

DALITS/SCHEDULED CASTES - 2012

January to December 2012

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Human Rights Documentation*
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Opp. for probe into dalit killing (2)

Patna: An alleged “fake” encounter of a dalit youth in Bihar by the Special Task Force on suspicion of his being an active Maoist sympathiser has led the Opposition parties to seek a CBI probe and adequate compensations to the slain 20-year-old’s poor family. Pancham Paswan, who reportedly came from Chennai to visit his family in Navadiha village in Gaya district a month ago, was allegedly shot dead by policemen outside his thatched hut on December 23 evening. The Opposition RJD and the Congress have insisted that the youth was innocent and that his murder illustrated the persecution of Bihar’s disadvantaged social sections by the JD(U)-BJP government. Talking about his only son’s unfortunate death, Ramdev Paswan, 70, told this newspaper: “He had been working at Lakshmi Hardware Shop in Chennai for four years and came home on November 23. He was brutally shot dead by a group of policemen who accused him of having given food to the Maoists.” When Pancham and his wife Julie Devi slept along with their two-month-old daughter after dinner, some armed policemen jumped into their hut by breaking open its thatched roof and asked them to reveal the whereabouts of the Maoists. “They insisted we had given a dinner with fish dish to some Maoists. When we denied, they dragged my husband outside and one of them shot him dead,” said Julie, weeping, her baby daughter sleeping in her arms. Senior RJD leader Abdul Bari Siddiqui, who introduced journalists to the grieving family, said: “This case is clearly another example of the state government’s persecution of the deprived sections of society. This fake encounter must be probed by the CBI and his family must be compensated and early for losing its innocent son to the police bullets.” Julie Devi wrote to the Bihar Human Rights Commission on Wednesday for a probe into the alleged murder. The Congress said it would submit petitions to Bihar governor Devanand Konwar and CM Nitish Kumar to order a CBI probe. (Asian Age 1/12/11)

Report uncovers deep-rooted resentment against Dalits (2)

BANGALORE, January 2, 2012: A group of Bangalore-based activists claim to have uncovered a deep-rooted resentment against Dalits by the Reddy community in Marasuru village of Anekal taluk that witnessed caste riots on December 18, 2011. Media reports had said that the killing of a local leader Ramesh Reddy on December 18 by Krishnappa from the Dalit community led to heightened tensions between the two groups and rioting. Krishnappa, a history-sheeter, wanted to construct an Ambedkar Bhavan next to the house of Pushkarni Reddy. The latter sought the support of other members of his community to oppose the project. An argument between Krishnappa and Pushkarni Reddy’s supporters resulted in an attack on Krishnappa. He retaliated by shooting Pushkarni in “self-defence”, media reports had said. However, a fact-finding report compiled by human rights activists Senthilir, Nagari Babaiah, Nagaragere Ramesh and Shivalingam indicates that the killing became an excuse to target the Dalits in the village who bore the brunt of the rioting. The report also claims: “It is obvious that the landed gentry is still not able to come out of the feudal mindset and hence, cannot tolerate the presence of the Dalits leading independent lives unlike in the past. Some two, three decades ago there was the bonded labour system, which is now a matter of the past. In fact, some Dalit youths, including Krishnappa, had become economically successful. The proposal to construct the Ambedkar Bhavan, which is a mark of Dalit assertion, is an eyesore for the landed class.” However, Bangalore Rural Superintendent of Police D. Prakash told The Hindu that Krishnappa has a history of violating the law and is an accused in at least four cases of dacoity and extortion in the district. But he concurred with the finding that 24 houses of Dalits were looted and torched by a mob comprising members of the Reddy community, traditional landlords in the area. He also contested two claims made in the activists’ report. “It was a 12 to 15-member mob not 70 to 80 as claimed by them [activists]. And the entire incident happened before I reached the spot with my men,” he said and added that eight of the rioters have been arrested. However, Mr. Babaiah alleged that those arrested were not the main people behind the rioting and the guilty are

* This is a collection of previously published news and views from the print as well as the electronic media, whose reference marked at the end of each news items. Department of Documentation and Library (DDL) of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi neither claims to the veracity of the facts in the news nor subscribes to the views expressed.

roaming scot free. The report also claims that senior police officers had reached the spot by the time the rioting began but “were not in a position to act”. The team also notes: “The MLA from the area [A. Narayanswamy] is a Dalit and Minister for Social Welfare. But the Dalits are unhappy with him as they believe that he is only supportive of the powerful Reddys as they also belong to his party [Bharatiya Janata Party], and does not care for the Dalits.” (The Hindu 2/1/12)

Activists threaten to intensify stir if made snana is not banned (2)

MANGALORE, January 2, 2012: Speakers at a seminar on made snana here on Sunday demanded that the Government abolish the practice across the State, failing which protests against the ritual would be “intensified”. The Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (Ambedkarvada), the Democratic Youth Federation of India, and the Sahamatha Vedike, which organised a seminar, resolved to intensify their protest by going to all temples where the ritual was practised, including Kuke Subrahmanya Temple next year during the Champa Shasti festival. Actor and progressive thinker G.K. Govinda Rao drew a distinction between “dharma” and “vijñana (science)” as opposed to “matha dharma (dharma of maths)” and “tantrajñana (technology)”. Buddha, Jesus Christ, Prophet Muhammad, Allama Prabhu, Basaveshwara, Kabir, and Purandaradasa were humble. They never said that they had the last word on “dharma”. Similarly, neither Newton nor Einstein said they had the last word on scientific knowledge. “Matha dharma” was a system to maintain the status quo and which was set up to bring people within their control, he said. About 90 per cent of the people was simply “never comfortable” with the idea of democracy and the Constitution because it spoke about equality for Dalits and for women. To them, equality for Dalits and for women was a threat. Matha dharma supported this notion. “Pejawar Swamiji said that made snana has been in existence for thousands of years. But he does not have the humility to say that for that very reason, the ritual warrants scrutiny. We must re-examine our history,” Mr. Rao said. If dharma demanded that people give up dignity, “we must have the moral authority (atma shakti) to reject such a dharma,” Mr. Rao said. He said that “matha dharma” and “politics of the Vidhana Soudha” should not be mixed, whereas the dharma of Mahatma Gandhi and his politics were worth emulating. Similarly, for Ambedkar too life was always a pursuit of dharma. The priority for society should be to oppose “matha dharma”. Mr. Rao said even untouchability was thousands of years old. “(Do) you know why (the) Pejawar Swami does not demand that it continue? Because he will go to jail,” Mr. Rao said. Coordinator of the Centre for Research on Kanakadasa at the Mangalore University B. Shivaram Shetty said the protest and felicitation of A.V. Nagesh, a Malekudiya man accused of assaulting K.S. Shivaramu, president, Karnataka Rajya Hindulida Vargagala Jagruta Vedike, was a kind of cultural politics. There were attempts to conflate a Brahmanical practice with Hinduism. Mr. Shivaramu said the report submitted to the Government on the issue by the Department of Social Welfare recommended that pankti bheda (serving food to Brahmins and non-Brahmins separately) be stopped, and demanded that the Government implement the report. He said that if pankti bheda was stopped, made snana would stop automatically. He said that if it was not stopped, next year, hundreds of people would come to Kuke Subrahmanya and demand that they be served meals in the precincts of the temple. (The Hindu 2/1/12)

Dalit forum's demand (2)

KOLLAM, January 3, 2012: The post of president of the five devaswom boards under the State government should be allotted on a rotation basis to members of five communities, Kerala Dalit Federation State president P. Ramabhadran has said. Inaugurating the State committee meeting of the Kerala Dalit Yuvajana Federation on Monday, he said the system would help eliminate the alleged community discrimination in the boards. The president's post of the Travancore Devaswom Board would fall vacant in June and it should be allocated to a person from the scheduled caste, Vishwakarma, or Dheevara caste, he said. The system of devaswom boards getting monopolised certain communities should end, he added. The suggestion of Nair Service Society for the constitution of a special agency for recruitments to the devaswom boards should be welcomed if it ensured transparency. (The Hindu 3/1/12)

Dalit dies of starvation & illness in Bhadrak (2)

While the world has been celebrating the New Year over the last several days, few bother to take pity on Radhu Das, a Dalit, whose world has fallen apart. A land oustee of Salandi-Nalia river renovation project in Bhadrak, Radhu died on December 9 of starvation and illness without any knowledge of the laws that protect his rights. The only muddy house of the family was demolished forcibly by the Government while executing the river renovation project. With all fear in their eyes, the family members narrated the horrible

episode of demolition of the house along with the houses of the neighbours, which was done without any notice and compensation. Even though they heard that some villagers had started getting compensation but Radhu's family members never got it. Yes, it was Radhanna, a rights activist and lawyer, who had visited their house and brought a bit of smile. Radhanna had gone to the local land acquisition office and sought a clarification as to why the Dalit family had not been paid its due compensation. The officials had assured that they would do it soon. Radhanna had also done his best so that the family gets some grant under IAY to build a house. But before getting any benefit, Radhu died in his kuccha house in Kanpada village under Tihidi block. His last rites were conducted with much difficulty by the handicapped son and the family members. The family members don't know why the New Year is worth celebrating as starvation and ailments have been their permanent allies. None of the schemes, except the Rs 2 per kg rice, has reached the family so far. (Pioneer 4/1/12)

Dalit sugarcane worker burnt to death, one held (2)

Chincholi Sindphana (Maharashtra), January 11, 2012: A day after 32-year-old Dalit sugarcane labourer Shahadev Tayad died of burns, the accused Vashisht Dhake who allegedly burnt him was held by the police on Monday, but the Tayad's family's efforts to come to terms with the loss have just begun. According to the police, Dhake burnt Tayad on Sunday for not returning Rs.5,000 at his residence in Chincholi Sindphana village in Beed's Georai taluka. An offence under Section 302 of the IPC had been registered against Dhake, and the police will also consider booking him under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, police said. Tayad lived with his wife, four children aged between one and seven, parents, a widowed sister and her three children. With his loss, the number of earning hands in the family is reduced to two: his sister and wife. With a population of barely 500, the village is home to a majority of Maratha landowners and a handful of landless Dalit families like that of Shahadev Tayad. Dhake belongs to the Maratha clan. Narrating the incident, Mhasa Tayad states that while his son was being beaten and burnt, nobody came to his rescue. "Everyone just stood and watched the tamasha [show]. I saw Dhake pour kerosene on him, and I ran and wrapped him in a blanket and tried to douse the fire," he says. "We had no enemies. We still don't. But we just hope that Vashisht Dhake suffers what we are suffering now." Dhake, who allegedly burnt Shahadev Tayad to death, was arrested by the Beed police on Monday night. Georai Deputy SP Jyoti Khirsagar told The Hindu on Tuesday that the police were on the lookout for Dhake, after Shahadev Tayad named him in his dying declaration. Tayad, who had suffered 93 per cent burns, died on Monday afternoon. Dhake was arrested from Latur on Monday night where he had been hiding. "Prima facie, according to the dying declaration and the Panchnama made at the spot, we are naming Dhake as the prime accused. The rest of the details will be made clear after interrogation," Ms. Khirsagar said. Dhake will be produced in a local court on Wednesday, where the police will be asking for the custody. According to Mhasa, Dhake threatened to kill Shahadev twice before and had beaten him up on two occasions last month "When I told him that we would file a police complaint, he threatened to kill me as well," he says. Approaching the police is what the family repents now. Shahadev Tayad was perhaps like one of the many labourers in the region: landless, uneducated and bonded year after year. Everyone in the Tayad household works as a labourer. Shahadev's wife Vandana works as a sugarcane labourer and was away in Sangli at the time of the incident. She too has borrowed Rs. 50,000, pledging labour for six months in return. The family stated that it has not got any work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS). "For six months we work in the sugarcane fields, and for the rest of the six months we work as farm labour in Beed, earning Rs.70 a day," Mhasa states. "The family only manages to save Rs.10,000 for the year's food and other supplies," Shahadev's sister Rukmini says. "I now fear for the lives of my children. What am I going to do with all four of them," 30-year-old Vandana asks with a blank look, unable to come to terms with reality. Sitting beside her, her only daughter Kalindi is telling her younger brother that father has gone out of town and will be returning soon. Visiting the family, Additional District Collector Shivanand Taksale is surprised that the family does not qualify to be Below Poverty Line (BPL). "If they don't, then who does," he asks. "We have issued a compensation of Rs.1.5 lakh [under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989], and we will try and give them as much as help as possible under the government schemes," Mr. Taksale told The Hindu outside the Tayad residence. He stated that as a victim of the Atrocity Act, the family could be given a house. "Under the Sanjay Gandhi National Social Assistance programme, the widow can be given Rs.600 per month. The family can also be considered for the Aam Admi Bima Yojana (covering death in rural landless households), and be given

Rs.75,000 in compensation,” he stated. Asked about the government schemes that could have perhaps helped Shahadev Tayad live, Mr. Taksale said, “We have all the schemes in place. The implementation needs to be worked out. By next year, Beed will be migration free. We are doing our best to encourage workers in the MGNREGS. This year, Rs.26 crore has been spent on the implementation of the MNREGS in Beed alone.” (The Hindu 11/1/12)

Dalit associations condemn violent protest (2)

VISAKHAPATNAM, January 12, 2012: Dalit associations in the city on Wednesday staged a dharna at Ambedkar Junction near LIC office condemning the untoward incidents at the GVMC during slum-dwellers' protest. They garlanded the statue of Ambedkar and raised slogans against those who created trouble on Monday during their protest. Corporators Koppula Venkata Rao, K. Vengala Rao, and Polipalli Jyothi and representatives of several dalit organisations were present. Mr. Vengala Rao said POW leader Lakshmi was projecting herself as a champion of dalits' cause and wanted firm action to be taken against her for Monday's incidents. Those who were in no way connected with Indiranagar issue were behind the trouble. She was trying to mislead people in the garb of dalits' cause, he alleged. He and other leaders met Municipal Commissioner B. Ramanjaneyulu later. Mr. Ramanjaneyulu said only 22 slums were shifted as there was no alternative. Of the 741 slums, 354 would be developed in situ. Mr. Venkata Rao, Ms. Jyothi, K. Kanna Rao (corporator), Puhle Ambekdar Samskrutika Samakhya convener and co-conveners P. Subba Rao and G. Arjun, J Rajagopal (Reli Sangham), Bharat Nastika Samajam president Jayagopal were among those who met the Commissioner. (The Hindu 12/1/12)

Dalit woman paraded naked in Chavan's hometown (2)

PUNE, January 12, 2012: A 42-year-old Dalit woman was beaten, stripped and paraded naked by five persons belonging to an upper caste at Mulgaon village in Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan's hometown of Karad. The incident occurred on Monday afternoon. Five persons have been arrested so far. An upper caste girl had eloped with the victim's son over a month ago. Upset at this, the girl's parents and relatives assaulted the woman publicly in the village in Karad taluka of Satara district, police said. The victim said the police refused to entertain her complaint when she approached them on Monday. “They told me that such incidents keep happening in our community, and that they cannot do anything about it,” she told a television news channel. Narrating the incident, she said: “The women pushed me to the ground, took off my sari and started beating me up with chappals and a stick. They pulled my hair. This continued for almost two hours.” With the help of Dalit activists, she was admitted to a hospital at Karad on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, five persons of the family which assaulted the Dalit woman, including the girl's parents, were arrested. Patan Deputy Superintendent of Police F.M. Naikwadi told The Hindu that the accused were booked under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Speaking to reporters at Chandrapur, Home Minister R.R. Patil called for a strict investigation. “All the offenders will be brought to book.” (The Hindu 12/1/12)

Buses damaged in two districts in protest over Dalit leader's murder (2)

THANJAVUR, January 12, 2012: A private bus was damaged allegedly by members of Devendrakula Velalar Kootamaippu near Papanasam on Tuesday night following the murder of Pasupathi Pandiyan, president of the Kootamaippu in Dindigul on Tuesday. Driver and conductor of the bus were attacked. Window panes of the bus were damaged in stone pelting. Police rushed to the spot and arrested two persons. Four buses were damaged by the cadre of Tamil Nadu Devendira Kula Velalar Kootamaippu here in the district late Tuesday night. This was in condemnation of the murder of Pasupathi Pandian, state president, Tamil Nadu Devendira Kula Velalar Kootamaippu, who was hacked to death in Dindigul on Tuesday. Enraged cadre intercepted three state transport corporation buses in Vedaranyam and one in Puthur, injuring a passenger, drivers and conductors of the buses. An SETC bus from Nagapattinam to Vedaranyam was intercepted around midnight on Tuesday, and the driver and a passenger were injured in the violence that ensued. Similarly, two other buses from Thirupoondi to Vedaranyam were stopped at Andarkadu here with the cadre inflicting grievous injuries on two drivers and conductors. All buses were off roads till Wednesday morning. According to sources, the Dalit leader was in Vedaranyam just a week ago to protest the alleged 'foisting of cases' by the police on the outfit's district secretary. As of Wednesday evening, 40 persons were named accused in the violence, and 10 persons have been arrested. Police refused permission to the outfit's cadre to take out a procession mourning the killing of Pandian. (The Hindu 12/1/12)

Samiti opposes proposal to teach Bhagavad Gita in schools (2)

Bangalore, January 13, 2012: Members of the Karnataka Dalit Sangarsh Samiti took out a protest in Bangalore on Thursday against the State Government's proposal to teach the Bhagavad Gita in schools. "Introduction of the Bhagavad Gita in schools is against the Constitution. It's a political agenda, and forcing this on students of other religions is wrong," said N. Murthy, State president of the samiti. According to him, if the Bhagavad Gita was introduced in schools, people of other communities would be prompted to demand that their religious texts also be made part of the school curriculum. "If this happens, instead of teaching the students science, technology, educational institutions would end up teaching students only the religious texts," said Mr. Murthy. Following the allegation that a right-wing group was behind the hoisting of the Pakistani flag in Sindagi town in Bijapur district recently, the samiti called for a Statewide ban on the Sangh Parivar and the groups affiliated to it. The protesters also alleged that the State Government encouraged practices such as 'made snana' which is propagated by the maths in the State. The protesters later submitted a memorandum to Governor H.R. Bhardwaj. (The Hindu 13/1/12)

Fear grips Dalit families in Mandya village. (2)

MYSORE, January 13, 2012: Dalit residents of Abalavadi village in Mandya district are living in fear following the "honour killing" of Suvarna, a girl belonging to the Vokkaliga community, who defied caste norms by having a relationship with Govinda Raju, a Dalit. When the couple continued to meet, Govinda Raju and Suvarna were beaten black and blue and Suvarna was alleged hanged by her relatives. The incident reportedly took place on November 6, 2011, but it came to light only on January 5, 2012 after Thimmappa, Govinda Raju's brother, lodged a police complaint. Speaking to The Hindu here on Thursday, Mr. Thimmappa said that he, his mother, Tholasamma, and sister-in-law Tayamma had been moving from place to place as they feared for their lives. "We could not lodge a complaint earlier because we were constantly moving from one place to another fearing retaliation. But I was also anguished about the death of the girl and the treatment meted out to my brother. I finally decided to lodge a complaint to bring the issue into the public domain. He said there were nearly 100 Dalit families in Abalavadi, but the dominant 'caste Hindus' had warned them of dire consequences if they reported the incident to anyone. Fearing violence and retaliation, they remained silent, says Mr. Thimmappa. "Though we have no role in Suvarna's death, my family feels persecuted. Even if we return to the village, we fear social boycott as the other Dalit families have been told not to entertain us, invite us for get-togethers or even provide employment as daily wagers," says Mr. Thimmappa. "But I am determined to go back to the village and earn my livelihood," he adds. However, neither Mr. Thimmappa nor anybody else from his family have seen Govinda Raju for the last two months. Meanwhile, the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Samata Vedike, Backward Classes Forum and other groups have condemned the incident and sought a probe by the CBI. General secretary of PUCL Lakshminarayana said the casteist nature and feudal mindset in rural areas was a reality and one could not wish it away. It called for a concerted, sustained effort through a mass movement to eliminate the scourge. These organisations will stage a dharna in the city on Friday and also urge Inspector-General of Police (Southern Range) A.S.N. Murthy and Director-General and Inspector-General of Police Shankar Bidari to take up the case seriously. The Akhila Bharata Janavadi Mahila Sanghatane has condemned the "honour killing" and has sought a probe by the Criminal Investigation Department into the incident. Addressing a press conference at Maddur on Thursday, officer-bearers of the organisation, including State vice-president K. Neela and State joint secretary C. Kumari, came down on the police for their failure to prevent the incident. They said the incident occurred on November 6, 2011, but the police failed to take suo motu action immediately to ascertain the truth and arrest the accused. The members said that the incident brought to the fore the feudal mindset prevailing in the village. The members also sought the resignation of Mandya district in-charge Minister R. Ashok and alleged that he was trying to hush up the matter by attributing the girl's death to suicide. The members said they would stage a dharna in Mandya on Sunday. (The Hindu 13/1/12)

Five arrested for stripping a Dalit woman (2)

KOLHAPUR, January 13, 2012: The police have arrested five members of a family, including three women for allegedly beating up a Dalit woman and had made her parade naked in Mulgaon in Satara district. According to the police, the Dalit woman was a widow and her son had an affair with the daughter of a non-Dalit. They wanted to get married but both the families were opposed to it, following which they eloped. Enraged by the incident, the girl's family members caught hold of the youth's mother on January

9, when she had gone out to fetch water, beat her up, stripped her, and took her around the village. Later the wounded woman was taken to a hospital. Satara is home district of the Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan. The Republican Party of India's chief Ramdas Athavale has demanded stern action against the accused . (The Hindu 13/1/12)

“No safety for Dalit leaders” (2)

TUTICORIN, January 13, 2012: Thol. Thirumavalavan, president, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi paid homage to the departed Dalit leader C. Pasupathi Pandian, on Thursday, at Alangarathattu, where the last rites were performed. He met the bereaved family and consoled them. Speaking to reporters, he said safety was not being provided to leaders affiliated to Dalit movements across Tamil Nadu. Due to lapse in security, Pasupathi Pandian was murdered by a gang of killers. Earlier also attempts had been made on his life and had the government extended protection to the Dalit leader, he would not have been murdered in a gruesome manner, Thirumavalavan charged. He also condemned the police for not having arrested the culprits. Regarding the violence that broke out during the funeral procession of the Dalit leader in Tuticorin, he said adequate precautionary measures were not taken. Though it was obvious that problems leading to lawlessness might arise, deployment of police personnel was insufficient to tackle the situation, he added. The murder of C. Pasupathi Pandian is highly condemnable, said K. Krishnasamy, president of Puthiya Tamilagam here today. Speaking to reporters here on Thursday, he said that the State government should extend a solatium of Rs. 10 lakh to the bereaved family and should provide free education to the two children of the slain Dalit leader. He also expressed his concern over the violence that erupted during the funeral procession leading to destruction of private and public properties. He charged that it was a deliberate attempt by some anti social elements and the Dalits of Devendra Kula Velalar Kootamaipu should not be made scapegoats. “Hence, police should initiate necessary action against such elements”, he urged. “Since communal harmony is non-existent here and most of the people living in the southern region of Tamil Nadu are educationally backward and economically deprived even after sixty years of independence, riots are a common occurrence”, he said. (The Hindu 13/1/12)

‘Would they have tortured me the same way had I not been a Dalit?’ (2)

Karad (Maharashtra), January 14, 2012: Rekha was assaulted because her son allegedly eloped with a Maratha girl Four days after she was beaten up, stripped and paraded in her own village, 42-year-old Dalit widow Rekha Arun Chavan wonders if she would have lived a life of more dignity had she been born in an upper caste. Rekha was assaulted because her son Amol allegedly eloped with a Maratha girl Anita Desai from Mulgaon village in Karad, Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan's hometown. Relatives of the girl confessed to The Hindu that they had indeed beaten her up. Bai aahe ka kutri? Am I woman or a dog to be beaten up like that,” Rekha asked this correspondent while she lay in a bed on Friday afternoon in Karad's Krishna Hospital. “About 12 persons of the Desai family assaulted me for one and a half hours. They called me names and swore at me for being from a lower caste. Would they have tortured me the same [way] had I not been a Dalit,” she asked. She had no clue about her 22-year-old son Amol's relationship with 17-year-old Anita, their neighbour. Speaking to The Hindu in Mulgaon village, where the incident happened, Anita's cousin Bhimrao Desai said, “What is wrong? How would anyone else react if their daughter had run away with a lower caste man?” So far, five persons from the Desai household have been arrested in the case, and are under police custody. The Desais are Marathas. According to Rekha, the village always lives in fear of the Marathas. Nobody speaks against them. There are about 25 Dalit families, and 100 Maratha families, she said. “When I was being beaten up, everyone just watched. They want to live safely in the village,” she said, showing the black and blue marks on the thighs, back and hands. Rekha said she had been ostracised by the villagers, even from her community, on the orders of the Marathas. She owns a small provision store. She lost her husband 22 years ago. Like every village in Maharashtra, Mulgaon also boasts a ‘Tanta Mukti Samiti’ (committee to resolve disputes) under the much talked about Mahatma Gandhi Tanta Mukti Gaon Yojana (dispute-free village scheme). A dispute like this should have been identified and resolved at the village level. However, as Bhimrao Desai reveals, the head of the committee is also from the Desai community. “When things are going wrong in your own house, what can the committee do,” he asks. Rekha's son left the house stating that he was going to Pune for a job. “He left on December 13. I haven't heard of him since,” she said. Anita went missing a day after. Since then, Rekha was threatened repeatedly. Her nephew Sharad and sister-in-law Surekha were also beaten up. While Sharad has lodged a police complaint, Surekha was too scared to take the step. It is also perhaps a sense of guilt that stopped her. “Amol had told me before leaving. He

wanted me to give his mobile phone to Anita and help her hide her bag, I had conveyed the message to her,” Surekha said. When attempts to get the information about her son from her relatives failed, the Desais targeted her, Rekha says. I kept begging them to leave me, and I repeatedly told them that I didn't know about his whereabouts. But nobody listened. Both the men and women were merciless,” she stated. In Mulgaon, though, there is a sense of acceptance of the atrocity. “Such things [inter-caste marriages] can happen in cities, but even we don't feel good that it is happening in our own village,” Eknath Chavan, also a Dalit, said. “We know it is permitted by law but we cannot be OK with it,” he said. (The Hindu 14/1/12)

BSP chief places her bets on OBC-Muslim combination (2)

LUCKNOW, January 16, 2012: Confident that her core support base of Dalits will not desert her in the coming Assembly elections, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati has placed her bets on the OBC-Muslim combination to return to power in the State. On Sunday, she declared the list of all the 403 BSP candidates. She, however, said the list was final. While 88 members of the Scheduled Castes have been given ticket (there are 85 reserved constituencies in the State), the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) account for 113 and Muslims 85. Brahmins follow next, with 74 nominations and Kshatriyas (Thakurs) 33. “Members of the Vaishya, Kayastha and Punjabi communities have also been represented in the list,” Ms. Mayawati told reporters at the BSP headquarters here. The day marked her 56th birthday. Ms. Mayawati said the BSP would contest the polls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab on its own and would not have truck with any party. This time, persons with clean image and those committed to the BSP's movement have been preferred while selecting candidates. Referring to the ticket distribution in 2007, she said ticket was given to wrong persons who hoodwinked “simple” party leaders and who pursued their selfish motives. Blaming these elements for defaming the BSP, Ms. Mayawati said they were also responsible for “corrupting” the old and committed leaders of the party. The Chief Minister said she was compelled to take action against several Ministers and MLAs, who “have also been denied ticket.” Their activities threatened to derail the BSP movement. “Commitment to the BSP movement has been given top priority in deciding the candidates' names,” she noted. Representation had been given to “sarv samaj” (all sections of society) in ticket distribution. Interestingly, unlike in the 2007 polls, this time there was no mention of the ‘social engineering’ formula (broadly understood as a combination of Dalits and Brahmins). It was a key component that was responsible for the formation of the Mayawati government in May 2007. ‘Social engineering’ has been substituted by ‘sarv samaj’ as Ms. Mayawati aims to retain power this year. A 28-page signed appeal to voters in a booklet form was released by Ms. Mayawati on the occasion — the BSP does not release election manifesto. In her appeal, the BSP president has asked people, particularly the cadres, to ensure the formation a BSP government on the principle of ‘sarvjan hitaya, sarvjan sukhaya.’ (The Hindu 16/1/12)

