

TOWARDS ANTODYAYA
Services & Schemes Under One Roof
115 Saral & Antyodaya Kendras
491
4,000 Atal Sewa Kendras
Information, Public Relations and Languages Department, Haryana www.prharyana.gov.in

Sh. Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION



DUPLICATES: Same tiger counted as two (TATR-21 and TATR-49) in Tadoba Andhari tiger reserve.



UNIDENTIFIABLES: A tiger (BPUR-53) identified by just whiskers in Bandipur. (CORB-123) identified by a tail in Corbett.

Tiger count up but official photos show one in seven could just be a paper tiger

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

ON JULY 29 this year, the government announced its quadrennial tiger survey: 2,967 tigers nationwide and as many as 2,462, almost 83%, of them photographed. This is a jump from the previous survey in 2015 that counted 2,226 tigers and ostensibly photographed 1,635 — almost 73%. The latest photos haven't been made public but officials pointed to photos taken for the previous survey to say that such a high share of tigers being photographed leaves little room for extrapolation or inaccuracy.

THE PROBLEM PHOTOGRAPHS

Photos Annexed	1696
Duplicates	51
Cubs (<1yr)	46
Fewer of single flanks	136
Unidentifiable	49
Unfit Total	282
Unique found	1414
Unique claimed	1635
Gap	221

GALLERY OF QUESTIONS
282 photographs online.
www.indianexpress.com

India's tiger population is undoubtedly on the rebound thanks to better protection and monitoring over the last 15 years. But an investigation of each of the 1,635 and 61 additional photos in the 2015 report by *The Indian Express* puts a question mark on the counting process.

For, by well-established norms of wildlife population estimation, 221 of these "tiger photos" should not have been counted. This works out to 16% over-reporting — in other words, there is one paper tiger for every seven tigers in the data. The survey is done by the Wildlife Institute of India and the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

Both, under the Ministry of Environment, have been doing these counts since 2006-07.

Consider the key findings of the investigation that also involved a survey of the country's top wildlife biologists who work on tigers and were asked to evaluate the photos on different parameters:

DUPLICATES: As many as 51 photos were found to be duplicates — the same tiger

QUESTIONED, OFFICIALS RUSH TO AMEND BUT HOLES REMAIN PAGE 8

MODI LEAVES FOR U.S. TODAY

PM will not discuss Article 370 at UN, it's internal matter: Govt

Trump hints at an announcement in Houston: Could be

Under wraps so far: 252 habeas corpus pleas in J&K HC since August 5

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

FOREIGN SECRETARY Vijay Keshav Gokhale Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is leaving for the US Friday, will not discuss the issue of Article 370 at the United Nations and will focus on development and other issues when he addresses the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 27 morning.

Gokhale said Article 370 is an "internal issue", and the Prime Minister will focus on issues related to development and India's role in shaping the global agenda. "Terrorism is one of the issues, but will not be our focus," he said.

While Pakistan has been trying to internationalise the ending of J&K's special status under Article 370, and plans to raise it at the UNGA, India has maintained that it is an "internal matter".

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KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

THE WRIT of Habeas Corpus is considered as one of the most basic protections a citizen is guaranteed under the Constitution against unchecked state power of taking people into custody without charging them. And the High Courts in the country are specially empowered to issue orders related to this writ, act swiftly — and order the government to produce the detainee before the court and ensure due process of law.

However, between August 16, when the second most senior judge of Supreme Court Justice SA Bobde said that he had a telephonic conversation with the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Gita Mittal, where he said that "BSNL lines

6 PETITIONS A DAY

KEY DATES	PETITIONS FILED
September 3	24
September 5	19
August 28	16
August 31	16
September 13	13

were working well", and September 16, when Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi asked for a report from Justice Mittal on allegations about restrictions accessing the High Court — an

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J&K INVESTOR SUMMIT POSTPONED PAGE 6

Derogatory word against PM is not sedition: Delhi Police to court

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

THE DELHI Police, in an action taken report (ATR) on complaints seeking the charge of sedition against Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar, told a Delhi court Thursday that "mere uttering a derogatory word, without more overt act, against PM of India did not constitute an offence under IPC sections 124-A/153-A".

While Section 124-A relates to sedition, Section 153-A is about promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc, and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony.

Seeking dismissal of the complaint as "no cognizable

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Latest push: Camps in 400 districts for easy loans

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

STATE-OWNED banks and Non Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) will jointly organise loan distribution programmes in 400 districts across the country in the next one month for retail, agriculture and MSME customers, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Thursday after a review meeting with heads of public sector banks.

To provide relief to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the government has advised banks not to treat stressed MSMEs loans as Non Performing Assets (NPAs) till March 31, 2020, and instead work towards timely resolution of these, she said. The relief will be provided under existing guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India.

