing PM Rajiv Gandhi.

Let us wage a war on plastic, says PM

“This year, on October 2, when we celebrate Babu’s 150th birth anniversary, we shall not only dedicate to him an India that is open defecation-free but shall lay the foundation for a new revolution against plastic, by people themselves, throughout the country,” he said.

People from all strata, he said, should celebrate Gandhi Jayanti as a day to make “Mother India plastic-free”.

‘Make arrangements’

Mr. Modi urged all municipalities, municipal corporations, district administrations and gram panchayats, and government and non-governmental bodies to make adequate arrangements for collection and

storage of plastic waste. “I also appeal to the corporate sector to come out with ways and means for appropriate disposal of all accumulated plastic. It can be recycled; it can be transformed into fuel. This way we can accomplish our task of ensuring safe disposal of plastic waste before this Diwali,” he said.

Diwali falls on October 27. He said resolve was required to take up the challenge and “what can be a greater inspiration than Gandhi?”.

In his Independence Day’s address, Mr. Modi had urged the citizens to eliminate single-use plastic and suggested that shopkeepers give ecofriendly bags to customers.

New law to curb lynching unlikely

It will be examined by the Centre before it becomes a law as it seeks to amend the IPC.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) examines Bills passed by State assemblies that are not in confirmation with Central laws before they get the President’s assent to become a law. As per rules, the President has to go by the advice given by the Council of Ministers, in this case represented by the MHA.

The official said several meetings were held with social media platforms to initiate action against persons spreading rumours that led

to such crimes.

Last month, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Centre, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State governments on a plea seeking the implementation of its July 2018 judgement laying down several preventive, remedial, and punitive measures to combat the crime of lynching.

No data

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) does not maintain data with respect to lynching incidents in the country and the incidents are listed crimes like murder.

Naga flag, law key to peace: Naga group

The publicity wing of the NSCN(IM) said hopes were raised about a final solution to the peace process – it began when the outfit declared a ceasefire in July 1997 – when the Framework Agreement was signed on August 3, 2015.

But there has been no headway in the three years since the agreement was signed, it said.

Going slow

The Indian government has been going slow in taking a stand on the core issues, compelling the group’s chairman Q. Tuccu and general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah to write to the Prime Minister about the doubt and confusion on whether an honourable political solution can be arrived at, the NSCN(IM) said.

“This is in reference to the core issues like Naga flag and constitution, which

are yet to be agreed upon between the two parties. Without these two core issues solved, any solution would be far from honourable because Naga pride and identity is deeply entrenched here,” the outfit said.

Framework Agreement

The Framework Agreement, initiated and signed by former NSCN(IM) chairman Isak Chishi Swu, was believed to have taken the peace process to a critical stage.

Neither the Centre nor the outfit, however, has divulged the contents of the agreement.

The Centre had a year ago insisted that the peace process would be incomplete if at least six other Naga extremist groups, some of whom are dormant, were not taken on board the negotiations.

Modi launches Bahrain temple project

Prime Minister says the 200-year-old Krishna temple manifests strong ties between the two nations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MANAMA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a \$4.2-million redevelopment project for the 200-year-old Sri Krishna temple here, and said it manifested the strong ties between India and Bahrain.

Mr. Modi, the first Indian Prime Minister to visit the key Gulf nation, offered prayers at the Shreenathji temple, the oldest temple in the region, and bought *prasad* with a RuPay card, which he launched in the UAE on Saturday.

“Spent time at Bahrain’s Shreenathji Temple. This is among the oldest temples in the region and manifests the strong ties between India and Bahrain,” Mr. Modi tweeted and shared some of the blessed moments.

Redevelopment project

The Prime Minister then unveiled a plaque, officially launching the redevelopment project of the iconic temple.

He greeted and interacted



Narendra Modi waves at the crowd at the Bahrain National Stadium in Manama. • REUTERS

with the Indian diaspora, who came to witness the event at the temple.

“Thank you Bahrain for the warmth and affection. PM @narendramodi concludes his historic visit with prayers at the 200-year-old Shreenathji Temple in #Manama, the oldest temple in

the region. The temple reflects the pluralism of Bahraini society,” External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said in a tweet.