Pro-Dalit organisations lack objectives, focus' (2)

Chitradurga, January 16, 2012: Dalit writer K.B. Siddaiah has criticised the increasing number of pro-Dalit organisations, equating them with “misguided children”, lacking any specific objectives or focus. Speaking after inaugurating the district unit of the Dalit Sahitya Parishat here on Sunday, he said: “Though there are innumerable pro-Dalit organisations, most of them have lost track of their objective. There is a need to introspect to what extent pro-Dalit agitations have yielded results.” “In Karnataka, I strongly feel that we neither have true pro-Dalit agitations nor Dalit writers who can provide a platform for a Dalit revolution,” Mr. Siddaiah said. “We should accept this reality for the sake of course-correction,” he said. He said most of the present Dalit writers were “corrupt” and alleged that most of them had lost the strength to speak for Dalits. . Mr. Siddaiah said certain sections were trying to destroy the very aspirations in the Indian Constitution framed by B.R. Ambedkar. He said it was time Dalit organisations united “to protect the integrity and the aspirations of the Constitution.” He urged Dalits to be fearless and think boldly like social reformers such as Allama Prabhu and Basaveshwara. Taking a dig at the Dalit writers who felt that learning English was essential for Dalits to become prosperous , Mr. Siddaiah said that learning English was important but it was mere illusion to say it will bring prosperity among Dalits. State president of the parishat Arjun Golasangi, district president B. M. Gurunath and honorary president. J. Kariyappa Malagi were present. (The Hindu 16/1/12)

Victims of violence seek steps for safety and resettlement (2)

BERHAMPUR, January 17, 2012: Representatives of 45 Dalit families of Talapartama village in Goudagotha panchayat, Sorada block of Ganjam district, who had left their villages in panic after attacks on their houses, met the police and administrative authorities on Monday demanding measures for their safe return to their village. Around 70 members of the families reached the city. Their representatives met the Deputy Inspector-General (DIG), southern division, R.K. Sharma in the city and Ganjam district Collector Kishen Kumar at district headquarters, Chatrapur. Leader of the group, Nirakar Nayak, said they got positive response and promise for action from these authorities. "We were promised that within next two days measures would be initiated so that our families could return to our village without fear," Mr. Nayak said. They also got assurance that they would be provided security during panchayat elections. It may be noted that the houses of the 45 families of Talapartama village were damaged by miscreants on December 22. The violence was a result of the continuing rivalry between supporters of tribal organisation Lok Sangram Manch (LSM) and Harabhangi Krushak Mahasabha (HKM) which is alleged to be supported by the Sangh Parivar. The LSM activists have alleged that supporters of HKM attacked and damaged houses of their supporters at the village and took away valuables. Following the violence, the families preferred to escape out in panic. All the victims were from religious minority community and the attack occurred before Christmas. The area has been tense over clashes between supporters of these two organisations for past many months. In the first week of September, 2011 a violent clash occurred between the two warring groups near Partama village in which both groups used country-made weapons. It was followed by 36-hour road blockade by LSM supporters in the area. In July last, 37 tribal and Dalit families, who were supporters of the LSM from four villages of Goudagotha panchayat, left their homes after similar violence against them. (The Hindu 17/1/12)

Attacks on Dalits: State's inaction flayed (2)

HYDERABAD, January 18, 2012: The Kula Vivaksha Vyathireka Porata Sangham (KVPS) has criticised the government for not acting against the alleged atrocities against Dalits, including honour deaths in Mahabubnagar and Prakasam districts. KVPS general secretary John Wesley said on Tuesday that two Dalits had sustained injuries when they were attacked by upper caste people for participating in 'bonalu' during the Sankranti festivities at Edutla in Mahabubnagar district. The upper caste people had attacked Dalits with stones. In the same district, a young woman, Madhavi, was made to consume pesticide for falling in love with a Dalit youth in Chowllapally village of Keshampeta mandal. At Jaggarajupalem in Prakasam district, some Dalit labourers were attacked by upper caste landlords, Mr. Wesley stated. The fact that no arrests were made in any of these cases indicated that the government was protecting the upper caste people, he alleged. (The Hindu 18/1/12)

RPI threatens to form squads to prevent atrocities (2)

Kolhapur, January 20, 2012: Ramdas Athavale, Republican Party of India (RPI) leader, said that if the police failed to protect the Dalits and failed to take stern action under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, against those who assaulted Dalits, the RPI would form its own squads. Mr. Athavale was speaking to presspersons on Wednesday after visiting a hospital where a Dalit woman who was stripped and paraded naked at Mulgaon in Satara district was undergoing treatment. He said that the police had arrested only five persons although 12 persons had allegedly stripped the woman and assaulted her. Mr. Athavale said incidents of atrocities against the Dalits had been occurring frequently in various areas in the State and the police were not taking prompt action under the Act, he said. Referring to the attack on the Dalit woman, Mr. Athavale said inter-caste marriages were not uncommon and such marriages should be encouraged by offering Rs. 1 lakh as incentive to the couple and also a job to one of them. (The Hindu 20/1/12)

14 arrested in Dalit murder case (2)

TIRUCHI, January 21, 2012: Fourteen persons were arrested on Wednesday in connection with the murder of a man belonging to the Dalit community near Viswambal Samuthram village, a few kilometres from Uppiliyapuram on Tuesday night. A wordy quarrel between members of two communities during Pongal celebrations led to the murder of S.Kumaresan (33). The deceased, injured and the accused hail from same village. Those arrested include G.Kannan, vice president of Balakrishnampatti town panchayat. (The Hindu 21/1/12)

Number of atrocity cases against Dalits on a high in 2011 (2)

MADURAI, January 22, 2012: The incidences of violence and commitment of atrocities against Dalits were recorded on a high during 2011, which is incidentally the highest during the last decade. In a survey done by Madurai based non-governmental organisation Evidence, which has taken 336 cases of atrocities for study, it was found that 44 Dalits were killed among whom 18 were women. Among the 336 cases of atrocities, 10 Dalits (3 per cent) died under police custody and police firing incidents. Death of 24 Dalits was recorded as death under mysterious circumstances, says the report. Police torture was cited in 24 cases. The organisation had taken up 204 cases for judicial intervention representing the affected, said A. Kathir, executive director, Evidence. During, 2010 in 1,633 cases of atrocities against Dalits, 25 were murder cases, in 2009 there were 1,264 cases against Dalits in which 27 persons were killed, in 2008, there were 1545 cases of atrocities in which there were 34 murders, but in 2011 among the 336 cases, it is indeed shocking to note that 44 murders had taken place. Cases of sexual assault against Dalit women were recorded in 32 cases, caste clashes formed 6 per cent, attempt to murder cases formed 12.5 per cent, among the 6 per cent (19 cases) of caste clashes which occurred in 2011, 4 were from Dindigul and 3 each from Sivaganga and Namakkal. The report also says that among the 336 cases taken up for study, 12 per cent of caste atrocities committed against Dalits was based on land-related issues. Another revealing fact is that among the 44 murders that took place in 2011, 43 per cent of the victims were aged below 30 years. Among the women who were sexually assaulted, 95 per cent was below 30 years. Sivaganga district stands first in the number of atrocities cases pending, the district has 395 cases pending, Madurai district stands second with 358 cases, Villupuram district has 343 cases and Tirunelveli has 277 and Virudhunagar 205. Overall, there are 3,568 atrocity cases committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes pending in the courts in Tamil Nadu. The conviction rate in SC/ST cases here is a meagre 5 per cent and in cases of murder against SC/STs the rate is much lower; its 3.9 per cent. Legal experts, social scientists opine even after two decades of its commencement, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 was not implemented properly. (The Hindu 22/1/12)

30 houses burnt in Bolangir in communal clash (2)

BHUBANESWAR, January 24, 2012: A petty altercation between two persons snowballed into a community clash leading to burning of 30 houses at Lathhore village under Khaprakhol block of Bolangir district on Monday. About 30 families were rendered homeless. The incident took place when a person belonging to lower caste community was accused of stealing a piece of shirt from a shop and offended. The person in a bid to avenge the insult grouped up with friends and attacked shopkeeper. What followed the incident was beyond imagination of everybody. The shopkeeper who belonged to upper caste community took up the matter with fellow villagers. According to sources, upper caste people ganged up and torched houses of lower caste families at Lathhore village in the wee hours. By the time police and fire tenders reached the spot, everything was reduced to ashes. Victims of community clashes were sheltered in a nearby school. Police rounded up about 40 persons in connection with the clash. "We are keeping a close watch on the incident. As many as 40 adults and two juveniles have been arrested in connection with the crime," Director General of Police Manmohan Praharaj said here. Veteran Congress leader Narasingha Mishra, who also hails from Bolangir district, said the administration should make sincere efforts to diffuse the tension otherwise it would be difficult to handle it in future. Reacting sharply State unit of Samajwadi Party has moved the National Human Rights Commission seeking its intervention in the incident. "About 50 houses of the Scheduled Caste people were burnt down by upper caste people on Sunday. About 500 upper caste people went in group and burnt down the houses. Dalit class people have fled from the village fearing threat to their lives," said Rabi Behera, president of State unit of SP. Mr. Behera demanded a compensation of Rs. 5 lakh to each family and relief to victims for one month. (The Hindu 24/1/12)

Amalapuram town remains tense (2)

AMALAPURAM, January 25, 2012: Tension is palpable in this town, heart of Konaseema, a day after the desecration of Ambedkar statues with two caste groups viewing each other with suspicion and those protesting the action of miscreants organising 'rasta roko'. Dalit associations continued to be in angry mood and did not allow police and revenue officials to re-install Ambedkar statues saying they would not allow this to happen until all the culprits behind the heinous act were arrested. This was despite highly placed sources contending that four persons were picked up in connection with the unseemly incident. Police officials however did not confirm the arrests. Minister Pinipe Viswaroop was surrounded by

members of Dalit associations demanding that culprits be brought to book immediately. There were heated exchanges between the Minister and youth and the police had to intervene to restore normalcy. Trouble started at tower clock centre and vegetable market on Tuesday morning when some of the shopkeepers tried to open their shops. However, the police brought the situation under control. A tense situation prevailed at several places as Dalit youth gheraoed Collector, Joint Collector and others at RDO office around 1 p.m. They had a wordy duel with police officer at I. Polavaram. Some youth allegedly burnt posters of actor Pavan Kalyan in Cheyyeru of Katrenikona. There was a mild cane-charge at Yerra Vanthana when a group of people tried to shut down the shops and stage rasta roko at Peruru Y junction. All the entries to this town from National Highway from Ravulapalem side were closed and Dalits in each of the surrounding villages did the same. Kapu leaders, including former Minister Metla Satyanarayana, MLC N. Chinna Rajappa and others had a meeting in the afternoon and appealed to the police not to harass their community people on mere suspicion. On the other hand, Dalit leaders Janga Baburao, Kunche Swarnalatha, Peyyala Srinivasa Rao and Mulaparti Satyanarayana alleged that domination of upper castes was continuing in Konaseema. Additional Director General Krishnam Raju and other senior officials held several rounds of talks with Dalit associations and Kapu community leaders to restore peace. (The Hindu 25/1/12)

Dalit panchayat chief prevented from hoisting the tricolor (2)

PUDUKOTTAI, January 29, 2012: A. Kalaimani, a Dalit woman village panchayat president of Karu Vadatheru village panchayat near Vadakadu, was allegedly prevented from hoisting the tricolour on the Republic Day by a group of caste Hindus. The group belonging to the Kallar community, led by Kumar, son of Rangammal, who is the vice-president of the village panchayat, allegedly pushed aside Ms. Kalaimani when she was about to hoist the national flag on the village panchayat office campus. The village panchayat president told The Hindu on Saturday that she planned to hoist the tricolour at three places – the village panchayat office campus; Raja Kudiyiruppu, a residential colony; and the panchayat union primary school at Kanniyankollai. But, in view of the problem at the village panchayat office, she allowed the group to hoist the flag at the school and cancelled her programme at the residential colony. She has lodged a complaint with the Vadakadu police and submitted petitions to District Collector B. Maheswari and Superintendent of Police R. Tamil Chandran. Ms. Kalaimani said that she had alerted the police a week ago, seeking protection for the smooth conduct of the celebrations. To her surprise, no police personnel were deployed in time. Police sources said that the matter was under investigation. The district wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly condemned the police for not registering a case against those who prevented the Dalit president from hoisting the tricolour. Led by M. Balasundaramurthy, union secretary of the CPI (M), they staged a demonstration in front of the police station at Vadakadu demanding immediate action. M. Chinnadurai, district secretary of the party, was among those who participated. (The Hindu 29/1/12)

Four-year-old Dalit girl raped in Karad (2)

Pune, January 29, 2012: A four-year-old Dalit girl was raped by a 17-year-old Maratha boy in Karad's Kathavli village on Friday, police said on Saturday. The girl admitted to the Satara civil hospital is out of danger. The boy was sent to the remand home in Satara to be kept under observation, police inspector Barkhat Mujawar said. This is the second incident of atrocity on a Dalit in Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan's hometown Karad. Earlier this month, a Dalit woman Rekha Chavan was beaten up and paraded in Mulgaon village in Karad, as her son had allegedly eloped with a Maratha girl. In the Kathavli incident, police arrested the boy late on Friday evening. He has been booked under Section 375 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code, as also the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, (1989). He was produced in court on Saturday. Mr. Mujawar said the parents claimed that the boy, a ninth standard student, was "mentally unstable" and undergoing treatment since the age of 10. "Two doctors have been appointed at the remand home to attend to him," he said. (The Hindu 29/1/12)

Hands, legs of Dalit youth chopped off in M.P. (2)

Rajgarh (Madhya Pradesh), January 30, 2012: A 27-year-old Dalit youth's hands and legs were chopped off by three persons in Rajgarh district in Madhya Pradesh over apparently a petty issue, the police said on Sunday. Victim Jagdish has been referred to Bhopal for treatment. His condition is stated to be serious, they said. The incident took place on Saturday morning at Pagari Bangla village under Malawar police station limits when accused Arjun Thakur, Shiva Gurjar and Madan attacked Jagdish with an axe

and a sharp-edged weapon. Jagdish had complained to police against them for allegedly stealing an electricity meter from his field. The police said while a case has been registered against the accused, no arrests have been made so far. Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee president Kantilal Bhuria strongly condemned the incident saying the State administration has become "defunct" as the Chief Minister remains occupied with political "dramatics." Demanding the immediate arrest of the culprits, Mr Bhuria also sought Rs. 5,000 as lifetime monthly assistance for the victim. — PTI (The Hindu 30/1/12)

Dalit leaders held, Amalapuram tense (2)

AMALAPURAM, January 30, 2012: Tension prevailed again in the town on Sunday following the arrest of Dalit leaders who wanted to organise a meeting to protest against the desecration of Ambedkar statues. However, thanks to heavy deployment of policemen, no untoward incident was reported from any part of Konaseema. DSP Sridhar said 40 persons, including Jupudi Prabhakara Rao, MLC, Bojja Tarakam, senior advocate of High Court, Kolli Nirmala Kumari, president of YSR Congress-women's wing, and Gollapalli Suryarao, former Minister and TDP leader, were arrested. When the police tried to arrest these leaders, their supporters resisted, resulting in a verbal duel between the two sides. Police resorted to mild lathi charge to disperse the slogan-shouting youths. However, after half-an-hour the situation became normal. Meanwhile, Congress MLC Kandula Durgesh began an indefinite fast near the Ambedkar statue at the Gokavaram bus stand in Rajahmundry, against the 'failure' of the police in arresting the persons responsible for the desecration of Ambedkar's statue at Dowleswaram. In a gesture of solidarity, MLA Rowthu Suryaprakasha Rao and a good number of corporators visited the hunger strike camp. Urban SP P. Umapati said efforts were on to arrest the culprits in the Dowleswaram incident. (The Hindu 30/1/12)

Dalit women allege discrimination (2)

MADURAI, February 2, 2012: Dalit women beneficiaries of a government scheme allege discrimination in allotment of land and distribution of pattas which was due to negligence on the part of the district administration. Fifty-seven members belonging to the SC/ST families of Perumparai, Kuthukadu, M.G.R. Nagar, Manalur and Pullaveli under Manalur panchayat in Aathur taluk of Dindigul district during 2006-07, were given 1 acre and 5 cents each to a total tune of 59 acres and 85 cents under the Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation (TAHDCO) Land Purchase Scheme meant for women. Though the lands were given to 57 women beneficiaries on March 28, 2007, they were not given pattas for the land allotted to them. As per the scheme, the beneficiaries would be given 50 per cent subsidy from TAHDCO and 50 per cent - as loan from banking institutions. However, in this case, TAHDCO had arranged for loan through a non-governmental organisation based in Pattiveeranpatti, and the NGO had arranged for Rs.33, 564 as loan amount for each beneficiary, but the beneficiaries alleged that they were only given Rs.20, 000 and the remaining 13,000 was taken by the NGO as maintenance and administrative charges. Meanwhile, the administration did not measure the lands allotted to each beneficiary and also had failed to provide pattas, which resulted in the beneficiaries abstaining from engaging in farm activity or agricultural production as they were not aware of which is their own piece of land. And on June, 5, 2009, State Bank of India, Ayyampalayam Branch officials had issued notice to the beneficiaries who have availed loan to repay the amount with the interest. The beneficiaries who were not given proper pattas and were pushed to a situation where they were not able to do any farming were shocked to get the notice. They had represented the issue with the district collector on October, 4, 2010, but in vain. One of the beneficiaries Shanthi (28) filed a petition in the Madras High Court; Madurai demanding pattas for the land, the Madras High Court has issued a notice the District Collector seeking explanation on January 2, 2012. On the other hand, on January 23, Aathoor tahsildar had issued pattas to Shanthi, Geetha, Andiammal, Vellaithai and Rajeshwari after a gap of 5 years. The Madurai-based NGO Evidence which did a fieldwork on this issue found that 90 per cent of the beneficiaries was found disinterested to get their lands after so many years and felt that it is going to serve no purpose. Land Purchase Scheme is a scheme of far reaching socio economic significance for SCs and STs, which aims to provide agricultural land as asset and various other agricultural inputs to improve the productivity of land, to landless, small and marginal farmers. However, here in this case, the Dalits have become victims of the "lackadaisical" approach of the district administration and this is highly condemnable, said the NGO. They demanded that the lands meant for the Dalits should be given to them with proper pattas and special agricultural and horticultural schemes made available to them and the loan waived. (The Hindu 2/2/12)

Absence of officials at grievance redress meeting annoys Dalit leaders (2)

Udupi, February 3, 2012: The leaders of various Dalit organisations boycotted the Udupi taluk-level Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes grievances redress meeting here on Thursday. "Although officers from 22 departments should have attended the meeting, only six had turned up for the meeting chaired by Udupi Tahsildar V. Prasanna," DSS leader Ramesh Kotian told The Hindu . "The Udupi City Municipal Council (CMC) Commissioner Gokuldas Nayak, Executive Officer of Udupi Taluk Panchayat and Block Education Officers of Udupi and Brahmavar, were prominent absentees. We had gone to the meeting with several questions to be posed to them," he said. Mr. Kotian said that there was corruption in the utilisation of funds allotted for the welfare of Dalits in all government departments and the Udupi CMC. None of the government officers were under the control of the Deputy Commissioner M.T. Reju. The SC/ST grievances redress meeting was being held just for the namesake. "While the previous district in-charge Ministers held redress meetings with all seriousness, the incumbent district in-charge Minister V.S. Acharya is not showing any interest in holding such meetings," Mr. Kotian said. The DSS leaders had urged the district authorities to allow presspersons to attend the grievances redress meeting on Thursday. But Mr. Prasanna did not give permission as per the instruction of the Deputy Commissioner. Leaders of Dalit organisations such as Karunakar Master, Prashanth Thottam, Venkatesh Manipal, Vishwanath Petri, Sundar Kapettu, Krishnappa N., Rajesh Padubidri, and Vijaylakshmi were present at the meeting, Mr. Kotian said. Mr. Prasanna said that only eight Dalit leaders attended the meeting. They wanted the presspersons to be allowed to the meeting. "But there is no Government circular in that respect. There is no such tradition in any other districts. Officials of only four departments – education, health, police and agriculture — did not attend the meeting," he said. (The Hindu 3/2/12)

Caste shadows poll issues in U.P. (2)

Putti Lal, a Dalit, lost his job as a cook in the primary school in Harak block in Zaidpur (SC) constituency in Barabanki district as the children from the upper castes refused to eat the food cooked by him. Ram Sewak Yadav of Satrohanpur village in Daryabad constituency has to get his quota of DAP manure at the black market rate of Rs. 1,000 per bag, and urea at the rate of Rs. 450 per bag. Reason: the bulk of the fertiliser and manure are cornered by the "dabang" (powerful), not necessarily from the upper castes. The Kurmis in the region are rich farmers and equally powerful. Welcome to Barabanki, the caste cauldron of central Uttar Pradesh, once famed for its opium cultivation conjoined with the dubious distinction of being part of illegal drug traffic in the State. Barabanki is a curious mix of metalled roads, dusty hamlets, lush fields and negligible industries. This is typical of a district where the upper castes and the "dabang" exist side by side with the lower castes and the downtrodden. Small wonder that both, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress (read Union Steel Minister Beni Prasad Verma) are eager to net maximum gains through their own method of caste arithmetic. Their weapon is caste politics. Also aiming for a share in the caste pie are the Samajwadi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Since Barabanki is Beni Prasad Verma's home district, the people here talk about the 'Beni factor' dominating the Congress poll campaign. "Potable water is a problem area but Beni babu cannot be faulted for it," said Mansha Ram Verma of Birauli village in Daryabad Assembly constituency. The contest in Daryabad is an interesting one with the Steel Minister's son, Rakesh Kumar Verma, pitted against three-time MLA of the Samajwadi Party, Rajiv Kumar Singh. Also in the fray is Vivekanand Pandey of the BSP. The constituency has about 65,000 Rawat or Pasi scheduled caste voters, followed by around 30,000 Gautam or Chamar SC voters. The Kurmis, the OBC caste to which the Union Steel Minister belongs, number around 20,000 in Daryabad. Besides, there are 25,000 Muslims, 18,000 Brahmins and 20,000 Yadavs. Barabanki is one of the districts with a large concentration of Dalit voters, around 7.2 lakh. Here, the Kurmis also exercise a domineering influence on the outcome of the elections. And among the Dalits, it is the population of the Pasis which exceeds that of the Gautams — or Chamar sub-caste of the Dalits — the caste to which the Bahujan Samaj Party president belongs. So it is not surprising to find the caste factor overshadowing the more pressing issues of development and basic needs of the people when it came to the selection of candidates. "Mayawati has mastered the technique of building cross-caste alliances, as was evident in the BSP's success in the 2007 Assembly elections. Her approach in the forthcoming polls towards stitching an alliance between caste groups opposed to each other is no different, the ability to solicit the support of her core vote bank of the Chamar Dalit sub-caste has helped her", said a professor of Saket Post Graduate College in neighbouring Faizabad. In fact, Barabanki presents a classic case of the distribution of candidates taking into account their castes alone — this is true elsewhere in the State. In two Scheduled Caste constituencies of Zaidpur and Haidergarh, the BSP president has given tickets to

Ved Prakash Rawat and Ram Narain Rawat, in the hope that the Pasi votes will combine with the Chamar votes to ensure her victory. As Putti LaL of Harak village remarked, "The Harijans (to be read as Chamar) will vote for Behenji (Mayawati) and the 'jaati' (to be read as Pasis) votes will go to the two Rawats". In the caste politics of Uttar Pradesh, the Chamar and Pasi sub-castes of the Dalits have always been at logger heads. The Pasis, who are mostly into pig-rearing in the rural areas, have not progressed in comparison to the other Dalit sub-castes, mainly the Gautams (Chamars). The Congress too is not far behind in playing the caste card for electoral gains. For instance, Mr. Verma's son Rakesh from Daryabad is a Kurmi, Baijnath Rawat in the Pasi-dominated Zaidpur (SC) belongs to this caste; and RK Chaudhri, fielded from Haidergarh (SC), is also a Pasi. Incidentally, the Steel Minister has been accused of managing about 60 percent of tickets for the OBCs — Kurmis and Yadavs — in the 55 constituencies where elections are to be held in the first phase on February 8. Apart from the constituencies in Barabanki, Mr. Verma's clout extends to Bahraich and Gonda districts as well. In this mad rush for caste votes, development has merited just a passing reference in political speeches like: "U.P. kyon pichhra (why is U.P. backward)?" No political party, however, is ready to take the blame for the lack of development, especially in rural areas. (The Hindu 4/2/12)

Report sought on torture of Dalit girl (2)

BANGALORE, February 4, 2012: Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda has said the State Government has sought a report from the Bijapur police on the alleged torture of a Dalit girl in Sindagi taluk's Budihal village on Thursday. Replying to the issue raised during zero hour in the Assembly by V. Srinivas Prasad of the Congress, Mr. Gowda promised to initiate stringent action against the guilty on receipt of the report from the Superintendent of Police. Mr. Prasad sought to bring to the Chief Minister's notice the alleged tying up of the 14-year-old Dalit girl to a tree reportedly for more than four hours by a land owner on whose jowar crop she had allowed her sheep to graze. The land owner had reportedly refused to set the girl free despite pleas by her as well as other Dalits in the village. He said the girl was set free only after police arrived on the scene. The land owner had fled the village, he added. (The Hindu 4/2/12)

Atrocities against SC/STs: Relief for murder Rs 5 lakh, sexual abuse Rs 2 lakh (2)

Madurai Enhanced monetary relief in the case of atrocities against SCs and STs has come into effect with the Centre notifying amended rules under the relevant act. As per the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities (Amendment) Rules 2011, which has come into effect from December 23, 2011, compensation in case of murder of a earning SC/ST member has gone up to Rs five lakh from Rs two lakh. In case of murder of a non-earning member, the relief has been increased from Rs.one lakh to Rs.2.5 lakh. Compensation paid in the case of sexual exploitation of a SC/ST woman would now be Rs 1.2 lakh as against Rs 50,000 earlier. A copy of the rules was made available to the media here by Evidence a non-governmental organisation, which has taken steps to create awareness among the people about it. For listed offences under Section 3(1) (i) to Section 3 (1) (x), the relief amount has been enhanced to Rs.60,000 from Rs.25,000 and for offences relating to right to franchise from Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000. For the offence of fouling of water, denial of customary right of passage and giving false evidence, the compensation had been increased from Rs.1.20 lakh to Rs 2.50 lakh. The amendment also says that words "Director/Deputy Director, National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be substituted with Representatives of the National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.". The rules have been welcomed by NGOs here including the People's Watch, SOCO trust, and Evidence. (Express India 8/2/12)

Upper caste men brand Dalit sarpanch's daughter-in-law "witch" (2)