"We have decided that in 200 districts of the country between now and September 29, there shall be a gathering which the banks will have of the NBFCs with whom they have tied up and given liquidity, and retail customers of the bank or new retail customers, all coming

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States cut traffic fines but raised no objection at GoM

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

WHILE SOME state governments have now objected to the steep increase in penalties for traffic violations under the new Motor Vehicles Act, none of the states, including Gujarat, gave a dissent note or a verbal objection when a Group of Ministers (GoM), comprising state transport ministers, discussed the issue at multiple meetings held over two years.

Last week, the Gujarat government was the first to announce a cut in the penalties for traffic violations, by up to 80 per cent in some cases. Some others, including BJP-ruled

states, have said they will rethink the new law.

"Gujarat, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana — no one objected to the fines. There was no dissent... All the states were totally on board. Kerala was represented by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan at one meeting," said BJP leader Yoonus Khan, who chaired the GoM. He was then the Rajasthan Transport Minister in the Vasundhara Raje government.

The GoM was set up by Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari on March 2, 2016 to deliberate and recommend changes in the Motor Vehicles Act and the Central Motor Vehicles Rules. It submitted its recommendations in a series of

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Chair and pillow taken away, Chidambaram in Tihar until Oct 3

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

NOTING THAT "it is not a case where no case is made out against the accused" and that "investigation is still in progress", a Delhi court Thursday extended the judicial custody of senior Congress leader and former Union Minister P Chidambaram, arrested by the CBI in the INX Media case, till October 3.

When Chidambaram appeared in the Rouse Avenue court of Special Judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar at the end of his two-week judicial custody, his lawyer Kapil Sibal told the judge that Chidambaram does not have a chair in his cell: "His

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Govt's first move to allow foreign univs to set up campuses here

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

THE NARENDRA Modi government has dusted off the then UPA government's plan to allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India by introducing a provision in the Higher Education Commission of India Bill to permit their entry and operation.

The Bill aims to set up a single higher education regulator that will replace the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE). The HRD Ministry is learnt to have circulated the draft law for inter-ministerial consultation this week.

EXPLAINED Many failed attempts

GOVERNMENTS IN past tried to enact legislation for entry, operation and regulation of foreign universities. UPA-II's Foreign Educational Institutions Bill failed to pass muster and lapsed following opposition from BJP, Left, SP.

The Bill, sources said, carries a clause stating that the new Higher Education Commission can permit "highly-reputed

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THE EDITORIAL PAGE

ONE LANGUAGE NOT AN INDIAN IDEA

BY SOWMYA DECHAMMA
PAGE 12

PAGE 1 ANCHOR 25 letters to PM, \$2.4 million, oil surveyor, judge — Howdy!

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 19

WHAT BEGAN as 25 letters sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June, inviting his US visit, has now become a mega event, with \$2.4 million collected by prominent Indian-American business leaders from 40 major donors and hundreds of smaller donors to host him at "Howdy, Modi!" on Sunday.

In June, some of the city's Indian-American professionals heard that Modi would be coming to New York in September for the UN General Assembly meet-

ing. Later that month, they learnt that along with their home, two other cities were in the running — Chicago and Boston — to host him. The India-US negotiations over Iranian oil sanctions had just peaked, and Houston, with 150,000 Indian-Americans, found its main selling point.

"Houston has a very vibrant Indian diaspora and it's a big energy capital. Energy security is a top priority of India," BJP's foreign affairs head Vijay Chauthaiwale said from Houston.

"India needs energy, and Houston has lots of energy. There could be a strategic partnership," said Jugal Malani, chair of the

Texas India Forum. Malani said the Forum was created in July specifically for organising the Modi rally, because they "didn't want to be associated with any other existing organisation". "None of us have experience of putting together an event like this," he said.

Along with a main committee of six members, there are 20 working committees, adding up to roughly 200 people. And then there is an army of volunteers.

From the owner of a company that surveys oil fields, to the founder of Chinmaya Mission in Houston, a Congress lobbyist, a county judge — the drivers of the two-month long preparation are



A billboard outside NRG Stadium, Houston. PTI

focussed on boosting India-US trade relations. Several of the prominent donors and organisers are wealthy business owners of oil, gas and energy companies, as well as corporate donors like Walmart and OYO USA.

After moving to the US in 1981 to work for his brother-in-law's small business, Malani began his own industrial products company 17 years later. For the last two decades, he has been the CEO of the Unique Industrial Product Company, supplying metal products domestically and globally.

"Houston is the energy capital of the world, and India consumes 10% of the world's energy," Forum spokesperson

Gitesh Desai said. "It has an interest to go to Houston and talk to the energy leaders."

In 2008, Desai was the president of the Indo-American Political Action Committee, a lobbying group that has contributed almost equally to Democrats and Republicans, according to online records. It lobbied for the India-US nuclear deal as well as auditing of US aid to Pakistan, said Desai, who received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award in 2019.

Besides Malani, funding came from Swatantra Jain, who serves as senior vice president and director of petrochemical

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