The facelift for the temple in Manama will kick off later this year.

The \$4.2-million redeve-

lopment project will be on a piece of land measuring 16,500 sq.ft and the new four-floor structure covering 45,000 sq.ft will have an overall height of 30 metres.

There are also facilities for traditional Hindu marriage ceremonies and other rituals, promoting Bahrain as

Pardon for 250 Indian prisoners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MANAMA

Bahrain pardoned 250 Indian prisoners on Sunday, during the maiden visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“In a kind and humanitarian gesture, the Government of Bahrain has pardoned 250 Indians serving sentences in Bahrain,” the Prime Minister’s Office tweeted.

Mr. Modi expressed gratitude for the pardon.

a wedding destination and boosting tourism.

The temple corridors will be adorned with paintings by various Indian and Bahraini artists and people of all faiths are welcome.

Nearly 3,50,000 Indian nationals, mostly from Kerala, live in Bahrain.

CVC sets up panel to probe bank fraud

Will investigate fraud of over ₹50 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has constituted the Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF) headed by former Vigilance Commissioner T.M. Bhasin to examine bank fraud of over ₹50 crore and recommend action.

The panel in its previous avatar was called the Advisory Board on Bank, Commercial and Financial Frauds.

The ABBF, formed in consultation with the RBI, would function as the first level of examination of all large fraud cases before recommendations or references are made to the investigative agencies by the respective public sector

banks (PSBs), the CVC said in an order.

The four-member board’s jurisdiction would be confined to those cases involving the level of officers of General Manager and above in the PSB in respect of an allegation of a fraud in a borrowing account, it said.

Lenders would refer all large fraud cases above ₹50 crore to the board and on receipt of its recommendation or advice, the bank concerned would take further action in such matter, it said.

“The Central Bureau of Investigation may also refer any case or matter to the board where it has any issue or difficulty or in technical matters with the PSB concerned,” it added.

Pranab expresses concern over state of economy

He says no lessons have been learnt from past scandals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Former President Pranab Mukherjee has expressed concern over certain negative trends in the economy.

In a subtle critique while delivering the annual lecture of the Association of Corporate Advisers and Executives here on Saturday, the seasoned politician said the economy had not learnt a lesson from scandals and frauds.

In a direct reference to the irregularities at Punjab National Bank over Nirav Modi’s massive fraud and serious regulatory issues at Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS), he pointed out the gaping “systemic” loopholes.



In the last couple of years, the frequency and scale of frauds revealed to stakeholders and the public at large have been astonishing

PRANAB MUKHERJEE
Former President

the fore, the burning questions about loopholes in the system, accountability, risk management, etc., are again up for debate in the corporate world,” he said.

He said if the activities of the fraudsters were not put under check, economic development would be stalled.

The promise of a \$5-trillion economy by the current regime depended entirely on external factors, the former President said.

NRC: Supreme Court rejected most of 51 petitions in 6 years

Many individuals and organisations had since 2013 filed petitions challenging one aspect of the NRC or the other

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

An analysis of petitions related to Assam’s National Register of Citizens (NRC) filed in the Supreme Court has revealed that the stakeholders received a favourable verdict in only four of the 51 cases heard since 2013.

Many individuals and organisations had since 2013 filed petitions challenging one aspect of the NRC or the other. But the court narrowed the stakeholders down to 10, including the Centre and the Assam government.

These stakeholders including the All Assam Students’ Union, All Assam Mi-

nority Students’ Union, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, Assam Public Works, Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha, National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Progressive), Indigenous Tribal People’s Federation and Joint Action Committee for Bangali Refugees.

Lawyers representing some of these stakeholders had analysed the NRC-related petitions.

Most significant

Of the four judgments that went in favour of the stakeholders, the most significant was allowing certificates issued by the gram panchayat or executive magistrate to be



On scan: NRC officials verifying documents. • PTI

used as an identity document for claiming citizenship if issued after conducting proper enquiries. The Supreme Court had on No-

vember 30, 2017, set aside an order of the Gauhati High Court that invalidated such certificates.