NEW DELHI, February 8, 2012: When Norty Bai, sarpanch of Harmara in Rajasthan, refused to give in to the demands of upper caste men in her village, her daughter-in-law Ram Peari was branded a "witch." The villagers called for Peari's "social boycott" and excommunication. In Alwar district in the State, Sunita Bairwa of Bahedakhah was assaulted because the upper castes were unhappy about a Dalit being elevated to sarpanch. These and similar testimonies were shared at a day-long public hearing on caste bias and atrocities faced by Dalit elected representatives, held here on Tuesday. Organised by the All-India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch, the event highlighted the stories of discrimination and violence against Dalit women elected representatives from in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. "It took us days to get the police to file a complaint. I was victimised because we are from the lower caste and my mother-in-law was doing some good work for the village. The upper caste men could not tolerate it, they wanted her to

toe their line and when she refused to, they accused me of being a witch and of performing black magic on another woman,” said Ram Peari. Most elected representatives facing harassment complained that the police and the administration were also not supporting them. “As chairperson of the district council of Aurangabad, I am not even kept informed of the day-to-day functioning. When I raise important issues, I am told that because of my caste, I will not even be heard,” complained Ranju Devi from Bihar. In her village, she alleged, her husband was beaten up by upper caste men who objected to her candidature. Syeda Hameed, Member, Planning Commission, who addressed the hearing, said the status of the Dalit women representative was same as it was years ago. The Centre and State governments would have to work collectively for the empowerment of Dalit women and there was need for a multisectoral approach to development and proper implementation of policies, she said. Following the testimonies, a jury put forth certain recommendations. They called for establishing a special office in each district to act as a support mechanism for Dalit, Adivasi and women panchayat presidents. The office should provide advice, training and information as well as monitor the performance of duties and interventions by others such as panchayat members and government officials. The special office should mediate and resolve problems encountered by panchayat representatives. In another recommendation, the jury said the State Election Commissions should set up a fund to provide basic financial support towards election cost to Dalits, Adivasis and women in general falling within a stipulated low household income bracket. It called for setting up an autonomous statutory directorate for all reserved panchayats at the State level, headed by a Dalit, Adivasi woman IAS officer, and assistant directorates at the district level, headed by a Dalit/Adivasi woman officer below the rank of IAS, to function under the directorate. These two institutions should fall under the jurisdiction of the Legislative Assembly through the Governor. They should monitor and review the pre and post-election performance of the reserved panchayats, and submit annual reports to the Assembly. The jury called for mandating the National and State Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Women’s Commissions with sufficient powers, funds and staff to specifically inquire into political obstruction or violence committed against Dalit women and men, Adivasis and other women elected representatives. A resolution to strengthen the legal framework such as the SC/ST (POA) Act, 1989, and enforcement agencies particularly those focussing on Dalit women was passed. (The Hindu 8/2/12)

Compensation rates for SC/ST victims raised by 150 per cent (2)

NEW DELHI, February 9, 2012: The Union government has enhanced the compensation to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes victims of different categories of atrocities from minimum Rs. 20, 000 to Rs. 50, 000 and maximum from Rs. 250, 000 to Rs. 500,000. The new rates of compensation follow amendments to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) (Amendment) Rules 2011, which has come into effect from December 23. According to the Ministry of Social Justice it is the first time that the scale of relief has been revised since the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, was first laid down in 1995. (The Hindu 9/2/12)

Caste Hindus, Dalits stride towards peace (2)

MADURAI, February 15, 2012: In a significant move, the caste Hindus and Dalits of Uthapuram village, who fought over the ‘wall of untouchability’, have taken the next step forward to sinking their long-drawn enmity and embrace peace. Representatives of both sides on Tuesday jointly met Deputy Inspector General of Police (Madurai), B. Bala Naga Devi, and Superintendent of Police, Asra Garg, for the withdrawal of cases registered against the people of both sides. Some 30 cases are pending against both sides since 2005, the DIG told reporters. They include cases for attempt to murder, those under the Explosives Act and Prevention of Atrocities (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes) Act. “We will follow due procedures of law to withdraw all the cases.” This is the second major step both sides have taken to bring about peace after the caste Hindus allowed Dalits to enter the Muthalamman temple in the presence of Mr. Garg on November 10 last year. “This is part of the peace agreement reached by both parties on October 20, 2011,” Mr. Garg said. Vishwa Hindu Parishad functionary Chinmaya Somasundaram, who, along with former Aavin General Manager K. Athimoolam brokered the peace, said that people of both sides had suffered a lot socially and economically ever since the fresh bout of tension in the village near Usilampatti in recent years. The ‘wall of untouchability’ on a common pathway dividing the Dalits from caste Hindus was demolished by the district administration in 2008. “We (caste Hindus) are ready to allow people of all communities into our temple. This peace process has given the village a new lease of life,” said an auditor and leader of the caste Hindus, B. Murugesan. “We (people of both the sides) have realised that we cannot fight each other forever,” Dalit leader K. Ponnaiah said. “Though not

all the people of the caste Hindus were happy about our entry into the temple, we were, indeed, given a warm welcome by some of them.” Both want the State government to expedite development works such as the construction of a bus shelter and diversion of sewerage lines that drain sewage into the Dalit areas. Asked about the main bone of contention of the Dalits – right to worship in the temple – Mr. Garg said that the temple was under construction and soon kumbabhishekam would be performed. “After that both the parties can enter it.” . On allowing the Dalits to use vehicles on the common pathway, Additional Superintendent of Police A. Myil Vaganan said that the pathway was being put to maximum use and was open for Dalits too. “There are some encroachments on it. Once it is widened, bigger vehicles can be allowed.” Mr. Garg said that the police pickets would stay as a precautionary measure. (The Hindu 15/2/12)

Another Ambedkar statue damaged (2)

SANGAREDDY, February 16, 2012: enson prevailed from the wee hours of Wednesday at Tellapur in Ramachandrapuram mandal of Medak district as some unidentified persons partly damaged the Ambedkar statue at Indiranagar chowrasta in the village. The right wrist of the statue was damaged and it was found near the statue .As the news spread like a wildfire, Dalit leaders from surrounding areas arrived in no time and demanded action against those responsible for the incident and staged a rasta roko at the spot. The agitators gheraoed MLA Nandeewar Goud demanding the arrest of culprits. Deputy Chief Minister Damodar Rajanarasima arrived at the spot and examined the damaged statue. He said that those responsible for incident would be arrested immediately and assured to bring a legislation to act tough against those demolishing the statues of national leaders. Ambedkar is a national leader and he should not be confined to some sections,” he said and directed Superintendent of Police P.J. Victor to arrest the culprits. Medak Lok Sabha member M. Vijayashanti also visited the spot and condemned the incident. She alleged that the government failure to act tough against those responsible for damaging statues in the past led to the current incident.Stating that some unidentified persons have damaged the statue, Mr. Victor said that cases were registered under Sections 295 and 427 of IPC. He said that those responsible for the incident would be arrested shortly. Several Dalit organisations staged protests in different parts of the district. (The Hindu 16/2/12)

Dalits demand additional allocation for SC Sub-Plan (2)

JAIPUR: Dalit groups here have demanded an additional budget allocation for the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan this year to compensate for the loss of Rs.8,685.04 crore caused by “inadequate provisions” made in the State budgets during the past five successive years. The allocation should be made in proportion to the population of Dalits enumerated in the 2011 Census. A delegation of Dalit activists met Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot here with the request for utilising the additional allocation for creation of a land bank for landless Dalits on the Andhra Pradesh pattern and creation of new livelihood opportunities for them. They said agricultural and residential land should be allotted to Dalits on priority. Centre for Dalit Rights chief patron P. L. Mimroth, who led the delegation, pointed out that Dalits were deprived of Rs.1,589.54 crore in the 2011-12 budget of the total size of Rs.1,92,896.21 crore. The allocation to the SC Sub-Plan was Rs.1,719.97 crore against the statutory requirement of Rs.3,309.51 crore in accordance with the population of Scheduled Castes. The delegation members said the Sambal Gram Yojana for rural development had been expanded in 2009-10 to include the villages with 40 per cent SC population. Despite the consequent increase in the number of villages from 2,463 to 4,110, the scheme's budget had not increased during the past three years. Seeking an enhancement in the upcoming budgetary allocations for such schemes for development and empowerment of the Dalits, the delegation drew Mr. Gehlot's attention to the need for appointing a monitoring body for the SC Sub-Plan. A provision in this year's budget for such an institution would ensure effective and speedy implementation of the Sub-Plan, said the delegation members. The delegation comprised CDR director Satish Kumar and coordinator Tarachand Verma, Dalit Mahila Manch convenor Suman Devathia, former State Women's Commission member Sunita Satyarthi and social activists J. P. Bairwa, Chandalal Bairwa, Mohini Devi, Mukesh Mehra and Milan Naik. A memorandum submitted by the activists to the Chief Minister said the funds under the SC Sub-Plan should be released to all departments in a uniform manner, against the current allotment ranging from 2 per cent to 10 per cent to different departments. Besides, financial assistance to Dalit victims of crimes should be sanctioned in accordance with the norms revised by a Central gazette notification issued on December 23, 2011. The delegation members also raised the issues of developing leadership traits among the Dalit elected representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions, effective

implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, for providing justice to Dalit women and transfer of trial in the Bhanwari Devi murder case to a court situated outside Rajasthan. (The Hindu 16/2/12)

Dalit attacked for drinking from pitcher (2)

Hisar (Haryana): In a shocking case of caste-related violence, a man belonging to the upper caste almost chopped off an arm of a dalit youth as he drank water from his pitcher. The police said here on Thursday that Rajendar alias Pappu almost chopped off an arm of dalit labourer Rajesh Ranga alias Raju for drinking water from his container on Wednesday. The culprit has been arrested under Section 326 of the IPC (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or other means) and under various provisions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, they said. Ranga, a daily wager of village Sanyana in Fatehabad district in the state, had gone in search of work in village Daulatpur near here. As he became thirsty, he stopped to drink water from the pitcher of Rajendar, a farmer. But hardly had the dalit touched the pitcher, the farmer got enraged and attacked him with a sickle, badly injuring his arm. A surgery was conducted on the victim at a local private hospital where doctors said it might take three months for him to recover. Meanwhile, the district authorities handed over `50,000 to the dalit youth and a deputy superintendent of police has been deputed to investigate the case. (Asian Age 17/2/12)

Accused in dalit hand chopping will not be spared: National Commission for Scheduled Castes (2)

NEW DELHI: Taking a serious note of the hand chopping incident of a dalit labourer in Haryana, National Commission for Scheduled Castes today said the accused would not be spared and shall be booked under appropriate sections of Prevention of Atrocities Act. The Commission also deputed a central team to undertake on-the-spot investigations and to prescribe relief and rehabilitation measures to victim Rajesh Ranga alias Raju, whose arm was chopped off by a man belonging to the upper caste for drinking water from his pitcher. National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) chairman P L Punia said the Commission is committed to deliver justice to members of SCs and in such cases, the accused would not be spared and will be booked under the appropriate sections of the POA Act, 1989. The incident took place in Daulatpur village of Haryana's Hisar district. "In order to perform Constitutional duties, atrocity cases against members of Dalit communities are viewed seriously and justice is provided irrespective of any political party," Punia said in a statement here. The NCSC Chairman said he immediately contacted district magistrate Amit Agrawal and superintendent of police Ashwin Shenvi and enquired about the incident. A central team under Joint Secretary T Theethan was deputed to see the victim and for detailed investigations, he said. "The district magistrate informed that the victim was provided monetary assistance of Rs 50,000 and provided free treatment at a private hospital. The state government has also sanctioned a sum of Rs 3 lakh as a part of rehabilitation package. The SP informed that the accused was arrested and a charge sheet is being filed soon," the statement said. According to the police, Ranga, a daily wager of Sanyana village in Haryana's Fatehabad district, had gone in search of work in Daulatpur village. The labourer had stopped to drink water from the pitcher of Rajendar, a farmer. But hardly had the Dalit touched the pitcher, the farmer got enraged and attacked him with a sickle. (Times of India 18/2/12)

Lathore inferno Dalit victims still homeless (2)

BALANGIR: Around 218 Dalits are living in a temporary shelter in a school even a month after upper caste people torched their houses and looted their belongings in Lathore in Balangir district. Although the district administration had promised to reconstruct the houses in a meeting with members of Lakhe Ghara Ganda Samaj Unnayana Samiti of the Dalit community, there has been no headway. "Initially the administration was reluctant to construct the houses. It only wanted to give compensation. But after we organized a rally and placed our demands in a memorandum, the collector invited us for a discussion, where he agreed to construct the houses. But sadly, it is yet to begin," said Omprakash Kumbhar, president of the outfit. On January 23, upper caste people had torched 30 houses of the Dalits in Lathore after which 250 men, women and children were shifted to the temporary shelter. Police subsequently arrested 42 persons and sent them to judicial custody. Property worth about Rs 2.5 crore was reportedly damaged in the riot. "We know that we won't get the valuables we lost when our houses were burnt down. We have lost important documents, ornaments and land records. But at least we should be provided with houses to live in. For how many days will we live in the school," said Jitendra Suna, one of the victims of the riot. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to Odisha government, calling

for a report on the incident within four weeks. Earlier, a team of Jawahala Neheru University (JNU) students visited Lathore to sympathize with the victims and also met the district collector. A few days ago, Dalits of the district and Lathore victims organized a rally and walked through the main road in Balangir town, holding placards and raising slogans. They demanded action against the erring police officials, who allegedly overlooked the warnings of the upper caste people a day before the incident. They also demanded Balangir district to be declared SC-ST atrocity prone. The Lakhe Ghara Ganda Samaj Unnayana Samiti outfit had given a fact sheet to the district administration mentioning incidences arising out of caste antagonism in the district. It said in the last two years 12 such incidents have taken place in the district. According to the outfit, the atrocity prone villages are Lakarma, Belpada, Jamsar, Pardhiapali, Kalijharan, Bandhpada, Gaibahal, Uparbahal, Bubel and Ambahali. "In each incident, either false allegations were slapped on lower caste people or the upper caste people openly expressed untouchability by speaking insulting words," said the outfit's secretary Sitaram Kumbhar. (Times of India 19/2/12)

Dalit nursing student raped on Mahashivratri night (2)

Beed (Maha) A 19-year-old Dalit student of a private nursing college was allegedly sexually assaulted by two youth in Kaij tehsil in the district, police said today. The victim had gone to a Mahashivratri fair and was waiting at a bus stop in Massajog village yesterday evening when the accused Balasaheb Dhakne (22) and Atmaram Munde (25) approached her in a Tata Sumo, they said. According to police, there was another passenger in the vehicle whom the accused forced to get down after the teenager boarded it. The duo then stopped at Lahuri village road and allegedly took turns to rape the victim. The accused who were arrested later have been booked under section 376 (punishment for rape) of IPC and Dalit Atrocity Act, police said. (Express India 21/2/12)

Casteism rears its ugly head at Gujarat University (2)

AHMEDABAD, February 23, 2012: Gujarat University Vice-Chancellor Parimal Trivedi has been released on bail after being arrested for allegedly making casteist remarks against a Dalit teacher of an affiliated college. Mr. Trivedi, who along with his family had allegedly been "absconding" for the past couple of days, surrendered before the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes cell of the Ahmedabad Police and was placed under arrest. Later the Metropolitan Court granted him bail on his furnishing a personal surety for Rs. 25,000 and surrendering his passport. Mr. Trivedi, who was appointed Vice-Chancellor for a second consecutive term, was considered a close confidant of Chief Minister Narendra Modi. The complaint under the Atrocity Act had been pending since 2008 when Pankaj Shrimali approached the police accusing Mr. Trivedi of using "abusive terms" and making casteist remarks against him. The police initially declined to register a First Information Report against Mr. Trivedi. Mr. Shrimali later alleged that the police were "deliberately delaying action" and he moved the Gujarat High Court, which directed them to file a case against Mr. Trivedi. State Congress spokesman Manish Doshi, who is also a member of the University Syndicate, demanded Mr. Trivedi's resignation on moral grounds. If he failed to quit, the Government should direct him to put in his papers as his arrest hurt the image of the institution, Dr. Doshi said. Recently, some complaints were filed with the police against Mr. Trivedi for allegedly allowing "underhand dealings" by some affiliated colleges in admission and other administrative matters. (The Hindu 23/2/12)

Recruitment board for Devaswoms sought (2)

ALAPPUZHA, February 24, 2012: A State-level meeting of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, and backward classes organisations to discuss the issues related to the Devaswom Boards in Kerala here on Thursday has demanded that a special recruitment board be constituted to make appointments to the five Devaswom Boards in the State. The meeting held here, which was presided over by Kerala Dalit Federation president P. Ramabhadran, also decided to demand Chief Minister Oommen Chandy to convene a meeting of the SC/ST and backward classes organisations with regard to appointments to Devaswoms. It demanded that all appointments including priests should be effected through the Board, the number of members of each Board be increased to nine, due representation be given to all castes in the Board and a caste-based list of Devaswom employees in the State be published. There was also a demand to extend the 17 per cent reservation for non-Hindus in other services to SC/ST and members of Dheevara-Viswakarma castes and backward classes in Group 8. The meeting also asked for a rotation system for the positions of president and members of five Devaswom Boards. An 18-member convening

committee, with V. Dinakaran as general convener and S.Kuttappan Chettiyar as convener, has been formed to frame future plans. (The Hindu 24/2/12)

Government orders closure of residential school for Dalit children (2)

Shimoga, February 27, 2012: The circular from the office of the Commissioner of Social Welfare to close down the Scheduled Caste (SC) Residential School established by the zilla panchayat at Melinakuruvalli village in Tirthahalli taluk has created anxieties among the students and parents. The Shimoga Zilla Panchayat had established the residential school at Melinakuruvalli near Tirthahalli in 1989 for the benefit of children from oppressed sections of society. It had not taken sanction from the Department of Social Welfare for this residential school. The resident school runs classes 1 to 5 and 17 children are studying in it. The school has a spacious building in which the Morarji Desai Residential School sanctioned for Tirthahalli taluk is tentatively housed. The maintenance grants and the amount necessary for payment of salary to the teaching and non-teaching staff of Scheduled Castes Residential School and Morarji Desai Residential School are paid by the zilla panchayat. The Morarji Desai Residential School was transferred to State sector from the zilla panchayat this year. It had been planned to construct a building for the Morarji Desai School at Vategaru village of Tirthahalli taluk. As the sanction was not accorded for the establishment of SC Residential School, a circular was issued to close it, and transfer the students to other schools. There was delay in payment of salary to the staff members of the SC Residential School because of these technical problems. Thirthahalli MLA Kimmane Rathnakar told The Hindu that Minister for Social Welfare Narayanaswamy had agreed to provide grants for the maintenance of the SC Residential School this year. The Thirthahalli Taluk Panchayat had passed a resolution against the move to close down SC Residential School. Sources said the district administration had written to the office of the Commissioner of Social Welfare four months ago to take over the residential school, and provide permanent grant-in-aid for it. Mr. Rathnakar said that considering the interest of the students from oppressed sections of society who enrolled in the residential school, the Government should take a positive decision in this regard. (The Hindu 27/2/12)

Dalit man charred to death inside Silchar shop (2)

SILCHAR: A man was charred to death at Gangapur village on Monday night when the shop inside which he was sleeping caught fire. Like other days, Chunilal Rabidas (34), a Dalit, was sleeping inside his shop, while his wife and three children were at home on Monday night. Suddenly at 11 pm, villagers noticed that the store was in flames. They rushed to the spot and tried to douse the flames by pouring water. But by then, the shop was gutted. A number of villagers, as well as members of Chunilal's family present on the spot, on Tuesday alleged that some miscreants poured petrol on the shop and then torched it which led to the death of Chunilal. However, no FIR has been lodged so far. Silchar police station OC said police rushed to the spot and recovered the body, which was sent to Silchar Medical College Hospital for autopsy. He added that a probe has been launched and it is yet to be ascertained whether it was the handiwork of miscreants or an accident. However, the village, dominated by Dalits, is tense because of the incident. In a separate case, police rounded up two persons on Tuesday in connection with the brutal murder of Biswanath Goala (50) and his son, Bishal (23), inside their house at Merua Grant village near Silchar on February 22. Another person was wounded in the attack. The arrested have been identified as Mati Ghatwar and Shyam Ghatwar. The duo was Biswanath's neighbours. They are being interrogated in Silchar police station. (Times of India 1/3/12)

No escape for Dalits from caste discrimination (2)

HYDERABAD, March 2, 2012: A gritty fighter, Dalit cloth vendor, Ammulu and her two teenaged daughters managed to escape from the ferocity of the tsunami that swept away her humble dwelling and a wayside shop in Andamans. When they reached Sarpavaram in Kakinada after a long arduous journey from the islands they heaved a sigh of relief having survived nature's fury, though it meant picking up a shattered thread of life. The relief proved to be short-lived as they soon found themselves caught in tsunami of the caste kind. "After six years of hard work, when we started building a house in 2010 on a six-cent site, we faced the wrath of the Kapus," she narrated at a public hearing organised by Dalit Shree Sakthi here on Thursday. They started harassing her, denied her access to a common pathway, saying it belonged to Kapus. After holding out threats they demanded Rs. 30,000. She managed Rs. 10,000 but the harassment and hurling of abuses naming her by caste continued leading to assault on June 2. A case of atrocity was registered but there was no further progress. Another Dalit, Hanumanthu of Miyapur,

Ranga Reddy district, recounted how his long cherished dream of seeing his 14-year-old daughter, Renuka becoming an IAS officer was shattered when two upper caste teachers humiliated her so much that she set herself ablaze. Miyapur police registered it as a case of suicide and not under Prevention of Atrocities Act. G. Jhansi of DSS recalled that police in RR district showed no interest in investigating cases of atrocities on Dalits as the perpetrators often brought pressure invoking name of the Home Minister. A modest crowd of families of victims, activists and the jury members was stunned when Chellapu Sesha Rao of Devavaram in Visakhapantam district narrated how his mentally challenged daughter was raped by a relative. When the case came to light, the 18-year-old was three months pregnant. She delivered a baby boy but does not know how to take care of him now. The jury members included former Supreme Court Judge K. Ramaswamy, former IAS officers -- K. R. Venugopal and K. Madhava Rao -- and president of RPI Bojja Tharakam. (The Hindu 2/3/12)

Former UP minister booked for beating Dalit (2)

ORAI (Uttar Pradesh): A case has been registered against BSP MLA and former Uttar Pradesh minister Hariom Upadhyay and two others for allegedly beating a Dalit man. The former minister of state for home guards and his two associates, Yogesh Dwivedi and Arun Dixit, were booked after one Phool Singh lodged a complaint at Rampur police station alleging that they beat him and made casteist remarks against him last night, police said. (Times of India 3/3/12)

Attack forces Dalit family to flee Dharwad village (2)

DHARWAD, March 3, 2012: A Dalit family from Mattikatti in Kundagol taluk of Dharwad district was allegedly threatened by a gram panchayat president that they would be driven out of the village if they did not convert. The family was even attacked by a group of around 15 persons and threatened on Thursday night, following which the family fled the village and landed at the Deputy Commissioner Darpan Jain's office on Friday seeking help. Chittibabu Kondapogu, along with his wife Manjavva and seven children, narrated the suffering they underwent in the last few days to Mr. Jain on Friday. Mr. Chittibabu, a labourer married Mardanabi, a distant relative of Mattikatti gram panchayat president Mashanabi Naik. After the wedding, she changed her name to Manjavva. According to Mr. Chittibabu, the trouble started after the family applied for an Ashraya house in the village. He alleged that the gram panchayat president told the family that if they wanted live in the village and avail themselves of the scheme, they would have to convert, and when the family demurred they were threatened. He alleged that the water supply to their house was cut and his children were not being allowed into school. "We were forced to flee the village after a group of 15 persons attacked us with weapons and threatened us with dire consequences," he said. When Mr. Jain asked them if they approached the police, Mr. Chittibabu said he feared that as the local police were in good terms with the gram panchayat president they would not register their complaint. Taking serious note of the incident, Mr. Jain immediately directed the Kundagol tahsildar to start an inquiry and initiate action against the accused. He also ordered him to take the family members to the police station and get a police complaint registered. (The Hindu 3/3/12)

Tribals, dalits take to streets against illegal mining

LUCKNOW: Thousands of dalits and tribals took to streets in Sonbhadra on Sunday to protest against the illegal mining taking place in the district. The immediate cause of the protest was the recent mining accident which left over 10 labourers dead. The protesters organised a march and gheraoed the local police station. They also handed over a memorandum to the district administration. Addressed to the governor, the memorandum demanded CBI inquiry into the illegal mining in the district, action against local forest and mining officials as well as labour and revenue department personnel. The agitators also demanded action against the police which, they claimed, have knowledge of all illegal mining taking place but do nothing to stop it. People served an ultimatum that they would launch a big movement if their demands are not met within 15 days. On February 27, around a dozen labourers were buried alive in a landslide following a blast in a mine. The protesters alleged that the blast was carried out by untrained staff. They said that the workers were from nearby villages who were forced to work in the mines because they are not getting employment under MNREGA. They also said that illegal mining has resulted in a large scale air and water pollution in the region, causing respiratory diseases. They also pointed out that those involved in illegal mining include politicians of various parties and some journalists. The protest was jointly organised by the National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, Kaimur Kshetra Mahila Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, Human Rights Law Network, Federation of Natural Resources Based

Working People and Inqalabi Naujwan Sabha among others. The Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court has also taken cognizance of illegal mining and accidents in Sonbhadra. (Times of India 5/3/12)

Dalit suicides spark protest in Koyilandy (2)

KOZHIKODE: Protest is mounting against apathy of cops in probing the suicide of four dalits including a college girl in Koyilandy. Though the investigation into reasons behind suicides began after the Babu alias Preman (40) committed suicide on November 25, natives say the police are not too keen on the issue. Meanwhile, activists of Bharathiya Pattika Jana Samajam have demanded the cops to intensify probe into the death of all the four and book the accused under Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Babu was thrashed by a group of 20 persons when he visited the house of a woman near Kuravangad Central Upper Primary School in Koyilandy on February 24. The miscreants later labelled him as thief and handed him over to the cops. Though the police released Babu, the attack and mental trauma caused by the incident apparently led him to commit suicide. The miscreants had also recorded the violent incident on mobile phone and posted it on Youtube. Three other youths had also committed suicide in the past three months. Vijeesh, 28, a native of Kinaloor, was found dead at a beauty parlour at Poonoor in the second week of December last year. "The police termed it as suicide and closed the case," said the members of Bharathiya Pattika Jana Samajam alleging that the Vijesh ended life due to the mental trauma inflicted on him from a certain persons. O Sarudesh (29), from Koottalida, was found hanging near Manjappalam ration shop on January 7. It is alleged that Sarudesh was roughed up by a group of persons a couple of days before his suicide. Allegations are that college student Dhanisha, of Naduvannur, ended life after her mother and aunt were taken into police custody on theft charges. "We have arrested and produced six persons under section 306 of IPC on charges of abetment of suicide before the court following the death of Sarudesh," said the officials of Balussery police station. (Times of India 6/3/12)

Allocate more funds for Dalit welfare: CPI(M) (2)

MYSORE, March 8, 2012: Members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) staged a demonstration here on Wednesday seeking greater allocation of funds for Dalit welfare in the State and Union budgets. Describing the Dalit community as socially oppressed and economically backward, the CPI (M) said that even after six decades of Independence, the community had been deprived of social justice. It said that Dalits comprised 20 per cent of the total population of the country and more than two-thirds of them were landless labourers. The CPI (M) called for legislation to make it mandatory to allot funds for SC/ST welfare and ensure that it did not lapse. It also demanded a special Parliament session to discuss the issues Dalits were facing. A memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister was submitted at the office of the Deputy Commissioner (The Hindu 8/3/12)

HC declines CBI probe into dalit boy's death (2)

MADURAI: Declining to order a CBI probe into the murder of a dalit boy, the Madurai bench of the Madras high court, on Friday directed the state police to expedite investigation relating to the killing of Palanikumar, which occurred prior to the death anniversary of dalit leader Immanuel Sekaran, and file the final report expeditiously. Disposing the petition filed by Thangavel, the father of Palanikumar, the bench comprising Justice N Paul Vasanthakumar and Justice P Devadass said, "Unless it is established in a given case that the local police is not conducting investigation in a proper manner, probe cannot be transferred merely on the request made by the complainant." According to Thangavel, his son Palanikumar was residing in Pallapaacheri, near Kamudhi where about 600 dalit families are living along with other caste Hindus. The dalit people from M Pallapacheri village have to cross the Mandalamanickam main street to reach their village as the said street is the only option available to them. The petitioner alleged that there used to be friction between the dalits and the Maravar community, which was the majority in Mandalamanickam main street. Several times the dalits were humiliated and they approached the district collector and SP to provide an alternative pathway to their village. Since no action was taken, the Pallapacheri village people boycotted the recent local body elections. On September 9, 2011, Palanikumar was murdered by some persons allegedly belonging to the Maravar community while he was returning home after watching a play, which was performed in a nearby village. (Times of India 10/3/12)

MLA kin 'attempts' to outrage Dalit woman's modesty (2)

KENDRAPADA : Two persons, including a relative of the Balikuda-Erasama MLA, allegedly misbehaved with a dalit woman and made an attempt to outrage her modesty a few days back while she was returning to her house after enjoying the Dola Melan organised in the locality. According to Balikuda IIC Sitakant Kanungo, a dalit woman of Baragudipada village of Borikina GP under Balikuda police station lodged an FIR on Sunday alleging that couple of persons of her locality made an attempt to outrage her modesty after passing casteist remarks. The victim alleged that while she was returning to her home after seeing Dola Melan near her village a couple of days back, a fellow villager, Jatadhari Barik and his associate Damodar Baral of Borikina village, forcibly stopped her on the road and misbehaved with her by passing casteist remarks. Later, the duo allegedly made an attempt to outrage her modesty, said Kanungo. "The duo managed to flee from the spot as my spouse and my brother-in-law rushed to the spot after I cried for help," the woman informed the police. According to police sources, one of the accused, Damodar Baral, is stated to be the relative of Balikuda-Erasama MLA Prashant Muduli. Balikuda police have registered a case based on the FIR of the victim under Sections 341, 323, 506 and 34 of the IPC and Section 3(XI) of the SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocity) Act and started inquiry into the allegation. (Pioneer 12/3/12)

Peace talks pave way for hoisting of flag by Dalit panchayat chief (2)

PUDUKOTTAI, March 13, 2012: A. Kalaimani, the Dalit president of the Karu Vedatheru village panchayat in Pudukottai district, who was prevented from hoisting the national flag on the Republic Day by a group of caste Hindus, faced no hindrance while exercising her right on International Women's Day last Thursday. Revenue and police officers succeeded in settling the issue through peace talks. Their intervention followed a series of agitations by the Untouchability Eradication Front and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), to which Ms. Kalaimani belongs, demanding she be given adequate protection to hoist the national flag on the premises of the panchayat office.(The Hindu 13/3/12)

SCs' body cries foul over 'religious conversions' (2)

TIRUPATI, March 15, 2012: 'Aadi Hindu Parirakshana Samiti', an SC organisation recently floated with pro-Hindu slant, has expressed its deep anguish over the alleged religious conversions being encouraged by some 'vested interests' by hoodwinking and wooing the dalits in the name of 'pensions' taking advantage of their poverty, backwardness and their feeling of social stigma. Kalluri Chengaiah, founder and State president of the Samiti has in a statement said that the problem which was earlier rampant in the neighbouring Nellore district has crept into the backward Chittoor district and appealed to the police and the revenue authorities to move in and arrest all those who were allegedly indulging in forcible religious conversions. He alleged that the 'vested interests' were also allegedly cheating the gullible people among the dalits by promising them a monthly 'pension' of Rs. 5,000 if they make one-time payment of Rs.11,000. (The Hindu 15/3/12)

SP men beat up Dalits near Maya village in Dadri (2)

New Delhi, March 15, 2012: The change of guard in Lucknow on Thursday — when a Samajwadi Party government headed by Akhilesh Yadav is to be sworn in — had an ominous portent in Greater Noida the day before. SP workers attacked Dalit families in the Dadri area, where outgoing chief minister and BSP supremo Mayawati's ancestral village, Badalpur, is located. In continuation of violence reported across Uttar Pradesh after the SP's victory in the assembly elections, villagers believed to owe allegiance to the party attacked a Dalit colony in Ramgarh village in Dadri on Wednesday afternoon, thrashing residents with sticks. Nineteen people, including women were injured in the attack and have been admitted to hospitals in Dadri. Some of them are in a critical condition. The victims belong to the Jatav community, to which Mayawati belongs. Ramgarh residents said most of the attackers support the SP. "As the sitting Dadri MLA from the BSP, Satveer Gujjar, won the election, SP supporters attacked the Dalits for not voting for the SP candidate," said a villager who didn't want to be named. Dadri circle officer Brijesh Singh, however, said, "It looks more like the fallout of a land dispute. Dalits had recently lodged a property-related case against the Gujjar group, which has been accused of violence on Wednesday. We're probing all angles, but right now our priority is to provide protection to the victims and arrest the accused." Tension prevails in the area and the district administration has deployed additional police forces to contain the situation. "The accused have fled the village. We have launched a manhunt to arrest

them. We have lodged a case and stern action will be taken against all the accused," Singh said. (Hindustan Times 15/3/12)

Allocations for SCs/STs fall short again (2)

NEW DELHI, March 17, 2012: The total planned budget for the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) for the year 2012-13 has once again failed to meet its target. For the Special Component Plan (SCP), the allocation has been Rs. 37,113.03 crore, which is 9.3 per cent as against the government's own target of 16.2 per cent. For the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), the allocation is Rs. 21,710.11 crore, which is 5.4 per cent of the total budget amount as against the official target of 8.2 per cent. In the last five-year Plan, the allocation was around 8 per cent for SCP, according to Paul Divakar, general secretary of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights. This year, while there has been an increase in allocation for the pre-matric scholarship scheme for SCs from Rs. 200 crore to Rs. 824 crore, there is a marked decrease in the post-matric scholarship scheme. From last year's allocation of Rs. 2441.7 crore, the allocation to post-matric has been brought down to Rs. 1,500 crore. "This is not a proactive measure for equality. A quantum of money is being spent on the social sector which is not a bad thing, but it looks at only aspects of survival and menial labour-related jobs for Dalits," said Mr. Divakar. The social sector allocations go for primary school education, mid-day meals, MGNREGS among others but the Dalits are being kept out of the larger economic growth due to reduced allocations in post-matric educational schemes, he added. There is a decrease in other schemes as well. In the scheme of pre-matric scholarships for children engaged in unclean occupation, it has come down from Rs.70 crore to Rs. 10 crore. In the 'Book Bank' and 'Upgradation of Merit of ST students' schemes the allocation has decreased from Rs. 823.78 crore to Rs. 750 crore. There has also been a decrease in the Indian Leather Development Programme from Rs. 30 crore to Rs. 12 crore. However, there is an increase in Infrastructure Maintenance (Department of Health & Family) from Rs. 701.75 crore to Rs. 978.11 crore. But infrastructure development should not be counted as SCP, pointed out Mr. Divakar. Meanwhile, there has been an increase in some other schemes such as Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Construction and Running of Hostels for SC girls in secondary and higher secondary schools, Indira Awas Yojana, Integrated Watershed Management Programme and National Rural Drinking Water Programme. One of the significant increases is in UGC allocation, which has gone up to Rs. 1042.4 crore from Rs. 799.6 crore. Under TSP, the allocation for reducing child labour has been halved to Rs. 15 crore and for the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme it has decreased to Rs. 107 crore from Rs. 131.56 crore. As per the Economic Survey, the expenditure on welfare of the SCs/STs and the OBCs has reduced from 0.67 per cent to 0.57 per cent. Making a case for thoughtful and targeted allocations, Mr. Divakar said that as the growth rate slid from 8.4 per cent to 6.9 per cent — the lowest in seven years — the Human Development Index has worsened, down from 119 in 2010 to 134 in 2011. "What happened to the claim that this growth will lift up the overall condition of the citizen or is this an inclusive growth?" he asked. (The Hindu 17/3/12)

Revert all dalit officials appointed on higher posts : SHSS to CM (2)

Lucknow: Reminding that it was time to deliver now, the Sarvjan Hitay Sanrakshan Samiti (SHSS) on Sunday demanded chief minister to revert all dalit officials which were appointed on higher posts in government departments without following promotion procedure during Mayawati regime. Stressing that the promotions should be based on seniority the SHSS has urged filling of posts lying vacant in large numbers since several years. If the new government acted accordingly it could trigger agitation of dalit employees in the state. To recall, following being pursued by the SHSS, an umbrella body of backward and general category state government employees, Samajwadi party had promised in its election manifesto to scrap the BSP government's policy of quota in promotions. During previous government, owing to this policy junior dalit officials were appointed on higher posts which led to litigation and consequently promotions were blocked in all major government departments. In a letter to Chief Minister, Akhilesh Yadav the SHSS office bearers said, the 16 lakh OBC and general category employees were angry as they were deliberately denied promotions during five years of BSP rule while much junior dalit employees were given postings on prime senior positions. The arbitrary policy of BSP government had paralysed the whole administrative set up by blocking promotions in major government departments. In PWD all three posts of chief engineer (level-1) and 17 posts of chief engineer (level-2) were lying vacant. In UPPCL all 18 posts of chief engineer (level-1) and out of 29 chief engineer (level-2) posts 28 were

vacant since long. Similarly in Irrigation Department all 7 posts of chief engineer (level-1) and 12 posts of level-2 were vacant, the SHSS office bearers said in the letter giving details of vacancies in prominent government departments. The SHSS general secretary, Shailendra Dubey said, the vacancies on senior posts in major government departments have negatively effected the development in state with administrative set up going defunct. The appointment of junior dalit officials on senior posts have given rise to corruption on large scale which should be stopped immediately. Moreover these dalit officials had deliberately given bad entries in ACRs of OBC and general category employees which needed to be corrected under new government, he said. (Pioneer 18/3/12)

Swamis to stage protest against 'made snana' (2)

GULBARGA, March 18, 2012: Swamis of different maths and Dalit organisations opposed to 'made snana' and 'pankthi bhojana' have decided to step up their movement against the practices. State convener of the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (Sagar) D.G. Sagar told presspersons here on Saturday that on March 26, 120 heads of different maths, including Veerabhadra Chennamalla Swami of Nidumamidi Math, would stage a protest at the Freedom Park in Bangalore demanding a ban on 'made snana' and 'pankthi bhojana'. Prominent religious heads who would be participating in the protest include Tontada Siddalinga Swami of the Yediyur Tontadarya Mahasamsthana Math, Gadag-Dambal, Panditharadhya Shivacharya Swamigalu of Sanehalli Math in Chitradurga, and Siddarama Swami of Rudrakshi Math in Belgaum. "It is unfortunate that despite an outcry against these practices, the Government has not responded to the demand to ban them," Mr. Sagar said. In Gulbarga, the State-level protest would be preceded by a dharna and protest march on March 21. The DSS would be joined by members of the Pragatipara Chintakara Vedike in their protest. (The Hindu 18/3/12)

TN: Khaki blind to Dalit plight (2)

CHENNAI: Over two years ago, Usha (28) saw her husband Raja being lynched by a caste Hindu mob in Villupuram in broad daylight. "Over 100 people armed with sickles, iron bars, knives and stones, hit my husband in front of me and my daughters; broke his skull and gouged his eyes out before killing him. What did the police do? Nothing. Two years have passed since the incident occurred. No action has been taken so far," says Usha. She was narrating her plight at a recent public hearing on the 'Atrocities and Non-implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and Tamil Nadu Rules' in the city. Usha's presentation put the glare on caste bias that is very much alive and kicking in our backyard. In fact, less than one per cent of the accused get convicted under the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities (PoA) Act, according to statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau in 2009. And almost 95 per cent of complaints filed by members of the SC/ST community are not even recorded. Of the five per cent of complaints based on which First Information Reports (FIRs) are filed, hardly any move forward as counter cases filed by the accused to render them ineffective. As Bharathan, a Dalit rights activist, who had helped Dalits file 218 FIRs in 2008 under the SC/ST(PoA) Act, points out, "Unless some civil society groups or NGOs support the victim, their complaints are never accepted by the cops." "What is sad to note is, the police often advise the accused on how to come up with the best counter-case, to nullify the victim's complaint. Cops prefer to investigate the counter cases, ignoring the original complaints filed by the victims. Often, FIRs are not filed under the SC/ST Act but under Section 323 of the Indian Penal Code (minor injury) or under Section 294-B of the IPC (singing, reciting or uttering any obscene song, ballad or words, in or near any public place), so it becomes easy later to force Dalits to settle for a compromise." To prove his point, he cites the case of a Arunthaiyar woman, who registered a complaint at Surandai police station in Tirunelveli on February 22. A caste Hindu verbally abused her in public. Though the cops gave the woman a CRS receipt after filing an FIR, they changed the case to that of causing public nuisance, after allegedly consulting the town's panchayat chairman. The case was closed after later. "When a case gets past the FIR into the investigation level, the person who wrote the FIR is king. The way he words it is very important. Most of the time, it is mildly worded with an intention to water down the intensity of the atrocity. Which is one reason why the charges rarely stick and the accused gets acquitted easily. The DSP, who is supposed to investigate the case as per the SC/ST Act is forever missing in action," says Bharathan. On rare occasions, the DSP files a fair investigation report. If and when that happens, he is transferred after the case comes to court, he argues And the investigation is handed over to the local police, who try their best to get the case nullified. Under the SC/ST Act, every district is supposed to have a SC/ST Act monitoring cell, which is a five-member body, presided by the district collector. If a DSP dismisses a case, he has to present it to this cell. Sadly, the district-level

monitoring cells are entirely dysfunctional. When Dalit or tribal women go to police stations, they end up interacting with male cops, not policewomen. The policemen hardly listen to them or take down their grievances, charges Kalpana, advisor, Tamil Nadu Federation of Women Panchayat Leaders. Besides, policemen are often not polite to Dalits, she points out. In fact, 18 per cent of the population in Tamil Nadu comprises Dalits. Tribals constitute one per cent of the population. Yet, job vacancies reserved for them are not filled up, citing spurious reasons, such as lack of "suitable candidates", observes Kalpana. There are about 450 types of discrimination and atrocities practiced by caste Hindus against SC/STs, out of which 32 are visible. The rest fall under various heads of visibility. Some are so well disguised that you can figure them out only if you happen to be a Dalit. For example, a Block Development Officer who was previously posted in the Villathikulam panchayat Union office, would get up every time the Dalit Panchayat president visited him. He would keep standing till the conversation was over – often stretching to 25-30 minutes — to avoid asking the Dalit to take a seat, argue activists. At the public hearing, cases broadly falling under social exclusion — infringement of customary rights to public places like water, road, graveyard, police atrocities resulting in custodial deaths, rape and sexual assault, abuse of women in power at the panchayat level were discussed.(NIE 19/3/12)

Stir for SC/ST sub-plan implementation (2)

VIJAYAWADA, March 20, 2012: The dalit organisations under the aegis of SC, ST Sub Plan Nidhula Sadhana Ikya Karyacharana Committee have staged a dharna in front of Sub Collector's office here demanding the government to implement SC, ST sub plan strictly. The dalit organisations' leaders, on Monday, alleged that the State Government completely ignored the welfare of dalits and their development. The allocations made in the budget and expenditure incurred in last six years proved beyond the doubt that the government was not sincere in its promises made to the dalits. It was unfortunate that the dalits were forced to take up agitations at State level even for trivial issues. The dalit organisations have been demanding the government to provide Cabinet rank to head of the SC,ST Commission, and appoint a retired or sitting High Court judge; the allocations for special component plan (ST Sub Plan) need to be made based on the population. The government was also asked to ensure that the funds were not diverted to other sectors or fields, they said, adding, there was no response from the government. Though statues of Ambedkar were being desecrated, the government did not respond in way it ought to do so. The dalit organisations have decided to organise Chalo Assembly to mount pressure on the government to address the problems and demands of dalits, they said. KVPS city secretary G. Nataraju, city president P. Koteswara Rao, Dravida State State president P. Ratna Raju and others spoke.(The Hindu 20/3/12)

Dalits' group asks Akhilesh to drop Raja Bhaiya (2)

JAIPUR, March 22, 2012: The Centre for Dalit Rights here has requested Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav to drop controversial MLA from Kunda, Raghuraj Pratap Singh alias Raja Bhaiya, from his Cabinet in view of a number of criminal cases pending against him. His induction into the Ministry had sent a "disturbing signal" to marginalised sections, it said. In an open letter addressed to Mr. Yadav, the CDR pointed out that Raja Bhaiya's continuance in the Cabinet would contradict the Samajwadi Party's pledge to provide a clean, efficient, crime-free and corruption-free administration in Uttar Pradesh with the commitment to social justice and rule of law. CDR chief patron, noted lawyer P. L. Mimroth, said the people in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere had high expectations from Mr. Yadav and regarded him as an unbiased, clean, broad-minded and highly qualified person, who had taken over as the youngest Chief Minister in the most populous State. "On the very first day of formation of the Government, your action of including Raja Bhaiya in the Cabinet came as a shock to all law abiding citizens. But you defended the move and said that the cases against Raja Bhaiya were politically motivated and had been registered during the previous regime," stated the letter. Mr. Mimroth pointed out Raja Bhaiya is at present an accused in eight criminal cases which include attempt to murder, abduction, corruption and dacoity. "With his highhandedness and notoriety, he is still considered an ugly face of Uttar Pradesh politics." Mr. Mimroth said raids were conducted at Raja Bhaiya's house after serious allegations were levelled against him and arms and ammunition were recovered. A police officer who raided the house later died in a road accident, which is a case being investigated by the CBI. In addition to Raja Bhaiya, there are 16 other MLAs with criminal records who have been inducted into the Akhilesh Yadav Cabinet, noted Mr. Mimroth. "Since you have got a thumping majority in the Assembly, we fail to understand your compulsion for including such people in the Ministry." "With the revival of this kind of feudal, anti-poor and anti-Dalit

autocratic environment, your Government would erode the Constitutional values and rule of law. Had Ram Manohar Lohia – whose name you always invoke – been alive today, he would never have allowed the Ministry formation in this manner,” said Mr. Mimroth. The CDR demanded that Raja Bhैया and other tainted Ministers be dropped from the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet and Mr. Yadav make a sincere attempt to promote the culture of protecting basic human rights as well as the core values of Constitution. In the largest populated State, only this would ensure justice and fair play to all sections of population, affirmed Mr. Mimroth. (The Hindu 22/3/12)

Two dalit girls in Madhya Pradesh stripped in examination hall (2)

BHOPAL: Two dalit girls appearing for their first board examinations in Narsinghpur district of Madhya Pradesh were allegedly stripped by female invigilators while 40 male students watched. Both of them are 15. The incident took place on March 15 during the Class X mathematics examination, but it was reported to the district administration only on Friday. The alleged outrage happened during an anti-cheating check in the government higher secondary school in Barhebara village. A handful of girls and 40 boys of Barhebara and neighbouring villages were appearing for the examination. The female examiners involved, Preeti Sharma and Reshma Simaiya, suspected that some students were using paper bits to copy and picked the two minor girls and asked them to strip. One of the girls told sub-divisional magistrate (Gadarwara) P N Yadav that when she refused to obey the examiner's orders, one of them allegedly shouted: "Strip, or I will cut the cord of your salwar." When the girls refused, the examiners allegedly stripped them while male classmates sniggered and cracked jokes. Nothing was found to suggest they had cheated and the girls were allowed to leave after the three-hour test was over. The girls did not inform their family members for the next nine days. Finally on Friday, they broke down before their parents, who complained to the district administration. The administration has ordered an inquiry. Speaking to TOI, Narsinghpur district collector Sanjay Singh said: "A complaint has been registered with us and we have asked the block education officer to start a probe immediately and submit a report. It is a serious allegation and we are expecting the report to reach us by Saturday after which the administration will be in a position to comment." (Times of India 24/3/12)

Dalit bodies petition Manmohan (2)

ONGOLE, March 25, 2012: Various dalit organisations on Saturday launched an inland letter campaign to draw Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's attention for enactment of law by Parliament for effective implementation of the Special Component Plan for SCs and Tribal Sub-Plan for STs. Launching the campaign at the Ambedkar Bhavan here, Dalit Hakula Parirakshana Samiti district president Neelam Nagender Rao said "such a law will build confidence among SCs and STs and ensure overall development of the communities". A bill in both houses of Parliament should be adopted to put an end to diversion and lapse of funds allotted for welfare of SCs and STs, Mala Mahanadu district president Dasari Malayadri felt. He lamented that implementation of the SCSP and TSP in the last 30 years had been tardy. Rajaka Reservation Porata Samiti district president Jayaram urged Dr Singh to strengthen the SCSP and TSP. (The Hindu 25/3/12)

SC, ST bodies firm on 'Chalo Assembly' (2)

HYDERABAD, March 26, 2012: A last minute appeal by the government to call off the 'Chalo Assembly' being organised by several Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes organisations on Monday has been rejected. The rally is being held under the banner of 'SC, ST Sub-plan Nidhula Sadhana Ikya Karyacharana Committee' to protest against the diversion of funds meant for the uplift of Dalits and Girijans. Former Chief Secretary Kaki Madhav Rao is the chairman of the committee which is seeking enactment of a special law to prevent diversion of funds and a two-day debate on the issue in the ongoing Assembly session. Deputy Chief Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha urged various organisations to call off the protest. He said the government was determined to ensure that funds allocated under Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan were not diverted and steps would be taken for proper implementation. He said MPs, MLAs and MLCs belonging to SC community would meet on Monday, discuss the measures to be taken for proper implementation of the funds and bring the same to the notice of Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy. Textiles Minister G. Prasad Kumar and Congress MPs T. Rajaiah and Balaram Naik also visited the hunger strike camp where representatives of various organisations have been on a 72-hour fast since March 23 and urged them not to go ahead with 'Chalo

Assembly'. TRS leaders K.T. Rama Rao, former Minister A. Chandrashekhara and New Democracy leader G. Diwakar participated in a day-long fast to express solidarity with those observing 72-hour fast which will end on Monday. (The Hindu 26/3/12)

Uproar over death of Dalit youth in Bikaner (2)

JAIPUR, March 29, 2012: The Rajasthan Assembly witnessed noisy scenes during Zero Hour on Wednesday over the death of a Dalit youth in Bikaner. Opposition members alleged police torture of Kishenlal, a daily wage earner whose body was fished out of a canal in Chattargarh area of Bikaner on February 26. Minister of State for Home Virendra Beniwal, who intervened in the discussion, said investigation into the case had been handed over to an officer of the level of Inspector-General of Police. "The inquiry will bring out the truth," he said. The Minister also informed the Assembly that the family of the victim had been provided with a relief of Rs.1.5 lakh. The issue was raised by Chandra Kanta Meghwal of the BJP who alleged that the police had tortured the person. Kishenlal and his brother along with some others were locked up in the police station and were tortured, she charged. Ms. Meghwal demanded an ex gratia of Rs.10 lakh to the victim's family and a Government job to a member. Communist Party of India (Marxist) member Amra Ram, who suspected a police role in the death of the Dalit youth, demanded suspension of the entire staff at the police station concerned. Gulab Chand Kataria of the BJP cautioned the Government against protecting the police personnel responsible for the death. Mr. Beniwal said the Government was "sensitive" to the issue and there would not be any effort for a cover-up. "That is why the Chief Minister has instituted an inquiry by a police officer of IG rank. We will maintain transparency in the investigations," he promised. (The Hindu 29/3/12)

Dalits question Vittala's arrest, SP says police have proof (2)

BANGALORE, April 2, 2012: The items seized from Vittala's house and recorded in the First Information Report did not warrant booking him under the charge of waging a war against the State, a Dalit activist said here on Saturday during the monthly meeting organised by the district police to address grievances of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. Shekar Layla of the Dalit Rights Committee, Belthangady, was referring to the arrest of Vittala, a post-graduate journalism student at Mangalore University on March 3 for allegedly aiding Maoists. Vittala belongs to the Malekudiya, Scheduled Tribe community and lives in Kuthlur village of Belthangady taluk. Mr. Layla claimed that 250 grams of tea powder, sugar, some utensils, a pair of binoculars, and alleged Maoist literature had been found in Vittala's house based on which, the charge of waging war against the State had been made out against him in the FIR. Superintendent of Police Abhishek Goyal said the police could not reveal the information they had obtained during the course of their investigation, but maintained that they had "more evidence" than what had been recorded in the FIR. Mr. Layla said he had not asked about the information gleaned during the police custody, but wanted to know how the items listed in the FIR could be proof of waging war against the State. Mr. Goyal said that Vittala had been accused of abetting naxalites and being a member of a Maoist group. Mr. Layla alleged that the police had booked Vittala in order to cover up the injuries inflicted on his father Linganna by the Anti-Naxal Force. He said that Mr. Linganna had sustained injuries to his left leg. The Superintendent of Police, Civil Rights Enforcement Cell, Sarvottam Pai, said that Mr. Vittala had not said anything before the judge when the duo were produced before the judge. (The Hindu 2/4/12)

Letter to Chief Justice on alleged human sacrifice (2)

Bangalore, April 3, 2012: Pro-Dalit groups have written to Chief Justice of India S.H. Kapadia and Chief Justice of Karnataka Vikramajit Sen to take suo motu cognisance of the "human sacrifice" reported in Tirumaladevarakoppa in Ranebennur taluk of Haveri district, a few months ago and order either a judicial probe or hand over the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation. In a letter written to Mr. Kapadia and Mr. Sen on March 20, the group stated that 17-year-old Basavaraj, a Dalit, was "sacrificed" on November 26 by the "upper caste" family of Basanagowda Ningannagowda Gowdaru in Haveri. They added that the sacrifice was "part of a tantric ritual carried out by an 'upper caste' landlord to correct the 'vaastu' defects of his newly-built house". "It is a matter of deep anguish and concern that a medieval practice like this can take place in the 21st century. It is a serious challenge to the word and spirit of our rational and egalitarian Constitution. It is learnt that the district administration, the State government and other statutory bodies have either tried to suppress the truth or have callously looked the other way. At the core of this suppression and indifference, we suspect, there is a caste and class element at work," the letter reads. The group has urged the Chief Justices to take suo motu cognisance of the issue to "arrest the palpable downward slide of society". (The Hindu 3/4/12)

Dalits plan temple entry agitation (2)

Tirupur, April 5, 2012: Dalits in Vellakoil block on Wednesday decided to take out a temple entry agitation at 'New Uthamapalayam Mariamman temple' in the locality on April 14. They have been fighting for an unrestricted access to the temple without any caste discrimination since the alleged denial of entry to the Dalits from Uthamapalayam, Dasavanaickenpatti and nearby hamlets, all in Vellakoil block, by the upper caste Hindus in 2010. "We are now going for the temple entry as Revenue Divisional Officer of Dharapuram did not include the Dalits in the talks scheduled on the day to resolve the issue pertaining to denial of unrestricted entry to people of all castes into the said temple," Uthamapalayam temple entry agitation committee convener S. Karuppaiah told The Hindu. The 'New Uthamapalayam temple', according to Mr Karuppaiah, has been built by the upper caste Hindus who had stated that allowing the entry of Dalits into the original Uthamapalayam temple from 2005 made the shrine lose its sanctity. Dharapuram RDO R. Alagumeena clarified to The Hindu that the talks which were to be held on the day, to settle the issue amicably by involving both the parties, had been postponed to April 11 only due to administrative reasons. (The Hindu 5/4/12)