The overruling of the High Court’s order provided relief to at least 29 lakh rural women in the State, who use the document to establish linkage with fathers and husbands.

‘Major verdict’

“Another major verdict was on December 12, 2018, whereby the apex court rejected the NRC authority’s plea that documents issued after 2015 would not be accepted. Allowing the documents irrespective of the date of issue enabled many of those ex-

cluded from the draft NRC to re-apply,” a lawyer for one of the stakeholders said.

The third favourable ruling was on November 1, 2018, when the apex court reversed the NRC authority’s move to trim the list of admissible documents from 15 to 10.

The five documents that the NRC authority said could not be relied upon included the NRC of 1951, electoral rolls up to the midnight of March 24, 1971, and citizenship and refugee registration certificates issued by the competent authority.

“Of the 47 petitions that were rejected, the most damaging included acceptance

of the NRC authority’s claim that legacy data have been exchanged or traded, exclusion of declared foreigners, doubtful voters and people with cases pending in Foreigners’ Tribunals, exclusion of people using legacy data by mistake and those with birth certificate errors,” the lawyer said.

Legacy data is a set of pre-1971 documents containing the name of a person from whom lineage is claimed. The analysis also revealed that the Supreme Court heard nine petitions related to the NRC in 2013, seven in 2014, eight in 2017, 15 in 2018 and 12 in 2019 (till August 13).

‘Modi, Shah must spell out their stand on quota’

RSS chief had sought an honest review of the issue, says Chhattisgarh CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Answers must be sought from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat’s comments that there is a need to debate the reservation issue, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said on Sunday.

“If Bhagwat ji says reservation needs an honest review after a dialogue with all stakeholders, let Narendra Modi and Amit Shah tell us whether they too hold a similar view. We need to ask them for answers,” Mr. Baghel said.

He was attending a function organised by the Samwidhan Bachao Sangharsh Samiti on the birth anniversary of B.P. Mandal to felici-



Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel being felicitated by Loktantrik Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav in New Delhi on Sunday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

tate him on his government’s decision to increase reservation for the other backward classes from 14% to 27% and Scheduled Caste quota from 12% to 13%.

Mr. Baghel said reserva-

tion alone will not solve all problems but it is a symbolic move towards ensuring that each section of society gets representation according to its strength.

Attacking the Sangh and

its stand on cow slaughter, Mr. Baghel said, “Mr. Bhagwat doesn’t discuss cow slaughter in Chhattisgarh, because he is aware of the condition of the cow shelters under the 15-year-long BJP regime and how cows starved to death there.”

Critics claim that the announcement to hike the OBC quota has been made with an eye on the upcoming municipal polls and especially after Congress’ defeat in the Lok Sabha poll in the State. The Congress won only one of the 11 Lok Sabha seats in the State. Rejecting any political motive behind the move, Chhattisgarh Congress secretary in-charge Chandan Yadav said, “The Congress government in Chhattisgarh is committed to social justice.”

Lecturer seeks PM’s help

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A former guest lecturer of Delhi University’s Hindu College has sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s intervention in his “arbitrary removal” as the guest faculty of Manipur University (MU), allegedly because of his political ideology.

The MU had on August 6

terminated the service of Ningombam Bupenda Meitei as the guest lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, much before his six-month agreement was to end.

The University had appointed him on June 26.

Mr. Meitei has been associated with the Congress in Manipur.



APPEAL

I, Jennifer Blessey Mano aged 17 years need your support to bring a new hope to my life. I suffer from Acute Myeloid Leukemia and require Rs. 6,00,000/- towards Chemotherapy at Meeanakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Donations sent by Ch / D.D. favouring Meeanakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch / D.D. / NEFT Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No: 60182010063310, IFSC No: SYNB0006018) favouring **WOMEN’S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. (Please do not mention patient name on the cheque).

All Correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 4, Cordell Apartments, O.No. 13, No. 29, Poyyorts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 28235324. E-mail ID: womenswelfare syndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfare syndicate.org

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