U.P. Dalits fear reversal of quota in promotion (2)

LUCKNOW, April 5, 2012: With speculation rife that the Samajwadi Party government may follow the Allahabad High Court ruling on reservation in job promotions, Dalit organisations want the government to wait till the Supreme Court delivers its verdict in the case. The judgment has been reserved by the apex court. In its Assembly election manifesto, the ruling party had said that on issues pertaining to reservation in promotions, it would act in accordance with the High Court order. The Lucknow Bench in its judgment dated January 4, 2011 quashed the Mayawati government's decision granting reservation in promotions. A Special Leave Petition was filed in the Supreme Court against the order by the Bahujan Samaj Party government and some organisations on February 28, 2011. Allowing the SLP, a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court ordered that "status quo, as it exists today, shall be maintained by the parties until further orders." The judgment was reserved on February 15, 2012. A delegation of the Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Mahasabha met Chief Secretary Javed Usmani and apprised him of the apex court's ruling on the maintenance of status quo and the judgment being reserved on February 15, 2012. In a memorandum, the Ambedkar Mahasabha said the government should wait for the Supreme Court's verdict. It also mentioned the 77th and 85th amendments to the Constitution on reservation in promotions and seniority. (The Hindu 5/4/12)

Students refuse meal cooked by dalits (2)

HAZARIBAG: Nearly 500 students (both girls and boys), studying at the Pahar Middle School in Keredari block of Hazaribag district, boycotted the midday meal served to them on Wednesday as they were prepared by two dalit cooks. Reports reaching the district headquarters on Thursday said the two new cooks - Anita Devi and Jitni Devi - both dalits, were selected during a general meeting of the Gram Shiksha Samiti on March 27. Tulsi Sao, the headmaster as well as the secretary of the managing committee, said, "At the meeting, 12 members of the samiti, including the panchayat samiti member Umera Khatun, were present. Khatun, along with the other members, approved of the appointments." But on Wednesday when the students were asked to collect their meal from the kitchen, they reportedly refused to consume the food as it was cooked by two dalits. Surprisingly, Khatun joined the agitating students supporting the boycott. It, however, could not be ascertained how the students came to know that the cooks were dalits. Sao said, "I am trying to identify the guardians who influenced the students to boycott the meal. After that I will submit a report to the district collector and the police so that action can be taken against those who propagated casteism and untouchability in the village." DC Manish Ranjan described the boycott as a serious issue and said he has constituted a three-member probe team headed by the DDC, Debar Joko, district education officer (DEO) and the district superintendent of education (DSE). They will submit a report to him within three days. He also directed the DEO and DSE to create awareness, both among teachers and students, about the evils of casteism and untouchability. (Times of India 6/4/12)

Dalit girl raped, three held (2)

Sheikhpura (Bihar), April 7, 2012: Three persons have been arrested for allegedly raping a Dalit girl in Bihar's Sheikhpura district, a police officer said. "Dinesh Yadav, Sadhu Sav and Sudhir Yadav — were arrested for gang-rape the girl on Thursday night," Sub-Divisional Police Officer Santosh Kumar said. He said the accused stopped the girl at an isolated place near the Kaurihari river and attacked her. She was returning with her family after visiting a fair in Farpar village. — PTI (The Hindu 7/4/12)

Census bares manual scavenging shocker (2)

New Delhi, April 7: Manual scavenging is still widespread and India has a long way to go in getting rid of the scourge, rural development minister Jairam Ramesh has said. Over 1 per cent of all households in the country still rely on the practice and neither urban nor rural areas are immune to it, Ramesh said on Tuesday citing recent census data. "The census results are a shocker. Manual scavenging is very much there in the country. It is prevalent in rural as well as in urban areas. We have a long way to go to abolish it," Ramesh told The Telegraph. The admission comes in the middle of plans by the government to bring a law to stamp out the blight after an existing one remained largely on paper. Around 25 crore households — nearly 12 lakh in rural areas and 13 lakh in urban areas — depend on manual scavengers to remove night soil from the latrines, Ramesh said. (See chart) According to the census data, there are 7.94 lakh dry latrines in the country where excreta is cleaned by scavengers. In over 13 lakh toilets, the waste is flushed into open drains and cleaned by humans. The Sonia Gandhi-headed National Advisory Council had in October recommended that the government take steps in co-ordination with states to end the "shameful" practice of manual scavenging by March this year. Parliament had enacted the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrine (Prohibition) Act in 1993. Under the law, hiring scavengers and construction of dry (non-flush) latrines were offences punishable with imprisonment of up to a year and a fine of Rs 2,000. However, the law has rarely been enforced, the NAC had said, and recommended amendments to penalise officials responsible for not implementing the act. The government, though, is likely to repeal the old act and bring in a new one to tackle the problem, sources said. Earlier this week, the Centre told the Supreme Court during a hearing that the proposed legislation would be brought in Parliament's monsoon session. The new law may include provisions for rehabilitating those engaged in manual scavenging in other economic activities, according to the sources. Ramesh said his ministry had decided to appoint over eight lakh accredited social health activists as "sanitation ambassadors" in rural areas. (Telegraph 8/4/12)

Mild tension as Ambedkar statue found desecrated (2)

CHITTOOR: Mild tension prevailed at Kattamanchi on the outskirts of Chittoor town following the reported desecration of the statue of Dr. Ambedkar by some unidentified miscreants in the early hours of Monday. The residents of the Dalit colony, where the statue is said to have existed for the last two decades, who noticed the incident, held a massive sit-in on the roads throwing traffic into a disarray for nearly four hours on the Tirupati and Puttur roads. The demonstrators agreed to lift the blockade only after District Collector Solomon Arokiyaraj promised that he would take immediate steps to re-erect a statue for Dr. Ambedkar at the same spot with a budget outlay of Rs.1 lakh and take steps to nab those who were behind the 'heinous act'. Later, all party leaders who held a meeting at Chittoor strongly condemned the increasing attack on the statue of the author of the Constitution and warned that they would hold the government squarely responsible for such incidents if it recurred in future. (The Hindu 10/4/12)

Dalits denied water in K'pada village (2)

KENDRAPADA: A Dalit ward in Ghagara gram panchayat under Nikirai police limits was denied Government pipe water facility by the sarpanch who took the decision at the behest of her father because many residents of the ward did not cast their votes to her during the recently concluded panchayat elections. According to police sources, Ghagara sarpanch Banodini Parida did not allow any development work to take place, including connection of a Government-sponsored water pipe line, in a Dalit ward of the panchayat at the behest of her father Balaram Parida. Balaram blocked the pipe water project in the ward for avenging on the residents who did not cast their votes to her daughter. This led to an altercation between Balaram and a Dalit member of the ward and Balaram Parida made casteist remarks on him besides using filthy language. Later, both Balaram and the Dalit member lodged FIRs against each other at Nikirai police station. When contacted, Nikirai police station IIC Manashi Patra said she had received two complaints and was conducting an investigation into the alleged matter. (Pioneer 10/4/12)

National Commission for Scheduled Castes panel upset over low government spending (2)

GANDHINAGAR: The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has taken strong exception to the state government failing to allocate enough funds for the welfare of the dalits in Gujarat. Winding up its stay in the state, NCSC chairman PL Punia told newsmen on Thursday that while the dalit population in Gujarat is 7 per cent, the state government allocated only 4.5 per cent of the annual plan for the welfare of Gujarat dalits. A statement on budgetary allocation for SC welfare, handed over to the commission, suggests that out of Rs 30,000 crore annual plan allocation in 2010-11, SC sub-plan got just Rs 1,331.79 crore, which is 4.45 per cent of the total. The statement, shown by a senior state official to TOI, suggested that out of Rs 1,331.79 crore allocation for the SCs, Gujarat government actually spent

must less - Rs 752.82 crore, which comes to merely 56.53 per cent. Punia alleged that even the money shown as "expenditure" for SC welfare is actually not spent for the benefit of the dalits. "A big sum goes to building roads, bridges, water supply facilities, educational infrastructure, all of which is used by all sections of society. This became clear during our interaction with government officials led by state social justice and empowerment minister Fakirbhai Vaghela. We believe, the spending must be need-based," he said. Punia, who also met chief minister Narendra Modi, said the government has failed to implement the reservation law in its true spirit. "Several states have enacted new laws to ensure that the scope of reservation is widened to cover areas outside the government. Gujarat has refused to heed our advice. We have asked the state government to extend reservation to the co-operatives and to those employed by firms to which the government outsources its activities," he stressed. During his interaction with Modi, Punia raised the issue of failure to comply with the provision to call the meeting of state-level monitoring committee for SCs once in every six months. "After 1999, the government held its meeting in 2004. Thereafter, it met in 2006, 2008 and February 2010. After February 2010, the monitoring committee, chaired by Modi, has not met," he said. Punia said the need for holding monitoring committee meeting is particularly important in a state like Gujarat, where the conviction rate for atrocities cases is 3.5 per cent as against the all-India average of 34 per cent. Then, there have been reports of continuing practice of manual scavenging, untouchability and refusal of entry into temples, he suggested. (Times of India 13/4/12)

Manual scavenging remains a reality despite ban (2)

Lucknow: It is the 121st birth anniversary of the father of India's Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar who fought against untouchability and manual scavenging. CNN-IBN shows how in the heart of Lucknow, practices like manual scavenging and untouchability still exist, raising questions over the government's claims to have successfully enforced the ban in six months. In 1984, an alcoholic husband and her children going hungry forced Vimla to sell her jewellery, gather Rs 2,000 and 'buy' the right to manually clean toilets from another worker. Now, close to two decades after manual scavenging was banned, she continues clean toilets in over 40 homes and makes just Rs 4,000 per month. "Nothing has changed in my life. People came and went, kept saying I will get a job, but I never got one. I don't have an option, but to do this," Vimla said. One of the homes that Vimla cleans is that of Farzana's. Farzana runs a tea stall, but her house has a dry toilet. "If Vimla does not come for 15 days, there are worms in the house, there is a threat of illness also," Farzana said. In the narrow streets of Lucknow, there are hundreds of dry toilets and there are at least 80 known cases of people like Vimla who do this for a living. In Lucknow's Ayaganj, Wazirabad, Sadaganj, Bilospura and Turiaganj, there are hundreds of such dry toilets. The latest census reveals that across India there are nearly 8 lakh homes that rely on human beings to clean their dry toilets and another 5 lakh rely on animals. Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Mukul Wasnik said, "There is lack of information. Also, we have a law that bans employment of manual scavengers and construction of dry latrines, but we don't have a single prosecution. The Centre is now thinking of bringing in a new law to fight this shame, but perhaps what is sorely lacking is political will. (CNN IBN 14/4/12)

Centre to tell states to check crime on dalits (2)

NEW DELHI: The Centre is set to tell states that they are not doing enough to check crimes against dalits at a special meet called by the Union home ministry to underline the statistics that have triggered concern. Union home minister P Chidambaram will on Tuesday meet state home ministers and social justice ministers to flag rising crimes against SCs and STs. The issue has turned serious because the prosecution system in states remains weak despite stringent demands of the Prevention of Atrocities Act. Sources said social justice minister Mukul Wasnik and tribal affairs minister Kishore Chandra Deo would make presentations to exhort the states to address the concerns of socially vulnerable groups. The worry is evident from home ministry calling the meeting after requests from Wasnik, though social justice ministry meets state social welfare secretaries annually. The invite to the home ministers is significant as they are in charge of crime and prosecution while social welfare departments have limited mandate of welfare schemes and policies. Since chief ministers in most states hold the home portfolio, the expectations from the gathering are high. The statistics with the Centre underline the seriousness of the problem. Ten states led by Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh account for 93% of the crimes against SCs, while MP, Rajasthan, Andhra, Chhattisgarh and Odisha are among the 10 states which alone witness 95% of anti-tribal atrocities. In contrast, the prosecution machinery is inadequate to deal with the magnitude of the problem. The conviction rate is as low as 32.5% while pendency of cases in 2008-10 stood at 80.6%. The states have been indifferent in taking the initiatives laid out by the atrocities law to help these vulnerable sections. Only three states have set up 'special police stations' for anti-SC/ST crimes, with Bihar having nine, Chhattisgarh 12 and MP 48. The

states have been lax in identifying atrocity-prone areas, a measure suggested by the prevention law to help pre-empt crime against SCs and STs. Importantly, the atrocities law also provides for periodical review of performance of special public prosecutors and of prosecution of cases. Sources said few states follow up on this provision. (Times of India 16/4/12)

State stands exposed on implementation of SC & ST Act (2)

HYDERABAD, April 16, 2012: There is nothing much the State can showcase at the National Conference of Home Ministers on the effective implementation of SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, scheduled to be held in New Delhi on April 17. The State stands fourth in the country in number of crimes registered under the Act between 1995 and 2007, according to data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and cited in '20 years of SC & ST Prevention of Atrocities Act' published by National Coalition for Strengthening SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The three other States which report higher incidence of crimes against Dalits are Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Further, the High-Level State Vigilance and Monitoring Committee, headed by the Chief Minister has not met once since February 2010, while it is mandated by the Act that it has to meet twice a year – in January and June, legal coordinator of Sakshi Human Rights Watch, A Srinivasulu said. Even under RTI the government has provided details of the 2010 meeting and nothing after that, he added. Prior to February 2010, the committee met only in August 2008, according to the minutes of the meetings submitted to the High Court, Srinivasulu said. In response to a public interest litigation filed in the High Court in 2006 on effective implementation of the Act, all the consecutive Directors-General of Police have conceded there were delays in completion of investigation of cases and blamed the system for the same. The reasons for the delays and also the possible solutions have been repeated, he pointed out. The State can only take consolation that it has responded to another PIL filed in the Supreme Court in 2006. Till 2011 only 13 States, three Union Territories, Union of India, Union ministries of Home Affairs and Social Justice have filed their responses and 22 other respondents have failed to file counters, National Convenor of the National Coalition for Strengthening of SC & ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, Sirivella Prasad, said. At the district level the Collector and the district Superintendent of Police along with other officials and members of civil society, mainly SCs and STs, are supposed to meet every month to monitor the implementation of the Act. Since the district level monitoring committees do not meet regularly the police are able to get away by not registering cases or diluting the cases, coordinator of Dalit Watch Leslie Martin said. There are cases where the complaint is registered under wrong section and or the police officer directs the parties to arrive at a compromise, he added. (The Hindu 16/4/12)

Attack on beef fest against 'food fascism' (2)

Hyderabad, April 16: A student was stabbed and injured last night as violence flared at Osmania University over a "beef festival" organised by Dalit students to assert their right to eat their traditional food on the campus. The government, worried that the issue may snowball and re-ignite the Telangana movement at its epicentre, has swamped the campus with paramilitary and police who caned the fighting students and fired tear gas. Still, skirmishes continued this morning and classes were closed. Satyanarayana, a member of BJP student wing ABVP which allegedly tried to disrupt the festival last evening by throwing stones at the diners, was attacked and stabbed past midnight at his hostel. His wounds are not grievous, hospital doctors said. Dalit student bodies — some of them pro-Telangana — organised the festival with support from Left student groups in protest against the "food fascism" that keeps beef out of campus canteens. Dalit students allege they are taunted by their upper caste peers for eating beef at home. Ironically, a beef stall has been a regular feature — and a major attraction — at the annual fest, Sukoon, of the nearby University of Hyderabad since 2006 and nobody objects to it. Last evening, as beef biryani was being served at Osmania to 200-odd people — including students, teachers and rights activists who had been invited — a group of about 50 students, allegedly from the ABVP, arrived and hurled stones. This triggered overnight sticks-and-stones battles on the campus, leaving six students injured and several vehicles, including a state bus and a media van, in flames. All the roads leading to the university have been sealed. The issue has been resonating on Twitter since yesterday, with festival supporters and opponents bashing each other in 140 characters. Writer and Dalit rights activist Meena Kandasamy, an invitee to the festival, tweeted how she had to be escorted out in a police vehicle. Last year, too, Osmania's Dalit students had planned a beef festival but were dissuaded. With their number growing from 1,200 in 2011 to 2,000 this year, they were more determined this time. Vice-chancellor S. Satyanarayana said he had not been approached for permission and asserted the event could not be allowed given the history of caste tensions on the campus. However, the organisers pooh-poohed the idea that holding such an event required permission. They received support from P.L. Vishweshwar Rao, a former professor of communications and journalism at the university, who said

students had the right to eat a particular food. He said the police and the university administration had failed to protect the students participating in the festival. "Beef is a basic Dalit food. We want this upper caste hostility towards it to end," said Kancha Ilaiah, a Dalit ideologue who teaches at the university. Some 200kg of beef was bought for the festival, organised by the Telangana Students' Association, Progressive Democratic Students' Union, the CPM-affiliated SFI and students from the English and Foreign Languages University across the street. The guest list of activists included Ilaiah, S. Simhadri, Gali Vinod Kumar, Vishweshwar Rao, Hangya Bhukya, Gogu Shyamala and G. Aloysius. A couple of days ago, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had said the festival would be opposed on the ground of hurting religious sentiments. (Telegraph 17/4/12)

All accused in 1996 Bihar Dalit carnage acquitted (2)

Patna, April 17, 2012: The Patna High Court has acquitted all the 23 persons accused of perpetrating the massacre of 21 Dalits at Bathani Tola in Bhojpur in 1996. The accused were convicted by the sessions court in Ara district and sentenced in May 2010. While three persons were awarded capital punishment, the remaining twenty were handed life imprisonment. A Division Bench of judges Navneeti Prasad Singh and Ashwani Kumar Singh cited "defective evidence" to acquit all of them. The carnage took place on the afternoon of July 11, 1996. Upper caste (Rajput and Bhumihar) landowners of the Ranvir Sena — a private militia of the landlords — stormed Bathani Tola in Bhojpur district's Sahar block in Central Bihar and ruthlessly hacked the Dalits, among them women, teenage girls and babies less than 10 months old. Ajay Singh was charged with brutally killing 10-year-old Phool Kumari, Manoj Singh was charged with the murder of the three-month-old daughter of Naimuddin (one of the prime eyewitnesses) and Nagender alias Narendra Singh was charged with slaughtering two women, Sanjharu and Ramratiya Devi. They were awarded the death sentence by the sessions court Bathani Tola, along with Laxmanpur-Bathe (where more than 60 Dalit men, women and children were slaughtered by the Ranvir Sena), have since become bywords for caste massacres that engulfed central Bihar from the mid-1990s onwards. An FIR was lodged against 33 people the day after the massacre. In all, the Bhojpur police framed charges against 63 persons in October 1996. "I am shocked by the High Court verdict," said Anand Vatsyayan, counsel for the witnesses in the Bathani Tola case. "The evidence at hand was more than sufficient to uphold the judgement passed by the Ara sessions court. "The Supreme Court guidelines in the event of a massacre are quite clear. The eyewitnesses need not remember all the names. And, of the six prime witnesses questioned in this case, all had conclusively pointed fingers at the persons convicted by the lower court." In July last year, the supremo of the Ranvir Sena, Brahmeshwar Singh "Mukhiya," known as the 'Butcher of Bathani Tola,' walked out of Ara Jail. Mr. Vatsyayan, however, said a case (no. 37/10) was on against the Mukhiya in the Ara sessions court and the evidence of official witnesses was being awaited. (The Hindu 17/4/12)

'Assault' of Dalits: police urged to arrest accused (2)

Hassan, April 18, 2012: Dalits of Naganahalli in Hassan taluk staged a protest in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Tuesday demanding arrest of people from 'upper castes' who allegedly assaulted Dalit youths and women in the village recently. The protesters submitted a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner K.P. Mohan Raj demanding security to Dalit families and suitable action against the accused. Kumar, one of the protesters, alleged that around 10 people from upper castes attacked youths and women of the Dalit colony on April 14, Ambedkar Jayanti. Jayalakshmi, also a resident of the Dalit colony, said that she was attacked by 'upper caste' youths and she suffered injury in her right hand. She said seven more injured were being treated at the government hospital in Hassan. They have also filed a complaint with Shantigram police. Police have been deployed in Naganahalli. Convener of the Hassan district unit of the Dalit Sangharsh Samiti B.P. Jayaram led the protest. (The Hindu 18/4/12)

Rape victim dies in hospital after suicide bid (2)

JAIPUR: A 16-year-old Dalit girl who attempted suicide by setting herself on fire after she was allegedly raped at Jasti Ka Bagh village in Sikar district succumbed to her injuries on Tuesday. She had sustained 60% burns and was being treated at SMS hospital since April 3. The family staged a dharna outside Vidhan Sabha and are demanding ex gratia of Rs 20 lakh. After sustaining more than 60 % burns, Suman, a Class VIII student, was admitted to the burns ward of SMS hospital on April 3. Meanwhile, as the doctors tried hard to bring her back, her parents had a hard time lodging an FIR against the accused. On Tuesday morning, the doctors informed Girdhari Lal that his daughter was no more. Later, the infuriated family members alleged that the police were harassing them and were not allowing them to take back the body as they had staged a dharna in front of the Vidhan Sabha. "When she was raped nobody at Neem Ka Thana police station registered a complaint. The case was registered after three days.

Though the accused, Rajaram Jaat, 23, has been arrested, our family is getting anonymous calls to withdraw the case and negotiate," alleged Jeetendra, uncle of the victim. He said senior police officers are trying to save the rape accused. (Times of India 18/4/12)

'Wall of untouchability' demolished (2)

SALEM, April 20, 2012: The wall that separated Dalits of Senkodan Nagar in Narasothipatti in Ward 3 here from others was demolished on Thursday. On instructions from Collector K. Maharabushanam, a team of officials from Revenue and Police Departments and Salem Municipal Corporation visited the spot and assessed the situation after The Hindu carried a report on the 10-feet-long and 5-feet high "wall of untouchability" that was erected right across the tar-topped 20-foot road in Meenakshi Nagar, where caste Hindus live. The wall had prevented 300 Arundathiar families living in Senkodan Nagar next to Meenakshi Nagar, from using the road that was laid by Salem Corporation some 30 years ago. RDO S. Prasanna Ramasamy told The Hindu that the wall should not have been erected across the road. "Our Collector personally supervised the whole issue and wanted us to sort it out as per law," he said. A team of officials from Salem Corporation led by Executive Engineer A. Asokan pasted a warning notice on the wall at 11 am on Thursday telling those who erected the wall to demolish it before 4 p.m. "Otherwise, the Corporation will demolish it and collect demolition charge from the persons concerned," it warned. But till 4 p.m., nobody had turned up to demolish the wall. Therefore, the civic body under Section 256 of the Salem Municipal Corporation Act 1994 pulled it down with the help of earthmover. Meanwhile, tension mounted in the locality with members of the Salem unit of the Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Committee, Bahajun Samaj Party and other Dalit outfits demanding immediate demolition of the wall. They warned that they would take up the task of demolishing the wall if the Corporation failed to do so. Heavy police pickets were posted at the site to prevent any untoward incident. S. Palanisamy, who took up the wall issue, said that more than 300 Arundathiar Dalit families of Senkodan Nagar had been using the road for the past three decades. "But the controversial wall came up all in a sudden and prevented us from using it," he said. (The Hindu 20/4/12)

Dalit body wants sops for sweepers (2)

GUWAHATI: The representatives of Harijan Sewak Sangh, in a meeting on Sunday, demanded BPL cards, permanent housing facilities and reservations for manual scavengers (sweepers) in different departments. MLA Robin Bordoloi, East Guwahati constituency, who was present at the meeting, said, "Dalits form a very important part of society and we have to appreciate their contribution to our civilization." Vivekananda Doloi, member of the committee said, "Dalits are one of the 16 sub-castes of the schedule castes and we want to uplift their economic status". "A survey to identify the number of Dalits working as manual scavengers has started. Based on the report, incentives would be provided. A special scheme to distribute sewing machines to the harijan women has also been initiated and an exclusive colony would be set up for the clan." he added. Pradip Basfor one of the representatives said, "We would not say that we have not received any benefits from the government, but we want the government to restart the survey on manual scavengers again, also we want permanent housing facilities for those living in the Dalit colonies." "It often happens that some construction work starts in our colony and we are asked to vacate our houses. We want permanent homes for those living in the Dalit colonies. Besides, Dalit workers who lose their lives while working under hazardous conditions should get proper compensation." he said. "The government should ask the district collectors to start issuing BPL cards to the Dalits as soon as possible." he added. (Times of India 23/4/12)

Two booked for raping Dalit girl (2)

BHANDARA: A rape case was filed against two youths from a backward class by the victim's mother at Lakhni police station on Saturday. The youths confessed to their guilt during interrogation and were booked under sections 376 and 3(1) (12) of Prevention of Atrocities on SC/ST Act of Indian Penal Code. According to the complaint, the teenaged victim was raped by two youths in the jungle. The victim was also from Dalit community studying in a school in Lakhni. She was taken to the jungle of Kesalwada in Khutsawari, 10km from Lakhni, by Pramod alias Kalya Bawankule (22) and Kartik Borkar (19), both residents of Murmadi village. The victim's mother said that the youths gave her some tablets to make her unconscious and raped her. They also took her pictures during the act and sent them to their friends via Bluetooth. The mother came to know of the obscene pictures after four months of the incident. Assistant superintendent of police Dr Abhinav Deshmukh said, "Such incidents happen in rural areas but most cases are not reported due to fear of defamation. A similar incident occurred in Palora village in the jurisdiction of Adyal police station two months ago. The accused were arrested and are in jail," he said. (Times of India 24/4/12)

High Court Bench restrains police from arresting lawyer (2)

MADURAI, April 24, 2012: The Madras High Court Bench here on Monday restrained the police from arresting or harassing P. Rathinam, a 66-year-old lawyer, in connection with a criminal case registered against him by the Othakadai police near here on charges of abusing some Dalits by their caste name. Justice D. Hariparanthaman passed the interim order pursuant to a writ petition filed and argued by the lawyer on the ground that a false complaint had been lodged against him though in reality he had been working to uplift the Dalits by fighting for their cause legally in courts. According to the petitioner, he was whitewashing a wall outside the High Court premises on September 1, 2010 along with a Dalit lawyer named V. Murugan. A few people belonging to the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) objected to it. It led to a clash between them. Mr. Murugan lodged a police complaint with regard to the incident. Later, a case was filed in the High Court Bench seeking a direction to register a case on the basis of the complaint. Disposing it of last month, Justice K.K. Sasidharan directed the police to register the case. Subsequently, the police registered a case on the basis of Murugan's complaint as well as counter case against him and Mr. Rathinam on the basis of a complaint lodged by the VCK cadres who alleged that the latter had abused them by their caste name. Alleging that the complaint lodged against him was nothing but a bundle of lies, the petitioner sought for a direction to quash the FIR registered against him and Murugan besides an order to the State Government to pay adequate compensation to the Dalit lawyer. (The Hindu 24/4/12)

Dalits fighting for temple entry rights threaten to move court (2)

Tirupur, April 26, 2012: Dalits in Vellakoil block who are fighting to gain unrestricted access to Uthamapalayam New Mariamman temple without any caste discrimination, have threatened to move Madras High Court if the authorities concerned did not find an amicable solution to the issue immediately. "We are contemplating to move the court because the talks planned by Dharapuram Revenue Divisional Officer involving Dalits and upper caste Hindus who were preventing us from entering the temple, to solve the issue, got postponed without any valid reason been told to us," Uthampalayam temple entry agitation committee convener S. Karuppaiah told The Hindu . He pointed out that the talks were scheduled on as many as three occasions this month itself, including the one on Wednesday (April 25), but only to find that it was cancelled at the last moment. He said even the petition sent through our counsel to the Dharapuram RDO on April 11 asking the official to uphold the rights of individuals of any caste or religion to worship without religious disabilities too did not get any favourable response. The Dalits started the fight for temple entry after they were denied access to the temple in 2010. Meanwhile, revenue sources told this paper that the meeting scheduled on Wednesday was postponed because Revenue Divisional Officer R. Alagumeena had to attend or a high-level official meeting on the day. (The Hindu 26/4/12)

Dalit youth, victim of honour killing (2)

CHENNAI, May 1, 2012: In yet another case of suspected honour killing, the Tirunelveli district police on Friday arrested four persons on charges of murdering a Dalit youth who fell in love with a caste Hindu girl. According to police sources, S. Elango (25) of Periyar Nagar in Erode was invited for a discussion by his girlfriend's maternal uncle and his former employer Saravanan. When he went to see him in a village near Munnirpallam on August 5, 2011, Saravanan and his associates took Elango to an isolated place and murdered him. The body was thrown into a pond. Since the victim could not be identified, police disposed of the body after preserving the skull. Elango's family did not lodge a police complaint since they were under the impression that he had gone to seek his fortunes in the film industry, which was his long-cherished dream. Deputy Inspector General of Police (Tirunelveli Range) V. Varadaraju said a special team formed to re-investigate the case followed specific clues and apprehended Saravanan and his associates Maharajan, Isakki Pandian and Kannan. The accused confessed to having murdered Elango. "The body was identified by Elango's brother last week. We will also go for DNA profiling for scientific confirmation. Though the youth was missing for about six months, his parents did not lodge a complaint with the police," he said. Giving details of the case, Mr. Varadaraju said Elango was employed in a grocery owned by Saravanan in Tirupur. When Saravanan's niece P. Selvalakshmi (18) came to the shop on a few occasions, Elango befriended her and the two fell in love. In a bid to end their relationship, Saravanan closed the shop and returned to his native village U. Pandiapuram in Tirunelveli district along with his family. However, Elango remained in constant touch with the girl. Enraged over this, Saravanan invited Elango to a place near Munnirpallam for talks and took the help of his relatives to murder him. "Initially, it was a case of suspicious death. We have altered it to murder...the accused persons will also be booked under the provisions of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989," he said, adding that the four were produced in a local court and remanded in judicial custody. A. Kathir, Executive Director of

'Evidence,' a human rights organisation, expressed concern over the increasing number of honour killings in Tamil Nadu. He sought suitable compensation to Elango's family. Enquiry by a fact-finding team revealed that the murder was a clear case of honour killing, Mr. Kathir added. (The Hindu 1/5/12)

Ex-senior cop launches Muslim-Dalit party (2)

MUMBAI: Members of Dalit and Muslim communities floated a new political party called Awami Vikas Party on Tuesday. Headed by retired ACP Shamsheer Khan Pathan with senior Dalit journalist Baban Kamble as his deputy, the party was touted as a confluence of Bheem (followers of B R Ambedkar) and Meem (Muslims). "We will fight elections without any pre-poll alliance with any other party," said Pathan, who retired on Monday. When asked if his party would be seen as an intruder since SP in the state claims to represent Muslims, Pathan said: "SP is headed by Mulayam Singh Yadav and his son Akhilesh. It is confined to UP. We are giving an alternative to the exploited groups." Kamble, who edits the Marathi daily Samrat said, "We have been cheated. Dalits have been kept in dark in the name of reservation while Muslims have voted for the so-called secular parties for because they were promised protection. We will remove these facades," said Kamble. Interestingly, the party's core group comprises retired police officers, bureaucrats, activists and educationists. RTI activist M A Khalid, who hails from Kerala, cited the example of his state where political empowerment of Muslims has enabled them to influence policy decisions. "In Kerala there are seven Muslim-run medical colleges. But in Maharashtra Muslims excel only in jails. The situation will change once levers of power are in our hands," declared Khalid. Javed Pasha of Nagpur called upon the Muslims to choose their rulers intelligently. "If you had chosen your rulers carefully, Sachar Committee would not have said that you are behind the Dalits on every parameter of development," Pasha said. Speakers added that shakhas and branches of the party will be opened across Maharashtra and their target was 2014 elections. (Times of India 2/5/12)

Discriminatory fence put by dalits removed near Madurai (2)

MADURAI: The district police have removed a fence, allegedly erected by members of the scheduled caste to prevent villagers belonging to another dalit community from reaching their temple near Madurai, on Thursday. The barbed fence was removed in the presence of police officials and members from both the communities. The action comes in the wake of a petition to the collector, U Sagayam, on Monday and a subsequent police complaint. In the petition, arunthathiyars of Sandhayur near T Kallupatti, about 40-km from Madurai said that the parayars, also a dalit community, had raised the barbed fence about 10 years back. "Efforts by the members of our community to get the fence removed over the years had proved futile and we were forced to take a circuitous route to our temple," they had alleged. Police said that out of the 700 families in Sandhayur, arunthathiyars comprised about 30 families while there were 60 parayar families. Both the communities had different temples for their worship. The arunthathiyars had complained that they had to reach their temple only after crossing the temple of the parayars. In a bid to prevent arunthathiyars from crossing the temple meant for parayar's, the latter had erected the fence in a poramboke land, the complaint said. "Due to the fence, we were forced to navigate around our residential colony to reach our temple. We took lot of efforts to get the fence removed. Even after adopting a resolution in the panchayat, the fence was not removed," they stated in the complaint. Madurai SP initiated an inquiry and found that the allegations were true and instructed the police to remove the fence from the poramboke land. The police summoned members of both the communities, held talks with them and subsequently removed the fence. It was close to Sandhayur, that an untouchability wall hit the headlines few years back at Uthapuram village. The wall was subsequently removed by the authorities. (Times of India 3/5/12)

Caste prejudices hit Bihar anganwadis, says report (2)

Patna, May 3: Caste and religious prejudices in Bihar's villages are affecting the Central Government's education and health schemes, such as anganwadis, for impoverished families, says a report by the Institute of Human Development (IHD). The report cites cases where upper caste children were not allowed to go to anganwadi centres in Dalit or lower caste hamlets and vice-versa. Anganwadis are Government-sponsored child and mother care centres at the grassroots. Also, anganwadi centres in Muslim hamlets see no children from upper caste and Dalit families, says the report. Anganwadi centres are part of the Ministry of Women and Child Development's flagship Integrated Child Development Scheme. Deeply-ingrained biases are depriving hundreds of children from education, mid-day meals and vaccination, says the report. The report was prepared after an on-the-spot survey of 14 villages of nine districts in Bihar by a team of researchers from the New Delhi-based institute. The report says vaccination could not take place either in the Dalit Paswan hamlets or the Brahmin hamlets, because Brahmins refused to send their children to Paswan hamlets nor allow Paswan children into their area. In Madhubani

district's Mahisan village, children from backward caste Yadav and extremely backward castes Kahtve and Musahar did not attend anganwadi centres in a Muslim hamlet. Similarly, in Jitwarpur in Araria district, tribal Santhal children did not attend centres in a Brahmin hamlet since only the Brahmin were given food there. Similarly, the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) also face prejudices in their work. It was found that they received co-operation or no co-operation depending upon their caste. ASHAs are an integral part of the rural health care system related to deprived sections of society. In Dewan Parsa village, Brahmin women had no inhibitions in admitting that they did not co-operate with ASHAs who were Dalits, says the report. (Business Line 4/5/12)

Minor Dalit girl sent out of village for inter-caste affair (2)

MYSORE, May 4, 2012: A minor Dalit girl from Bannirsarige in Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka was forced to leave the village by her family and local people for falling in love with a boy from a different caste and, in their view, bringing "ignominy" to the community. Suma (name changed), 17, and pregnant, was left to fend for herself after her father and other family members threatened to commit suicide if she did not leave the house. She was lured into a relationship by the boy from an adjoining village at a construction site where they worked. He had won Suma's confidence after promising to marry her. He did not tell her that he was already married. He is now absconding. Suma's ordeal began after her mother's death when she was sent to her aunt's place in Maadigara bedi in Kollegal by her father, Dasaiah. But her aunt, on learning of Suma's pregnancy, sent her away. Suma then went to the government hospital in Kollegal. The doctors, who learnt of her predicament, sent her to Odanadi Seva Samsthe, an NGO working for the rehabilitation of women and prevention of child trafficking, in Mysore, for assistance on Sunday. Speaking to The Hindu, Parashurama of Odanadi and a member of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) said the girl was emaciated, anaemic and could hardly speak, but she narrated the sequence of events. "I sat with her for some time to elicit information, but the girl, being asthmatic, was gasping for breath and unable to walk." Suma was being treated for asthma and a certificate issued by doctors at the Kollegal hospital confirmed her pregnancy. Lochana of the CWC in Chamarajanagar said there were conflicting reports about Suma's banishment, and CWC staff had been sent to Bannisarige village for a probe. Mr. Parashurama said the Chamarajanagar Rural police did not take any action as there was no case or complaint filed. But Deputy Superintendent of Police Mahadevaiah has promised to initiate action, if a complaint is filed. Odanadi will file a complaint seeking action against the boy. "However, the larger issue of convincing the local people and her family to accept Suma will be challenging because of their misplaced sense of honour," said Mr. Parashurama. Till then the girl will be sheltered by Odanadi with the authorisation of the CWC, he added. (The Hindu 4/5/12)

Where converts do not find a place at Dalit graveyard (2)

NAGAPATTINAM, May 6, 2012: On Saturday, as 105-year-old Nagammal journeyed to her grave, her right to a decent burial in a yard meant for Dalits was scuttled, after caste Hindus opposed her burial as she was a convert to Christianity. Finally, her body was made to travel over 45 km to Velankanni for burial. Two years ago, in February 2010, the body of another Dalit convert was subject to two sets of rites, one as per Christianity and was finally cremated under Hindu mores following opposition to burial from caste Hindus. The three-cent plot of a graveyard, marked out solely for the use of Dalits of Kovilkuthagai in Katripulam village here in Vedaranyam, is the bone of contention — not among Dalits, but by caste Hindus. The space marked out for Dalits was meant to cater to 12 families, and seven of these families had converted to Christianity over a decade ago. However, with the first of the deaths in 2010, the issue of burial came to fore, with the caste Hindus opposing the practice of burying bodies with a crucifix. They, however, do not have any objection to cremation under Hindu rites. According to Veeramani, ex-president, and spouse of the President of Katripulam Panchayat (who spoke on her behalf), the concern was just about maintaining 'social calm'. "We have nothing against Dalits, but if they start burying their dead, then it might pose problems for other Dalits. We prefer not to encourage new practices in the village." Also, the family's request to have the burial in their own patta land was also rejected on the premise that the owners of neighbouring sites would oppose the burial. The issue was more of trying to retain 'samudaya kattupaadu' (social control) over these people, and religion was their sole umbilical connection to retain this control, says Birla Thangadurai, member, district monitoring committee for bonded labour. "There is evidence of burial even among us Hindu Dalits, and in the vicinity of houses," says Thangadurai. According to him, "this is to sustain the bondedness by birth sanctified by religion." The bereaved family said they would not want to seek out trouble. In February of 2010, the Dalits concerned had petitioned the former Collector, and it was promised that alternative arrangements would be made. However, two years on, the issue remains unresolved. (The Hindu 6/5/12)

Debate over SC/ST status for dalit Christians (2)

Chennai: The Assembly on Wednesday witnessed intense debate between Congress members and ruling AIADMK ministers on the issue of inclusion of dalit Christians in SC/ST category. Speaking on the debate on demand for grants for backward classes and minorities department, Congress legislator John Jacob said the state government should take steps to include dalit Christians in SC/ST category. CPI legislator Arumugam raised a point of order and said the decision should only be taken by the UPA in the Centre to which the member belonged. At this juncture, Congress legislator Prince said the Centre is likely to implement it soon. "The Tamil Nadu government will have to clarify its stand as to whether it supports the issue or not," he added. Minister K.P. Munusamy said the member should not speak for sake of argument and added, "Not only the state government, but the whole of subcontinent will welcome once the bill is introduced in Parliament by the ruling UPA government." Minister C.Ve. Shanmugam said legislator Prince had been giving misleading information to the Assembly, as the bill is yet to be introduced in Parliament. (Asian Age 10/5/12)

Mob lynches woman, man forced to attempt suicide (2)

NAGAPATTINAM, May 10, 2012: Madhavan, a Dalit, has literally escaped the noose and is grateful that he is still alive. On Tuesday morning, he was still dangling from a sari, after he was forced to attempt suicide. But, there was no such luck for Chitra, a 29-year old Caste Hindu, who was lynched by a village mob for her alleged relationship with Madhavan. The honour killing took place on Tuesday just after dawn in Vandal village in Vedaranyam. Chitra and Madhavan were heckled at, taunted, bullied and beaten up. Their crime was that their alleged relationship was not only extra-marital but also inter-caste. Madhavan, who has taken refuge at his aunt's place in Ayakaranpulam here, spoke to The Hindu on Wednesday, "I was intercepted by a few men on the street, who made caste references. A mob gathered and started beating me up." After a while, Chitra was summoned by one of the men there. "The moment she arrived, she was assaulted by the men in public." The mob allegedly dragged her back to her hut even as Madhavan was beaten up. "Later, I was told that Chithra had died. I was taken to her hut and locked up. They forced me to hang myself from a sari. However, the thatched roof was too low for the forced attempt to succeed." Madhavan said that he was dragged out into the street and beaten up again, when two policemen arrived on the scene and rescued him. However, despite Madhavan's request to be taken to the police station for giving a statement, the policemen had dropped him at the Thalainayar panchayat president's house. Later, he was taken in a taxi to the Thiruthuraipoondi Government Hospital. The police told him to attribute his injuries to a fall from a bridge, Madhavan claimed. When The Hindu contacted the Thalainayar police station on Tuesday evening, the police said that they were not aware of the incident and no complaint had been received. However, according to Birla Thangadurai, member of District Bonded labour monitoring committee, the Superintendent of Police was informed about the incident even as Madhavan was being assaulted by the mob says. Mr. Thangadurai said he had alerted the SP and RDO. Calls made by The Hindu to G. Ramar, Superintendent of Police, since Tuesday evening were unanswered. According to Mr. Thangadurai, the entire incident was hushed up. By Tuesday evening, Chitra's body was cremated. She had two young daughters. "Does this imply that a collective murder by a village would not attract suo motu investigation by the police solely on the grounds there was yet to be a formal complaint," asked Kathir, Executive Director, Evidence, Madurai-based human rights organisation. Evidence sent in its fact-finding team to the village on Wednesday. This is the first instance of honour killing in the recent times, when an entire village bore collective responsibility for the crime. According to Mr. Kathir, Section(4) of SC/ST Act, 1989 should be slapped on the police officials for dereliction of duty and obstruction of justice. When contacted, Revenue Divisional Officer Manikandan said the VAO and tahsildar had been told to conduct an inquiry. (The Hindu 10/5/12)

Dalits express disappointment (2)

Tirupur, May 11, 2012: The Dalits in Vellakoil area who are fighting for unrestricted access to Uthamapalayam New Mariamman temple without caste discrimination, have expressed their disappointment that the talks convened by the Revenue Divisional Officer (Dharapuram) involving Dalits and upper caste Hindus did not take place on Thursday. "It is an unjustifiable act by the RDO for not turning up in the last moment for the fourth time within a span of 45 days after asking us to come for the meeting to resolve the issue," Uthampalayam temple entry agitation committee convener S. Karuppaiah told The Hindu. According to the revenue department sources, the RDO R. Alagumeena could not turn up for the meeting as she was preoccupied with an inspection along with District Collector. "The next meeting has been scheduled for June 12," sources said. Mr. Karuppaiah said that the Dalits now have no other option but to approach the Madras High Court for action against the RDO for not upholding the rights of Dalits for an entry into the temple. "We did not get any response from the RDO even for the

petition sent through our counsel on the previous occasion asking the administration to allow people of all caste to offer prayers at the temple without any religious disabilities," he added. (The Hindu 11/5/12)

Uttar Pradesh scraps 26 projects benefiting mainly Dalits (2)

LUCKNOW: The UP government on Friday decided to scrap Mayawati's pet projects aimed mainly at Dalits, or named after Dalit icons and use the money freed up for new projects that the SP government will prioritise, most of them poll promises like unemployment dole and laptops and tablets for students. The attempt is to make the welfare schemes targeted at a more wider audience, not just Dalits. This will affect 26 schemes being handled by 13 departments involving Rs 4,861.72 crore. Most of the money was flowing into conservation and protection of parks and memorials built in the memory of Dalit icons, scholarship to Dalit students, and also those schemes launched in the name of BSP founder Kanshiram. However, the government has clarified that work which had already started, for instance houses under construction as part of the Kanshiram Awas Yojana, will not be stopped, but the scheme or project will not be renewed after that. Another major decision the cabinet took was to stop reservation of government contracts for SC/ST bidders that Maya introduced in June 2009. The government said this was affecting the quality of work and a more competitive bidding process would benefit the state. This was the third meeting of the cabinet after Akhilesh Yadav took over as chief minister two months back. In all, the government plans to take up 36 projects, some of them new like construction of roads, while the others are old schemes tweaked to suit the present regime. Part of the money released from the Dalit schemes will go to fund the unemployment allowance that SP had promised in its manifesto. This will cost the state Rs 1,113 crore and will benefit 9 lakh unemployed youth. To be eligible for this, a candidate should be live in UP, register with the unemployment exchange by March 15 of any financial year and the total income of the family should not exceed Rs 1.50 lakh a year. Only those between 30 and 40 will be eligible and they will get Rs 1,000 per month. The money will also fund Akhilesh's other poll promise to distribute tablets to students who clear Class X and laptops to those who clear Class XII. It will also fund pension to farmers above 65 years of age, again a poll promise. Around seven lakh small and marginal farmers will be covered under the scheme. In some cases, however, projects will merely be renamed and their scope broadened. For instance, the Savitri Bhai Phule Scheme For Girls' Education which benefited only Dalits will now be called Kanya Vidya Dhan, which will fund the education of all poor girls who clear school. Other projects, too, have been made more inclusive. For instance, the Kanshiram Housing Scheme for Urban Poor and Mahamaya Housing Scheme for Rural Poor will now be clubbed under the common banner of Housing For The Homeless and will cover not only poor Dalits but also the poor among other castes. In another decision, the government decided to do away with the existing Ambedkar Gram Vikas Yojana and replace it with Rammanohar Lohiya Samagra Gram Vikas Yojana to cover a total 10,000 villages in the five years. In the first phase, 1,600 villages would be taken up in 2012-13. Some of the projects that will be scrapped are: Manyavar Sri Kanshiramji Shahari Garib Awas Yojana, Manyavar Sri Kanshiramji ji Green Eco Garden, construction, beautification and conservation of Lucknow Parivartan Chowk and Baba Saheb Ambedkar Prateek Sthal, Mahamaya Garib Balika Ashirvad Yojana, Manyavar Sri Kanshiramji Sahari Dalit Bahulya Basti Samagra Vikas Yojana. Other schemes are Mahamaya Awas Yojana, Mahamaya Sarvajan Awas Yojana, Savirti Bai Phule Balika Shiksha Madad Yojana, job creation for minorities, CC road construction in Dr. Ambedkar villages by the Panchayati Raj. (Times of India 12/5/12)

Dalit girl assaulted, forced to file a 'false complaint' (2)

MANGALORE, May 14, 2012: Some people belonging to Scheduled Castes at a meeting here on Sunday alleged that the Sangh Parivar groups were using Dalits both as a "tool" and a "shield" in settling scores with minorities in Dakshina Kannada. They alleged that the Sangh Parivar groups had continued to indulge in moral policing in the district. They urged the police to act impartially against such groups. The Dakshina Kannada police had convened the monthly meeting to address grievances of people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Superintendent of Police Abhishek Goyal presided over the meeting. Raising the issue, Guruvappa Kallugudde, from near Kadaba, alleged that on April 26 some members of the Bajrang Dal forced a Dalit girl from Kadaba to file a "false complaint" at Kukke Subrahmanya police station against a member of a minority community stating that he attempted to kidnap her. He said that the members forcibly took the girl to the station and made her file the complaint. The next day, after Mr. Goyal intervened, the girl went to the Kadaba police station and filed another complaint against the Bajrang Dal members who had taken her to Kukke Subrahmanya. The police arrested three Bajrang Dal members based on the second complaint, Mr. Kallugudde said. Mr. Kallugudde told presspersons at the venue of the meeting that the girl had requested the member of the minority community to take her in his car to her relative's house at Kaenya, near Balpa, as a relative was

not well. She had taken Rs. 2,000 from him for treatment. When they were on their way from Kadaba to Kaenya, some members of the Bajrang Dal followed the car and stopped it between Kadaba and Panja. They damaged the car and assaulted the girl, saying that being a Hindu she should not elope with him. Later, they took the girl to Kukke Subrahmanya and made her file a complaint against the member of the minority community. Mr. Kallugudde said that following this, he along with the girl, approached Mr. Goyal on whose direction the Kadaba police registered a case against the Bajrang Dal members on April 27. Mr. Kallugudde also said that the girl had alleged that a police official from Kadaba station went to her house at 10 a.m. on April 28 and asking her why she filed a complaint against the Bajrang Dal members. (The Hindu 14/5/12)

'Social boycott made Dalits in 77 Gujarat villages migrate' (2)

AHMEDABAD, May 16, 2012: Dalits in at least 77 villages in Gujarat have been forced to migrate due to social boycotts, according to chairman of the National Human Rights Commission Justice K.G. Balakrishnan. A team of the NHRC, headed by Justice Balakrishnan, on Tuesday completed a two-day visit to Gujarat for an Open House to hear the complaints of the backward classes. He rounded it up with a meeting with Chief Secretary A.K. Joti and some other government officials to discuss steps being taken by the government to attend to the complaints. Talking to journalists at the conclusion of the visit, Justice Balakrishnan said nearly 100 complaints were also received by the NHRC on alleged police atrocities, particularly the police refusing to register their complaints, or showing total inaction in pursuing the cases after registering the complaints. Some of the specific cases, however, were promptly refuted by the government. It pointed out that the complainants might be unaware of it, but the police had filed FIRs on the basis of their complaints, and investigations were on. Expressing concern at the low conviction rates — just 5 per cent — in atrocity cases in the State, Justice Balakrishnan said this usually happened because of improper investigation by the police, or due to the failure of the public prosecutors to present the cases properly. He said the attention of the State government had been drawn to the situation, and it had promised to take necessary remedial measures. The government had also agreed that henceforth the meeting of the vigilance committee for the backward classes would be held twice a year as required. Justice Balakrishnan said the NHRC was satisfied with the past performances of almost all State governments, as most of the suggestions and recommendations of the commission had been implemented by all States. As far as social boycott of the Dalits by the upper castes was concerned, it was the outcome of the "mindset" of the people for centuries, which would take time to be removed. Justice Balakrishnan was all praise for the Gujarat government, for formulating "innovative schemes" for the betterment of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Describing Gujarat as a "model State" in this sphere, he said: "Many innovative schemes are being implemented, which are all working well. This is the State where the penetration of education among the SC and ST communities has reached 70 per cent," he said in his opening remarks. (The Hindu 16/5/12)

Appoint Dalit woman as Anganwadi worker, says HC (2)

MADURAI, May 17, 2012: Appointment to lower posts such as Anganwadi worker in government-run noon meal centres cannot be denied to a person belonging to a socially backward class on the sole ground that he or she was not residing exactly within three kilometres of the centre, the Madras High Court Bench here has said. Justice D. Hariparanthaman made the observation while allowing a writ petition filed by a Dalit woman C. Karpagavalli of Chidamparampuram in Ettayapuram Taluk of Tuticorin district challenging her non-appointment to the post of Anganwadi worker at a noon meal centre at Kalugasalpuram in Kovilpatti Taluk of the district. The petitioner, a married woman qualified upto tenth standard, said that on March 26, 2010, the then Tuticorin Collector had invited applications for filling up the vacancies of 356 Anganwadi workers in various taluks of the district. The vacancies included the one at Kalugasalpuram noon meal centre. Ms. Karpagavalli attended the interview conducted on April 23, 2010 along with many others. However, none of them were selected and instead, the district administration issued another notification on February 15, 2011 calling for applications for Kalugasalpuram once again. Hence, she filed the present case challenging the second notification. Filing a counter affidavit to the writ petition, the District Project Officer, Integrated Child Development Programme, said that the second recruitment process was also kept in abeyance due the enforcement of the model code of conduct during the Assembly elections held in May last year. The officer also said that the petitioner was not selected as she was residing three kilometres away from Kalugasalpuram which had a mini Anganwadi centre. Refuting the contention, the petitioner's counsel, G. Thalaimutharasu, contended that the distance between Chidamparampuram and Kalugasalpuram was less than three kilometres. After hearing both the sides, the judge said that he was not convinced with the reason

adduced by the officer for denying job to the petitioner. He quashed the second recruitment notification and directed the Collector as well as other subordinate officials to appoint the petitioner as an Anganwadi worker in Kalugasalpuram. (The Hindu 17/5/12)

1 lakh cases of SC/ST atrocities pending: Govt (2)

New Delhi | Agency: PTI: With over one lakh cases of atrocities against SCs and STs pending, the government is considering amendments in the existing law to fast-track trial, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday. Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Mukul Wasnik said during Question Hour that a concept note was sent to state governments for comments on amending the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. He said that out of over one lakh cases of atrocities pending at the end of 2010, the highest number of 19,939 cases were pending in Uttar Pradesh, followed by 13,590 cases in Madhya Pradesh. Rajasthan had 11,524 cases pending at the end of 2010, Gujarat - 9,437, Odisha - 8,826, Bihar - 7,776 and Karnataka - 6,044, he said. Wasnik, who did not specify the proposed amendments, said six states had not yet given their opinion. He said states were being impressed upon to set up special courts to try cases of atrocities on SCs and STs in places where conviction rate is low, pendency is high or registration of cases are high. He also said public prosecutors would be denotified if they did not perform their job well. (DNA 17/5/12)

MPs' protest against cartoon is vote-bank politics: Dalit activists (2)

JAIPUR, May 18, 2012: Activists and Dalit intellectuals have expressed concern over the move to carry out changes in NCERT textbooks, in the wake of the recent controversy over an Ambedkar cartoon. What happened in Parliament, where a section of members raised the issue of the 1949 cartoon by Shankar Pillai published in a Standard XI Political Science textbook, was a brazen attempt at wooing the Dalit vote bank, they charged at a meeting here. The NCERT books were well-produced and of high quality, they asserted. The People's Union for Civil Liberties, Rajasthan; the Centre for Dalit Rights, the Janwadi Lekhak Sangh, the Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) and Idara termed the controversy "uncalled for." The groups have decided to organise meetings to read out contents from all banned textbooks, including "300 Ramayanas," and hold exhibitions of the banned cartoons. "What is extremely disturbing is the manner in which Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal apologised in Parliament, and conceded the demands for removal of the cartoons and stopping of distribution of books," said a statement issued by the groups. "We are certain that there's nothing objectionable in the Nehru-Ambedkar cartoon by itself, and the text accompanying it. In fact, it is highly appreciative of the hard work by the Constituent Assembly under the leadership of Dr. B. R Ambedkar." Leading Dalit activist and Centre for Dalit Rights chairman P. L. Mimrot said, "In fact, it appeared to me, that it was for the first time, Baba Saheb received this kind of prominence in an NCERT book." Describing as "cowardly" the attack on Suhas Palsikar, who has since submitted his resignation as Chief Adviser to the NCERT (Political Science), Dalit activist and editor of Diamond India Bhanwar Meghwanshi, said: "If the caption is read with the cartoon, no one can find fault with it." Rajeev Gupta, Professor of Sociology in Rajasthan University, termed the whole episode an affront to freedom of expression and attack on Ambedkar himself. "The whole attitude reeks of fascist tendencies. The Minister ordered the removal of the cartoons, even without referring the matter to an academic committee." It was pointed out that out of the 32 cartoons in NCERT books, 16 pertained to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. "In the past also, texts have been deleted, and books have been tampered with, and people have had cases filed against them, merely in the name of upsetting public opinion. "It is important to know that the endeavour of education isn't to indoctrinate the minds of the young, or teach them any one ideology... Education essentially implies having openness towards all points of view. "The young must know that there are many dimensions to any issue," said the statement signed by Prem Krishna Sharma, Kavita Srivastava and Radha Kant Saxena of the PUCL, Rajasthan; M. Hasan of Idara; Komal Srivastava of the BGVS; and academicians and activists Prakash Chaturvedi, Vishwambhar, Rajeev Gupta, Rajendra Saiwal, Govind Beniwal and Shiv Singh. (The Hindu 18/5/12)

Six accused in March 25 attack on Dalits held (2)

YADGIR, May 21, 2012: The Surpur police arrested six persons on Saturday in connection with the March 25 attack on Dalits at Bhairamadagi village in Surpur taluk. Although the incident took place on March 25, the First Information Report (FIR) was filed only on May 9 and the accused identified. The police failed to explain why a case was not registered immediately after the incident, or why it took so long to arrest the accused. The accused, one of whom is a woman, were produced before a magistrate, and all, except the woman, were remanded in judicial custody. The accused woman was enlarged on bail. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police S.D. Bhagwadmath, there was a dispute between the Dalits and Kuruba community members over Dalits participating in the Yallamma Devi jathre on March 25. The Kurba

community members allegedly attacked complainant Dyavappa Doddabasappa, a Dalit, on March 25 after he reportedly refused to perform a ritual during the jathra as it was "demeaning" to the Dalits. Thereafter, the "caste" Hindus allegedly began a social boycott of the Dalits, even denying them provisions from shops, and stopping them from drawing drinking water from a common borewell in the village, the Dalits said. After waiting in vain for more than a month, leaders of the Dalit community took the issue of boycott and the police's failure to arrest the accused to the district administration, and took out a protest in Yadgir town last week. Following this, Superintendent of Police D. Roopa visited the village on May 17 and held discussions with the leaders of both communities. (The Hindu 21/5/12)

Temple entry: efforts on for an amicable settlement (2)

Tirupur, May 22, 2012: The Dharapuram Revenue Divisional Officer, R. Alagumeena, has said that the administration had taken steps to amicably settle the issue pertaining to denial of temple entry in Uthamapalayam New Mariamman temple raised by a section of Dalits. She told this in a discussion held with Dalits from Vellakoil block and the upper caste Hindus held on Monday to resolve the crisis. Ms. Alagumeena later told The Hindu that since a civil suit in this regard was pending before the sub-court in Dharapuram, a solution in the matter could be implemented only under the directive of judiciary. S. Karuppaiah, convener of Uthamapalayam Temple Entry Agitation Committee, welcomed the suggestion made by the RDO in the meeting that a court directive would be sought to appoint a 'receiver.' (The Hindu 22/5/12)

Dalits allege social boycott, quit Haryana village (2)

CHANDIGARH: Around 70 dalit families of a Haryana village have left their homes and are camping outside the Hisar district administration headquarters to protest discrimination by upper-caste villagers. Dalits of Bhagana village allege they are facing social boycott. Police have been deployed in the village to avert a flare-up. The dalit protest is also receiving support from members of other backward communities. When a low-caste farmer was stopped from entering a village pond by upper-caste men, the dalits bolted their houses and marched to the district headquarters the next day. "On Monday, we decided to finally leave. We have suffered enough," said Satish Kumar, who is leading the protests. He alleged dalits are being ostracized for the last three months. On Tuesday, a delegation of upper-caste villagers met the deputy commissioner, Amit Aggarwal, and denied imposing a boycott on dalits. "A few people are trying to create a rift," said village sarpanch Rakesh Kumar. Sparks were first lit in 2011 when dalits demanded free residential plots of 100 square yards under Mahatma Gandhi Gramin Basti Yojana. This was strongly opposed by upper-caste villagers even though 220 acres of shamlat (community) land lay vacant. "Upper caste men distributed this land among themselves. Now, they are forcing us to withdraw a complaint against encroachment of land," said Balraj Satrodia, district president of Bahujan Samaj Party. Deputy commissioner Amit Aggarwal said a probe has been ordered. "It's not a case of atrocities on dalits, but a dispute between two groups," Aggarwal said. (Times of India 24/5/12)

Bhagana dalits: Khap steps in to end deadlock (2)

HISAR: The eight-day long deadlock between the district administration and dalit families from Bhagana is likely to end as the Sarva Jatiya Khap Panchayat on Monday met the dalit families, so as to persuade them to return to the village. With a view to have a permanent solution to the ongoing cold war between dalit and upper class families of the village, the khap has also convened a meeting to settle all the issues, at the village on Wednesday. Representatives of upper caste villagers and dalits have agreed to the decision made by the khap panchayat on Monday. Headed by Master Mahender Singh, a delegation of khap panchayat contacted the agitating dalit families at mini-secretariat, where they are camping for the past eight days. Khap delegates claimed to have met representatives of upper caste families before meeting dalits. Khap members later met deputy commissioner Amit Aggarwal and requested him to join Wednesday's meeting to ensure permanent solution to the issues related to dalit families. Mahender Singh said, "Before convening the Wednesday meeting, we shall personally have another round of meeting with villagers to take stock of the situation. We have already requested the DC to join the meeting or send a representative. I have personally met the villagers, who have assured to maintain the atmosphere of peace and brotherhood in the village." Meanwhile, when contacted, Vijay Bagoria, who leading the dharna, confirmed the development and hinted at ending the stir. "The khap members have assured action against families who have ostracized us. For this purpose, we have also asked khap members to contact elected members of panchayat, while taking stock of the situation. So far as withdrawal of dharna is concerned, I am on way to a meeting with khap members. After the meeting, we shall reveal our further course of action after discussing the same with agitating families." The dalit families are camping at mini secretariat premises since May 20 to press their demands for action against

upper class families, who had ostracized them for demanding 100-yard plots in the common land of the village. (Times of India 29/5/12)

Upper caste youth attack dalit in Haryana (2)

ROHTAK: A group of upper caste youth allegedly urinated on the face of a dalit vendor after beating him at Mokhra village in Haryana's Rohtak district on Monday night. Ashok Kumar, 22, of the Balmiki community sells eggs for a living. He was beaten up near a liquor shop when he tried to stop five jat youth from stealing his money and snatching away some eggs. When he protested, the youth beat him. He was rescued by some onlookers, who rushed to the spot and tried to settle the dispute. When Kumar left for home about 10pm, the youth again attacked him at an isolated place. "The men urinated on my face and stole Rs 2,500 from my cart. They also broke my cart before fleeing," said Kumar. He was admitted to Rohtak's Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences. Police registered a case for causing hurt, criminal intimidation, attempt to rob, and also under sections of SC/ST Act against the five accused on Tuesday morning. "We have identified three of the accused while a probe is on to identify the rest. Police are raiding the hideouts of the suspects," said Meham DSP Prithvi Singh. (Times of India 30/5/12)

Ranvir Sena chief shot dead (2)

Ara (Bihar), June 1, 2012: Brahmeshwar Singh alias 'Mukhiyaji,' the chief of Ranvir Sena, the dreaded private militia of upper caste landowners, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen while he was on a morning walk at Katira Mohalla, 71 km from Patna on Friday. Five private and government vehicles were set ablaze in the violence that broke out in Bhojpur district headquarters town of Ara after the killing, the police said. Mr. Singh was in his early 70s. Curfew was clamped in Ara, but it was lifted in the afternoon following a high-level review of the situation by senior officials. The situation in the district was described as tense but under control. Director-General of Police Abhayanand, who is camping in the spot, was roughed up and heckled by the locals, who charged him with failure to provide security to Mr. Singh, who had founded the banned outfit. Mr. Singh was taking a stroll when six unidentified gunmen, armed with sophisticated weapons, pumped several bullets into him. He died instantaneously. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar appealed for calm and said an investigation was under way to trace the killers. Mr. Abhayanand constituted a high-level team, led by Deputy Inspector General of Police Ajitabh Kumar, to expedite the probe and submit a report within a month. "The guilty won't be spared," he said. Mr. Singh who faced life imprisonment in several cases of carnage he had perpetrated on the lower caste landless poor — including at Laxmanpur Bathe where 61 Dalits were massacred in December 1996 — was acquitted and released from jail in April this year. Prohibitory orders, under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, would remain in force, sub-divisional police officer Dharmesh Kumar said. The Opposition RJD, the Congress and the LJP demanded a CBI probe. Hundreds of Sena supporters gathered at the site and shouted anti-government slogans. They also tried to chase policemen, including the Superintendent of Police, who had arrived there, and later clashed with policemen. (The Hindu 1/6/12)

Dalits protest vandalism of Ambedkar statue (2)

TIRUPATI, June 3, 2012: Desecration of Ambedkar's statue by unknown assailants at Chiguruvada village near Chandragir on the Tirupati-Chittoor highway in broad daylight on Saturday has triggered widespread protests in and around Tirupati. Leaders of various Dalit organisation, who sat on a dharna and rasta roko at the place, said that the defilement of the statue of the author of the constitution, closely on the heels of a similar incident recently clearly reflected the hegemonic attitude of the anti-Dalit groups and strongly criticised the police and the revenue administration for not taking enough care in preventing such outrages. Dalit leaders, Paramasivan, G. Giridhar Madiga, P.Kalyan Kumar and others have in a statement to the media regretted that despite an attack on the statue and the consequent dharna, no responsible official from the Revenue Department had turned up at the site to take up an enquiry. (The Hindu 3/6/12)

Needed urgently, police-admn link to stop Dalit atrocities: DGP (2)

Bhopal: Director General of Police Nandan Dube said the officials of both police and departments dealing with weaker sections should coordinate to save Dalits from atrocities in the society. Dube was speaking at the inauguration of a two-day workshop on Atrocities Prevention Act at Police Training and Research Institute in the State capital on Monday. He further said such issues need be dealt with utmost care and sensitivity. Officials from police, public prosecution and Scheduled Castes Welfare Department are attending the workshop. The problems at the grassroots level faced by weaker sections of the society and the proper implementation of atrocities act and the equal status to the weaker sections mentioned in the Constitution of India will be discussed during the workshop. This is for the first time that the all the

departments involved in SC/ST Atrocities prevention are sharing the same platform. The workshop is going to witness the Madhya Pradesh High Court Judge, senior journalists, professors from National Law Academy, sociologist from Barkatullah University, and professor from Ambedkar Research Institute of Mhow. Scheduled Caste Welfare officer SS Bhandari, former joint director Tribal Research Institute SK Pare will share information regarding the rules and regulations laid by the government in respect of caste certificates provided by the Government to the Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and weaker sections of the society. Inspector General of Police of Aadim Jati Kalyan Anvesh Mangalam will present his research based on legal decisions delivered in the cases of atrocities on weaker section. (Pioneer 4/6/12)

Dalits burn Purushottam Rupala's effigy (2)

RAJKOT: Members of dalit community staged a demonstration and burnt the effigy of BJP national vice-president Purushottam Rupala on Monday. The agitators were angry with Rupala over his alleged derogatory remarks against the community he is said to have made on May 30. Police arrested 11 persons for staging road block at Civil Hospital square as part of protest. The agitators were booked for violating the city police commissioner's notification under Section 188 of Indian Penal Code. Police said the arrested belonged to Dalit Samaj Swayam Sainik Dal which launched the stir against Rupala. (Times of India 5/6/12)

Bihar's caste curse (2)

June 5, 2012: Bihar under Nitish Kumar received some stunning good news last week. Long condemned as a basket case, the State buried that image once and for all with a chartbuster GDP growth of 13 per cent. Remarkably, Chief Minister Kumar achieved this in just seven years, setting an example for other leaders struggling to lift their States out of crushing poverty and economic backwardness. Yet only days after scaling this wonderful statistical peak, Bihar would return with a vengeance to its badlands past, with mayhem and worse following the murder of Brahmeshwar Singh, the unofficial chief of the outlawed Ranvir Sena. The violence rekindled memories of an earlier Bihar, where lawlessness was a given, and the Sena, an upper caste Bhumihar-led private militia, plundered and killed as it pleased. Formed in the early 1990s, the Sena ruled unchecked for a decade, leaving its bloody imprints on large swathes of central and south Bihar, where its primary adversaries were the Naxals led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist-Liberation) and the Maoist Communist Centre. And yet, the victims of this class war were almost always the landless Dalits, newly awakening to Bihar's gross caste inequalities but nonetheless rendered doubly vulnerable by their poverty and their social exclusion. The Sena's signature was evident in over 40 massacres, with the landmark cases of Bathani Tola, Laxmanpur Bathe and Shankarbiga accounting for the murders of over 100 Dalits and Muslims. The Sena's sadistic trait was revealed in the fact that it did not just kill randomly, it acted by design, picking women and children as its targets. Bitter memories of that period were stirred again when the Patna High Court in April this year acquitted all 23 men charged with the Bathani Tola carnage. The court cited lack of prosecutable evidence against the accused but for the families of the victims, this was no consolation. Indeed, the release of the men, among them Brahmeshwar Singh himself, was a warning that Bihar could yet relive the caste nightmare of the 1990s. Tragically, the Nitish Kumar government failed to anticipate the violence inherent in the situation. The regime ought to have exercised vigil, and all the more in view of the perception that the Janata Dal (United) is a patron of the Bhumihars. In his time, Lalu Prasad was wont to boast that he had given swar (voice) to the Dalits of Bihar and he would give them swarg (heaven) too. The caste massacres showed up the emptiness of his words. Under Mr. Kumar, Bihar has admittedly come a long way from the hopelessness of that period. It would be a pity if the feel-good vibes were to escape the Dalits and the landless who form the lowest rung of the social ladder. (The Hindu 5/6/12)

In Nitish Kumar's home district, Dalits get plots to build their homes — in a pond (2)

Islamapur, Nalanda: One family builds a house that has no walls, no doors, just a bizarre semi-circular curved strip buried in the sand; another builds a thatched house with no approach road so everyone has to sleep by the side of the highway and cook in the open. And 70 other families don't know what to do because all the plots they got last November — to build their homes — fall right into a pond that's dry today but won't be next month when the rains come. This is how the Nitish Kumar government's showpiece Mahadalit Vikas Yojana scheme — under which the poorest, landless Mahadalits get a 3-decimal (1306.8-square-foot) plot each — is playing out on the ground in Bihar. As The Indian Express reported in two parts on Wednesday and Thursday, in some areas, an alleged nexus of government officers and brokers has bought land from villagers at dirt cheap rates and then sold to the government at four to five times the cost. In others, Mahadalits have been allotted land but only on paper. And, here, in Nalanda, Nitish's home district, Sonmati Devi's new address is Khata number 35, Khesra Number 307

under mauja Akbarpur of Islampur block. This plot falls in the village pond duly shown in the official land survey which clearly mentions that Khesra 307 can "only be used for irrigation". This pond has water from July until March, and is the only source for the irrigation of the two-crop (rice and wheat) agricultural land for over 300 villagers. (Indian Express 8/6/12)

Dalit girl rape: Scribes, leaders, ex-IG booked for defaming Pipili (2)

Cuttack: In an interesting turn of events, the Pipili police on Thursday booked two senior journalists, two local leaders and a former top police officer on charges of defaming Pipili and its residents by raising the issue of alleged gang rape case of a Dalit girl. "We have registered cases against senior journalists Rabi Das and Prashant Patnaik, State Women Congress chief and former Minister Bijaylaxmi Sahu, former Minister Panchanan Kanungo and retired police Inspector General SN Swain on the basis of a complaint filed by one Bikram Keshari Singh and 14 others of Pipili," said local police inspector Ratnakar Mallick. All the accused have been booked under section 124 (sedition), 153 (provocation of riot), 201 (screening of evidence), 426 (mischief), 500 (defamation), 505 (statement conducting to public mischief), 509 (words intended to insult the modesty of woman) and 34 (common intention) of IPC, Mallick informed. It may be recalled here that the complainants had earlier approached the Odisha High Court stating that the accused had defamed the name of Pipili by making outrageous and preposterous statements over the incident relating to the Dalit girl of Arjungoda village. They had claimed that by such acts of the accused persons, Pipili was shown in a poor light. The High Court had dismissed the PIL of the complainants on the ground that it lacked merit. The court, however, had suggested the complainants to approach proper forums like local police or crime branch police for redressal of their grievances. Reacting to the registration of the case against him, senior journalist Prashant Patnaik said the media forum which raised the issue had not intended to defame any particular area or any particular group of people. "It was raised in public seeking proper justice to the Dalit girl who was a witness to a previous molestation case involving her friend," Patnaik said. Former top cop Swain, who is also known for not mincing words, said all that he had said about the sensational case have been vindicated in the meantime by the dismissal of the then local police inspector from service. He said the charges made out against him, particularly section 201 of IPC should have been made against the dismissed police inspector for not registering the case at an appropriate time. "The one who has registered the case against me has not understood the provisions of law either in letter or in spirit", Swain told. (Pioneer 8/6/12)

PCC head makes out a case for Dalit welfare (2)

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee president Kantilal Bhuria said Dalits of the State are oppressed and forced to face atrocities. The BJP Government has been ruling for the last eight years but the condition of the one crore of Dalits in the State has remained unchanged. For the last eight years, the Government has shown only ostentatious sympathy and made hollow promises to solve the problems of Dalits, Bhuria said. The Government has given the additional responsibility of issues related to Dalits to the Adim Jati Kalyan Minister of the State. The budget and work of department of Adim Jati Kalyan does not allow it to address the grievances of the Dalits. The Scheduled Caste Welfare Department has been separated but no Cabinet Minister has been given the charge of the department. The Government is not interested in promoting State Minister Harishankar Khatik, who belongs to the Scheduled Castes, to Cabinet rank. Billions are provided by the Central government to the State for improvement of Dalits' status but these are not being spent by the Government, Bhuria alleged. He further said that the negligence by law enforcement agencies in handling issues concerning Dalits is not acceptable. Women of the community are the worst affected and this is confirmed by the fact that Madhya Pradesh holds top position among States as regards atrocities on women. The negligence of the department in providing caste certificate is increasing leading to unemployment among youth even as the jobless are opting for fake papers in their desperation. The Government is aware of the facts but no action is being taken. A committee was formed to put a curb on the people getting jobs on the basis of these fake caste certificates but it allegedly patronised its own at the cost of others. The Madhya Pradesh Tribal Finance and Development Corporation has become an useless entity as the recommendations made by the Scheduled Castes Commission in the annual report are never implemented, Bhuria said. (Pioneer 11/6/12)

Discrimination against Dalits on the rise: VCK chief (2)

PUDUCHERRY, June 11, 2012: Incidents of discrimination against Dalits have increased after the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam assumed power in Tamil Nadu, chief of Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi Thol Thirumavalavan told a press conference here on Sunday. Citing recent incidents, including the discrimination faced by the elected president of Kottakachiyendhal Village panchayat in Virudhanagar

V. Karuppan, the VCK leader said atrocities against Dalits had increased since the new government came to power in Tamil Nadu. Urging the Tamil Nadu government to put an end to such discriminatory practices, he said several elected Dalit panchayat presidents faced even physical threats from caste Hindus. He wanted the government to appoint a commission to enquire into such incidents. He also pointed out the trouble faced by a Dalit family in Monchanur village in Namakkal district in cremating the body of a deceased person a few days ago. Opposition by caste Hindus delayed the cremation by two days and the VCK cadre who protested against the discrimination were arrested by the police, Mr Thirumavalan said adding that the party would organise a protest in Monchanur on June 14 to condemn the incident. The VCK would hold a protest demonstration on June 13 in Chennai urging the Centre to remove a cartoon from the twelfth standard Social Science textbook that ridicules the anti-Hindi agitation and the students who participated in the protest, he said. (The Hindu 11/6/12)

Caste Hindus object to admission of dalit boys in school (2)

Tiruvannamalai, June 12, 2012: Caste Hindus of Adayur village near Tiruvannamalai opposed the admission of two dalit boys in the local Panchayat Union Middle School on Monday and stopped their children from attending the school in protest. However, the caste Hindu students returned in the afternoon after a peace meeting was convened by the Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) V. Bupathi, officials said. Up till now, dalits used to send their children to the Adi Dravidar Welfare Middle School in the village. For the first time, Muthuraj and Sathish, sons of Kumar, a dalit migrant worker, were enrolled in the PUMS in class I and VI respectively on June 6. Angered by this, caste Hindu parents assembled in the school on Monday and urged Headmaster Mohammed Usman to expel the two dalit boys. As he refused to do so, they prevented their children from attending school. RDO V. Bupathi, Tahsildar Ravichandran and Police Inspector Pooncholai rushed to the spot and held a meeting with representatives of both communities. Mr. Bupathi told the meeting that the parents alone could decide where their children should study and not others. "When someone comes to a government school for admission, we cannot turn down the request based on caste. Our law will not allow this kind of discrimination in school admission. We need not run two middle schools in the village for less than 400 students. We may consider merging the two schools if things go on like this." When some caste Hindu women argued that their girls were teased by dalit boys, Mr. Bupathi said it was irrelevant to the issue at hand and assured them that action would be taken if there was any specific complaint. M. Srinivasan, a DMDK functionary who represented caste Hindus, said, "No dalit has ever been admitted to PUMS and they usually go to their welfare school. This is in practice for 50 years and why should they come here now?" However, Mr. Bupathi retorted: "Our nation was enslaved for 300 years. Why then did we seek independence?" Panchayat president R. Ramamurthi, a caste Hindu, argued against the exclusion of dalit boys. He pointed out that in all other villages in the region, dalit and caste Hindu children studied together in schools. "Even children of this village go to school along with dalits from class IX," he said and urged parents to send their children. Soon, the parents relented and students started returning to school. (The Hindu 12/6/12)

Bagariya community demands Scheduled Caste status (2)

JAI PUR: Demanding the status of Scheduled Caste, a delegation of 50 people from the Bagariya community on Monday met chief secretary, C K Mathew, and other government officials. The leaders of the community asserted that they were under the category of Scheduled Caste before 1994. However, without doing census of their community, the government has slotted them in Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. "We have constantly demanded the government to reverse its decision but nothing has been done. We have a population of around 25,000 but there's not a single representation in the administrative services. Our children aren't getting proper education and jobs, our people are living under abysmal poverty and the whole community is facing discrimination," said a community leader. The community is mainly based in Ajmer, Udaipur, Rajsamand Bhilwara and Chittorgarh. The leaders also met additional chief secretary, who instructed district collectors of all the five districts to look into the matter. (Times of India 12/6/12)

Temple fete cancelled to protest Dalits' entry (2)

CUDDALORE, June 16, 2012: About 150 residents of a colony, led by Palanivel, branch secretary of the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, offered worship at the temple, run by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department. On coming to know of their entry, a section of the caste Hindus opposed the action, contending why the Dalits should enter the temple when they had a temple in their colony. The caste Hindus, led by Manivel, Nallur panchayat union chairman, assembled before the temple and cancelled all events for the day. Thittakudi Deputy Superintendent of Police Vanitha, Assistant DSP Ramakrishnan and Thittakudi Tahsildar Prabhakar rushed to the spot and held talks. Superintendent of

Police (Cuddalore) P. Pakalavan told The Hindu that when the Dalits sought to enter the sanctum sanctorum they were politely told that this was against custom. They dispersed peacefully. Though there were no clashes, the village remained tense. A strong posse of police personnel has been posted. (The Hindu 16/6/12)

Dalit outfits demand action against Kovai commissioner (2)

COIMBATORE: As many as 100 members including sanitary workers from the city municipal corporation and members of pro Dalit outfits conducted a protest near Red Cross building on Hosur road in the city on Friday evening demanding action against Coimbatore municipal corporation commissioner TK Ponnusamy for alleged misuse of his official position. The inspection cell of the district administration here will conduct a probe into the matter and will submit a report to the district collector in the coming days.

A petition has already been submitted to district collector, M Karunakaran, which was accepted and based on which the veracity of the allegations will be probed. "We have accepted the petition and the routine procedure will be followed in the matter," said M Karunakaran, district collector, Coimbatore. According to the petition, TK Ponnusamy had employed as many as 178 sanitary workers deployed in municipal ward no 23 from May 17 to June 2 at his private farm near Karumathampatty in the district. These workers were asked to dig trenches to plant teak saplings claimed M Elavenil, member, Tamil Pulikal, a pro dalit organisation. "These workers were taken to the 6.5 acre farm in Thekkalur near karumathampatty in a corporation lorry and made to work in his farm," Elavenil claimed. However the Corporation commissioner and a sanitary inspector who allegedly made arrangements to take these workers to the farm categorically denied the allegations. They levelled counter allegation that the petitioners were trying to blackmail them with false claims. Ponnusamy also added that he did not even own 6.5 acres of land and he owned only three acres of land near Karumathampatty. "I do not have to deploy corporation workers in my land as I can afford to pay the wages to workers who work on my land. I have not done anything wrong," said Ponnusamy. The protesting sanitary workers also demanded that those employees taken on contract to be deployed in the additional areas of the corporation should be made permanent and also the corporation should ensure the welfare of its sanitary workers. (Times of India 17/6/12)

Dalit found dead in Hisar village (2)

HISAR: Tension gripped Bhagana village of Hisar district after a 45-year-old dalit Rajkumar was on Monday found dead in mysterious circumstances in his room, which was locked from outside. Police have been deployed in the village in view of the recent caste conflict that has taken place in the area. The cops have ruled out any foul play and termed the dalit's death as a natural one. However, investigation into the matter is on. Rajkumar belongs to a Punjab village but a few years back, he shifted to Bhagana village with his wife. The man had also joined the dalits in their protest against the upper caste members in front of the district headquarters at Hisar. Around a month back, about 70 families had staged a dharna at Hisar following a dispute over free residential plots of 100 square yards under Mahatma Gandhi Gramin Basti Yojana (MNREGA). SHO of sadar police station, Hisar, Sulochana Gajraj, said, "We have recovered a bottle of celphos in the deceased's room though no suicide note has been recovered from the spot. We are waiting for the autopsy report." (Times of India 19/6/2012)

New fees reimbursement rules upset Dalit outfits (2)

PUNE: The Aarakshan Hakka Sanrakshan Samiti (committee for protection of reservation rights) is up in arms over the State cabinet's move to modify the reimbursement for professional course fees scheme for socially backward and economically weaker section students from 2012-13. The samiti is a collective of Dalit Ambedkar movement, Left and socialist organisations. Its convenor Sanjay Dabadhe told TOI on Monday, "The modifications are unfair and unjust. The government always finds it convenient to curtail the constitutionally mandated expenditure for the socially and economically weaker sections under the garb of a financial crunch." On Monday, the samiti met at Ambedkar cultural hall near Pune railway station to chalk out an action plan of protests and demonstrations against the decision. According to the modifications cleared by the cabinet on June 13, an income ceiling of Rs 2 lakh per annum has been introduced for the beneficiaries from the scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribe (ST), VJNT (denotified tribes), other backward class (OBC) and special backward class (SBC) students. Earlier, there was no such ceiling for the SC/ST students while the same for the VJNT, OBC and SBC students was Rs 1 lakh per annum. While the benefit of 100% reimbursement of fees will be extended to the SC/ST students, the government has now prescribed a fixed amount of reimbursement to the VJNT, OBC and SBC students for various professional courses. These students would earlier get 50% reimbursement of their tuition fees but now, they will get a fixed amount, which need not necessarily work out to 50%.The new scheme

restricts the benefit to only two children from an eligible family as against no such restriction earlier. Moreover, if a family has two sons then the benefit will be restricted to one but, if a family has a son and a daughter then the benefit will be extended to both, and in case of a family having two girls, the benefit will be given to both. Dabadhe and other members met chief minister Prithviraj Chavan on Saturday, and pointed out the widespread resentment in the community. "He justified the decision on the grounds that the government does not have sufficient funds to continue with the scheme in its present form and that has safeguarded the interest of students below Rs 2 lakh annual income. However, the CM's stance is highly objectionable," said Dabadhe. He said, "The Constitution mandates a special component plan by each state government for the SC/ST communities and a sub-plan for the tribal communities. An expenditure directly proportionate to the percentage of population of these communities in the state has been provided under these plans." "However, successive governments in the state have consistently resorted to under-provisioning of financial outlay for these plans and under-utilisation of money. There is no political will and the state administration is apathetic to these issues," he said. Dabadhe said, "The CM has cited situations like drought in the state but, the government can seek funds from the central government to address drought instead of curtailing expenses mandated for the socially and economically weaker sections." (Times of India 20/6/12)

Another Dalit dies in Lakshmipet attack incident (2)

SRIKAKULAM, June 21, 2012: One more person died on Wednesday in the Lakshmipet incident in which four Dalits were killed while fighting for their rights over leftover lands originally alienated for the construction of Madduvalasa reservoir. Papayya, 55, succumbed to injuries in King George Hospita, Visakhapatnam. With the death of Papayya, the toll went up to five in the attack that occurred on June 12. Meanwhile, several Dalit associations organised a protest with black flags at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar statue demanding that Vangrara former MPP Botcha Vasunaidu be arrested immediately as he had allegedly instigated others to beat up Dalits so that there would be no opposition to landlords to control 220 acres of land which was vacant under Madduvalasa reservoir. Telugu Desam Party (TDP) publicity secretary S.V. Ramana demanded that special court be set up immediately for trial of the accused and ensure speedy justice to Dalit families. "The government should order a probe on why the police picket was removed just one day before the attack on Dalits. It is a conspiracy to help the accused to create havoc among Dalits. Land should be distributed immediately to help Dalit families to lead respectable life in their own village," he added. (The Hindu 21/6/12)

Houses of Dalits attacked at Sunamani (2)

BERHAMPUR, June 23, 2012: Houses of Dalit families were attacked by a group of miscreants at Sunamani village under Sorada police station in Ganjam district on Thursday. According to sources 32 families left their homes after this attack. They included a physically challenged youth Pradip (22), who escaped from the village on his tricycle. Pradip said this attack occurred at around 10.30 pm. The miscreants hurled some crude bombs and attacked on the houses of Dalit families at Harijan street of Sunamani village. The attackers were around 30 in number. It is alleged that they entered the houses of targeted Dalit families, misbehaved with the women, beat up the male folk and also looted the valuables. A complaint been lodged with the Sorada police on Friday. (The Hindu 23/6/12)

Dalit forum up in arms against Govt (2)

Bhubaneswar: Members of the National Confederation of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR) State unit on Saturday hit the streets against the increasing atrocities against Dalit and tribal people in the State, surprisingly when Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has proposed PA Sangma, a candidate from the Dalit and tribal community for the top post of the country. About 500 members of the confederation led by Ashok Mallick, the State unit president, marched from Master Canteen to the Lower PMG with slogans to arrest former Minister and BJD vice-president Damodar Rout who "humiliated the Dalit and tribal people" in a public meeting at Kujang. At the rally, Mallick also demanded that the State Government should vacate Rout's advance bail and stay order from the High Court. He said although nearly two years have elapsed, no action appears to have been taken by the Advocate General or by the State Government, which reveals the double standards and the lackadaisical attitude of the Naveen Patnaik Government that still continues to project the accused as vice-president and spokesperson of the ruling party. Earlier in similar circumstances, Mallick said, Minister Pradeep Nayak and Minister Pramila Mallick had to resign from the Cabinet before surrendering in the Court. "But how does Naveen Patnaik who claims to be Mr Clean, continues to allow an accused as a party functionary," he said, adding that it is humiliation of millions of Dalits of the State. He said misusing his power as Panchayati Raj Minister, Rout had made a lady, Sarojini Sahoo, chairman of Kujang block who impersonated her sister to win the poll

and latter when her term was over, she was illegally absorbed as a data entry operator in a Government undertaking, then chaired by Rout as Minister of Agriculture. Mallick demanded that Rout should be immediately sacked from the BJD. The Naccor also demanded that Pratap Jena, Minister School and Mass Education, should be removed from the Ministry for his atrocity on Dibakar Samal of village Katarpada under Nischintakoili block. While Jharsuguda MLA Naba Das attacked dalit Zilla Parishad member Trinath Goel, a police case was registered against Phulabani MP Rudra Madhab Ray for his remarks against Daspalla MLA Kasinath Mallick. "But no action has been taken as on date," Mallick said and demanded immediate action against the accused. He further said the body of the Pipili gangrape victim, a Dalit girl, was forcibly taken away by the police to a place other than what the parents desired. A CBI inquiry into the Pipili incident has not been ordered so far. Even the accused IIC of the Pipili police station has not been removed from his service. Mallick said as 10 lakh rupees was awarded to the Pipili gangrape victim's family recently, the same also should be awarded to the four Dalits who expired and four others injured seriously in the Kujang fire explosion on November 16, 2011. Naccor also demanded Crime Branch probe into the case, withdrawal of false police cases against Dalits and tribals in different parts of the State, free entry to all temples, Mallick said adding that the Government should create an environment for Dalit and tribal people to live with dignity in the society. Another officer bearer of Naccor Manoj Bhoi quoted an apex court Judgement delivered on last May 8 asking all State Governments and Union Territories to take strong action against people perpetrating atrocities on dalit men and women. Among others, Editor of Amari Katha Kailash Mishra said that the atrocities on dalits are increasing in the State of a Chief Minister who has openly come out to support PA Sangama as the Presidential candidate. Ashok Mallick was called in by the CMO and on return told The Pioneer, "We have submitted our memorandum to Special Secretary of the CMO RC Das who has assured appropriate action to redress our grievances, failing which we will be compelled to organise a State-level agitation." (Pioneer 23/6/12)

Dalits urge police to save DC manna land (2)

MANGALORE, June 25, 2012: A Dalit leader at a meeting here on Sunday sought the intervention of the police on saving 19 cents of Depressed Class manna land (reserved for Dalit community) at Derebail, which he claimed had been converted as government land by the Revenue Department. Mangalore Police Commissionerate had convened a monthly meeting to redress the grievances of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. S.P. Anand, a leader of Dalit Sangharsha Samiti (Ambedkar Vada), told senior police officials at the meeting that they should ask the Revenue Department authorities if they could convert DC manna land as government land. Mr. Anand said the police should protect the properties meant for Dalits. He said that once the records of DC manna land were converted as government land, Dalits would be deprived of the land reserved for them. He claimed that a lobby was attempting to encroach upon a land belonging to Umanath Karkera, a Dalit at Kadri. He had been living there for the past 75 years. Mr. Anand sought police intervention in preventing the lobby from succeeding in their attempts. He said that some artistes at a cultural programme organised by Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy at Town Hall here recently had used the word "dikka" (a low level attribution to a Dalit). The academy had organised the programme to present its annual book and honorary awards. Action should be taken against those who used the word, Mr. Anand said. Ramesh Kotian, an activist of DSS (Ambedkar Vada), said the police had not arrested a key accused in the alleged murder of a person belonging to Koraga community at Kavoore recently. Sadashiva, a Dalit activist, asked the police not to permit "koli anka" (cock-fight) during "nemotsavas". "Koli ankas" gave scope for criminal activities, he said. The police officials said that they would look into the issues raised by Dalit leaders and activists. Earlier, Mr. Singh paid respects to Radhakrishna (56), a head constable with district armed reserve (DAR) here, who died on Saturday night following illness. (The Hindu 25/6/12)

Dalit murder leads to tension in Rajkot (2)

RAJKOT: Violence broke out in Thorala area of the city after a dalit man was murdered last night. Guntant Rathod (45) was murdered last night by Hitesh Mundhva and his accomplices over a dispute, police said. This led to violence, with an attempt to set on fire two houses in the area last night. Some people stone-pelted an ST bus too, according to the police. Police increased the security, but the situation became volatile this morning after Guntant's funeral, as a group of dalits disrupted the traffic, demanding prompt action against the murderers. The mob also pelted stones at the policemen, police said. In response, police lobbed teargas shells and used lathicharge. As many as 20 people including four women were arrested for rioting and damaging the public property, police added. (Times of India 25/6/12)

'12 Dalit graves have been destroyed' (2)

DHARWAD, June 26, 2012: Challenging the statements of leaders of the Anjuman-e-Islam here that no

graves of the Dalit community were destroyed while undertaking construction work, the Jai Bheem Nagar Rudrabhumi Abhivrudhi Sangha has alleged that 12 graves were destroyed. Besides, Anjuman authorities had encroached upon a large portion of the burial ground, the group claimed. Speaking to presspersons here on Monday, sangha president Mahesh G. Belgaonkar said an FIR was registered against eight persons, including Anjuman president Ismail Tamatgar on June 22. (The Hindu 26/6/12)

Upper caste youths stop dalit's ghurchari (2)

ROHTAK: A dalit groom was barred from carrying out the marriage ritual of ghurchari by a group of upper caste youths in Baniyani village of Rohtak district on Monday night. Police booked around 10 persons and arrested one of them on Tuesday. A police team also took stock of the situation in the village. Meham DSP Prithvi Singh said that the situation is under control now and the police were trying to nab the remaining accused of which six had been identified. Ghurchari is a pre-nuptial ritual in which the groom rides a mare to the village temple. The complainant, Patlu, told the police that they were carrying out the marriage procession of his son Rajesh Kumar. When the procession reached near the house of Ram Pal, he objected and denied entry to the street. He was supported by youths identified as Bhagate, Madan, Kale, Devender, Raju and some others. The complainant said they tried to argue with them but the youths refused to let the ghurchari march on. "We had to divert our route to return home. We informed the police about the incident," the groom's father said. Police sources said that on Tuesday, both the groups had a confrontation on the issue again. However, it was resolved by the police. The DSP said police has been deployed in the village and the situation. "One person has been rounded up for questioning," he said. (Times of India 27/6/12)

54 held for attack on dalits (2)

SRIKAKULAM: The CID has arrested 54 people in connection with the attack on dalits in Lakshmipeta village of Vangara mandal in the district. Five dalits were killed in the attack by the Kapu community members in the village on June 12 over a land dispute. Police have identified 65 persons for their role in the attack and named former MPP Botsa Vasudeva Naidu and another person Avula Srinivasa Rao as prime accused in the case. Several dalits and people's organizations have been demanding the arrest of both Naidu and Rao for their participation in the attack. Allegations have also been levelled against PCC chief Botsa Satyanarayana and minister Kondru Murali for providing shelter to the key accused. Additional director general of CID, S Gopala Reddy, who reviewed the case here on Tuesday, said that eight special teams have been deployed to nab Vasudeva Naidu and Srinivasa Rao and others. "If anybody gives information about the duo, they would be suitably rewarded," he said. The government ordered the CID inquiry after pressure mounted from various groups. The accused were booked under the SC/ST Atrocities Act. District SP KVV Gopala Rao said his department would release the photos of the prime accused. (Times of India 28/6/12)

Dalit girl gang raped in R'than (2)

Bharatpur: Four youths gang raped a 16-year-old Dalit girl in Rajasthan's Bharatpur town, police said. One of them was arrested, added police. The girl was allegedly raped in a room inside the compound of a cremation centre in the town, an official said. "She was on her way to a market from when 22-year-old Amit Kumar offered her a lift on his bike. The girl knew him, so she accepted the lift," a senior official said. He took her to a room situated inside the compound of cremation centre on the pretext of finishing some work there, added the officer. He added three other youths were already in the room there. "They allegedly raped her one by one and then escaped. We have arrested Amit Kumar, while three others are absconding," said the officer. The girl reached home and told about the incident to her family. They immediately approached Kotwali police station and registered an FIR. (Deccan Herald 3/7/12)

Orissa temple a statement for Dalits and womanhood (2)

Bhadrak: The Maa Dhamarai temple in Bhadrak district is more than a typical Hindu place of worship; it goes against two trends in Orissa. The temple is not only accessible to Dalits but also has women priests — again Dalits — in a state where a patriarchal society frowns on this very concept. Denial of access to Dalits has been a rule, usually unwritten, in a number of Orissa's countless temples. In July last year, chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes P L Punia was denied entry to a temple to goddess Kali in Puri district. In 2005, four Dalits had faced massive opposition from upper castes when they tried to enter a 300-year-old Jagannath temple in their village in coastal Kendrapara. Those Dalits did gain entry a year later following a directive from the Orissa High Court, but the general trend continues elsewhere. The standout Maa Dhamarai temple is on the outskirts of Dhamra, a fishing village about 20km from the ballistic missile launchpad of Wheeler Island. "Before Maa Dhamarai, there is no caste or

gender discrimination. She is a woman after all," says Rabindra Nath Majhi, who looks after the temple's day-to-day affairs. "It is the priestesses who are allowed to perform certain rituals. We men don't even dare look at the goddess in the dark. Only a woman can look at her from up close," says Nityananda Das of the temple management. At the break of dawn every day, hundreds of Dalits as well as upper caste members from villages throng the temple as priestesses Bimali Majhi and Laxmi Behera perform the rituals, chanting hymns and making offerings to the goddess. (Indian Express 3/7/12)

Crime against Dalits in UP still a serious issue: Punia (2)

VARANASI: "Every month approximately 700 complaints are filed with the National Commission for Schedule Castes (NCSC) from across the country and the maximum complaints come from Uttar Pradesh," said PL Punia, MP and chairman of NCSC. Talking to reporters here on Tuesday, Punia said that the crime cases against dalits in the state was still a serious issue and the situation had not improved at all what it witnessed during the tenure of the BSP government. "SP government is not at all sensitive towards the issues of dalits", he said. When asked about the loopholes in the welfare schemes for schedule castes in the state, Punia said, "The scholarships and school fees and other benefits meant for SC students have not been offered to the beneficiaries in many states for the past three years, however NCSC has directed state governments and central government to offer these benefits to students every month". Denying that Pranab Mukherjee has been nominated for the presidential election to keep him away from the post of Prime Minister, Punia said, "There are no such intention, Pranab Mukharjee is the most eligible and experienced candidate for the post and we are getting support for him from opposition as well". (Times of India 4/7/12)

Dalit woman president seeks police protection (2)

Chennai: A dalit woman panchayat president in Theni has approached the DGP seeking protection from the vice-president and other subordinates, who belong to the dominant caste. R. Selvi, 40, who has been admitted to the Theni GH, alleged that the panchayat members called her names, attacked her and humiliated her just because she sat on the president's chair. Other panchayat members, including vice-president Ganesan and fourth ward member Nattandurai, prevented her from performing her duties and abused her using the name of her caste, she alleged. "My husband Rasaiah and I worked in a stone quarry. I won in the 2011 panchayat elections and took charge as Tirumalapuram panchayat president. The members were unhappy and told me that I should stay at home as I belong to a lower class and should hand over all the duties to them," she said. "However, I continued to work for the welfare of the people. I faced several problems and complained to the district administration," she said. Selvi said that officials conducted an inquiry just as an eyewash and told her to cope with the situation. "The members told me that they would pass resolutions and I should sit quietly in the office. They attacked me and warned me that I should not sit in the office chair," she said. A. Kathir, director of Evidence, a dalit rights NGO, said that he files at least 15 complaints on discrimination meted out dalits who work for panchayat administration every year. Theni collector K. Palanisamy said that an FIR was registered based on Selvi's complaint. "We heard that panchayat members attacked her. We will investigate her complaint and take necessary action," he said. (Asian Age 7/7/12)

Dalits' social boycott over wages, Punjab village facing strains in social equilibrium (2)

SANGRUR: Bollywood heartthrob Aamir Khan might have raised his voice against discrimination to Dalits through his social reforming serial 'Satyamev Jayate', Dalit residents of a small Punjab village are made to face the discrimination at the hands of village landlords. The landlords of village Maha Singh Wala in Sangrur have decided to socially boycott the village Dalits over wages for paddy sowing. The landlords made the local milkmen to stop milk supplies to Dalits and flour mill owner to stop turning wheat into flour. The landlords even have decided to fine the villagers whoever pays more for engaging them in sowing paddy. The village Sarpanch though is out to ensure compromise between the warring factions but the boycott is continuing for more than 10 days. In the backdrop of boycott of dalits, few of the villagers engaged migrant labourers to sow paddy astonishingly at higher rates than decided for village Dalits. Village Maha Singh Wala dalit residents Dara Singh, Hukam Singh said "we are made to face discrimination at the hands of village landlords for demanding Rs. 2000 as wages for sowing paddy in an acre. Though we had lowered our demand to even Rs 1700, the landlords were adamant on giving only Rs 1500 and enforced more such conditions before engaging us". The landlords though stopped us from going to neighbouring villages for paddy sowing, they engaged migrant labourers to sow paddy at higher wages than were offered to us and stopped our milk supplies, stopped flour mill owner to get our wheat turning into flour, said Hukam Singh. Dara Singh said the as the landlords have announced to fine anyone engaging us for more than Rs 1500, no one is coming forward to engage us but are treating us like

untouchables. Dalit congress leader Darshan Kangra and his Punjab youth congress leader wife Poonam Kangra accompanying the dalits said "we soon will approach the SC/ST commission against this discrimination". A village landlord confirmed the boycott call on condition of anonymity. Village Sarpanch Gurwinder Singh, who belongs to upper caste, admitted the social boycott call of dalits in the village over wages. He said I had tried a lot for reconciliation but problem is persisting for few days and we are trying to settle it at the earliest. Sangrur DC Kumar Rahul said "I am seized of the matter persisting over some labour rates and have asked Moonak SDM to solve it. SDM has been instructed to visit the village on Monday getting along labour department and police officials and take stern action if social boycott call is proved there". (Times of India 8/7/12)

Road blocked over dalit youth's killing (2)

ROHTAK: Enraged over the alleged murder of a dalit youth, family members of the victim along with other residents blocked the Rohtak-Bhiwani highway for around 18 hours by placing the body in middle of the road. The blockade was imposed around Sunday midnight and lifted on Monday evening after the district administration assured swift action against the guilty and to compensate the family of the victim, Prakash Chand. According to information, the victim had taken contract for construction of a dhaba in Karontha village of Rohtak about six months back. A day after a financial dispute with the dhaba owner, his body was found hanging from a tree outside the Karontha village on Sunday. The wife of the victim, Subo Devi, alleged that his husband had told her over phone on Saturday night that he had been abducted and tied and could be killed. "He called me twice during night after which I informed the police control room. The police however found his hanging from a tree in Karontha village early Sunday morning", she said, adding that his husband had taken the contract of construction for Rs 4.50 lakh but the dhaba owner had not paid even a penny. The police said that the dispute arose after a wall of the under-construction dhaba collapsed recently. The incident led to payment row after which the victim went into depression. The SP, Vivek Sharma, however said that on a complaint of victim's wife, the police have registered a case of murder against dhaba owner, Sombir Singh and started a hunt for him. The SP said that the blockade had been lifted after the discussion with the family members and other villagers. "We have assured that the accused would be arrested soon and financial aid would also be provided to the victim's family on behalf of the district administration," the SP said. (Times of India 10/7/12)

Tussle between dalits, farmers over daily wages ends in Punjab (2)

Sangrur (Pb): A month-long tussle between dalits and farmers over daily wages in Mahasinghwala village here today ended after intervention of the administration. According to dalits, the farmers refused to employ them in their fields claiming they were demanding "exorbitant wages", and instead hired labourers from outside. The dalits also alleged the farmers, who belong to the majority community, exercised their influence due to which they were not getting work during sowing of the paddy season in the neighbouring villages also. A deputation of the dalit community on Friday presented a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner Kumar Rahul and sought his intervention to end the tussle. Following the direction of the DC, Lehra SDM Subhash Chander intervened into the matter and convinced both the parties for a truce, officials said. (Indian Express 11/7/12)

State govt increases financial aid to dalit sufferers (2)

Lucknow: State government on Friday announced increasing financial aid provided to a dalit family in condition of its any member being murdered from Rs two to Rs five lakh. The Social Welfare minister, Avadhesh Prasad giving details of scheme said, earlier Rs two lakh were provided as financial aid to a SC/ST family whose any member was murdered now this amount has been increased up to Rs five lakh. The state government have made already a provision of Rs 3550.65 lakh under this head. Seeking financial assistance in this category 37 applications were pending in Faizabad and 18 applications were pending in Balrampur district. The concerned officials in both districts has been directed to make assistance available to aggrieved families soon, he said. The minister said, the government has also hiked the financial assistance given to dalit families after reported incidents of harassment and atrocities. (Pioneer 13/7/12)

It's not 'untouchability wall', say caste Hindus (2)

Erode: Caste Hindus of Nagapalayam near Kodumudi in Erode district petitioned the Collector on Thursday, stating that the caste Hindus and Dalits were living peacefully in their village and the recent issue over the controversial wall was raised by people who were not from their village. The petition stated that those persons raised the issue by making false allegations on caste Hindus to disturb the cordial relationship existing between persons from various communities in their village. Petitioner S. Boopathi, a

trustee of the Temple in Nagapalayam, was accompanied by hundreds of caste Hindus when he petitioned the Collector. He claimed that the controversial wall was 70-year-old and was built to protect the temple. Saying so, he clarified that it was not an 'untouchability wall'. He added that the land near the temple was given to the Adi Dravidars only in 1980 and that the three-foot wall was only renovated three years ago. Mr. Boopathi claimed that the Dalits had three other approach roads to the village and that the controversial wall, a part of which was demolished a couple of weeks ago, was not blocking their way to the village. He made an appeal to the Collector to view the complaint from the Dalits as a row over a blocked passage and not as an 'untouchability wall' issue. He also asked the district administration to take necessary steps that would restore peace between the two groups. Meanwhile, Dalit organisations claimed that the wall was built only about a year ago. "Various Dalit organisations have planned to jointly organise a mass demonstration near the Erode Railway Station on July 23, seeking action on the caste Hindus who are responsible for the ongoing problems," says N.R. Vadivel, State organiser of the Arunthathiyar Ilaigai Peravai. He said the Revenue officials demolished only two portions for a stretch of 40 feet, 20 feet each in two locations, of the wall that runs across a stretch of 100 feet, and said that the remaining portion should also be demolished. "Dalits should also be permitted to enter the Maariamman Temple in the village," Mr. Vadivel added. (The Hindu 14/7/12)

Spurt in crimes against dalits, Bihar records highest number of cases (2)

NEW DELHI: Bihar witnessed the highest number of caste-based crimes in the country in 2011, data released by the National Crime Records Bureau said. NCRB figures also showed that there was a spurt in crimes under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in the entire country with 2011 witnessing 11,342 cases — an increase of 7.9% over the previous year. With 3,024 cases under SC/ST Act, Bihar accounted for 26.7% of total such crimes in the country. It left behind states such as UP and Rajasthan which, however, recorded maximum overall crimes against dalits. The difference between overall crimes and those under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act is that while the former includes all crimes committed against a dalit by any caste (including a fellow dalit) for any reason, the latter includes only those cases where atrocity has been committed against a dalit by an upper caste for reasons primarily of caste difference. In this category, Bihar scored over all other states. UP, which accounts for maximum overall crimes against dalits with 7,702 cases, comes second under Atrocities Act with its share being 17.6%. Andhra Pradesh follows with a share of 12.7% under the Act. It is often argued that such figures give a misleading picture as the Act is highly abused where false complaints are lodged against people to settle personal scores. To put matters in perspective, NCRB figures show that 10.8% of cases under this Act have been found to be false. Bihar's rate of charge-sheeting cases under the Atrocities Act stands at 82.2%, below the national average of 90.7%. All other states known for caste violence have scored better than Bihar with MP and Rajasthan scoring over 99%. On rate of conviction too, Bihar has to do better. At 10.6% (way below the national average of 31.9%), it has the lowest conviction rate for crimes against dalits. Only Andhra Pradesh's rate is comparable at 11.6% while states such as UP (59%) and Rajasthan (45.7%) are far ahead. (Times of India 16/7/12)

Protest meet to highlight Laxmipet Dalit carnage (2)

HYDERABAD: A 'chalo Hyderabad' programme with the objective of mobilising thousands of people belonging to weaker sections from all over the State would be held here on Tuesday to highlight the carnage against SCs at Laxmipet village in Srikakulam district recently. A meeting would be organised to mark the occasion at Indira Park which will be addressed by a SC leader at the national level Udit Raj and balladeer Gadar, said AP Dalit Mahasabha president Katti Padma Rao. The programme is sponsored by the Mahasabha. He said the meeting will discuss the role of AP Congress Committee president Botcha Satyanarayana in the incident. Mr. Padma Rao said that the efforts of the government to shield Mr. Satyanarayana and other culprits and the indifference of political parties towards the plight of the victims would be exposed. (The Hindu 16/7/12)

'Govt trying to end manual scavenging' (2)

New Delhi: The government plans to set up a strategy to end the practice of manual scavenging, social justice and empowerment minister Mukul Wasnik said here on Wednesday. "Even after concerted efforts to resolve the problem of manual scavenging, it still needs to be addressed," said Wasnik while addressing a conference on 'Social Inclusion and Affirmative Action' organised by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham). Wasnik said the 2011 census revealed that there were over 26 lakh unhygienic toilets in India. In 13 lakh of them human excreta is discharged in open drains, while the rest are cleaned by humans. "At least 49.80 per cent households in India defecate in the open, thus it is a huge problem and we are committed to address the same effectively,"

said Wasnik. Dr P L Punia, chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, said it is necessary to impart education to disadvantaged sections of society. "Education is essential to get rid of the deep-rooted evil in social disparity, and there is a need to empower the socially deprived to perform better," he said. According to experts, India must act on its responsibility towards disadvantaged sections of society. "This section accounts for nearly 25 per cent of India's total population as per the census, and we must take steps to ensure that the country remains on the high growth path," said Punia. Recently, a popular TV show hosted had also highlighted the issue of manual scavenging, drawing attention from several quarters. (Deccan Herald 19/7/12)

Dalit beaten, tied to railway tracks in row over land (2)

NEW DELHI: The 22-year-old Dalit boy from Ramgarh in western Uttar Pradesh was brutally beaten up by members of the dominant Gujjar community and tied to the railway tracks. Though he struggled to free himself, Ram suffered grievous injuries as a train ran over his legs. According to Ram's father Sheeshpal, who is waiting for his son to come out of the state of unconsciousness, doctors at AIIMS are not very positive about his survival because of the excessive bleeding after his legs were crushed. The police at the Dadri police station, which initially was not taking any action, registered a case of attempt to murder against four people that Tika Ram had named after activists belonging to the All-India Students' Association and All-India Progressive Women's Association protested. Those who have been named in the FIR include Kालु Bhati, brother of the village pradhan Kuldeep Bhati, who belongs to the Gujjar community. Activists said the attack on Tika Ram was directly related to a dispute over 4.75 bighas of panchayat land allocated to the 60 Jatav families by the State Government. The land has been allegedly occupied by the gram pradhan, Kuldeep Bhati. The Constitution mandates the allocation of a fixed share of panchayat land in every village to Dalit families so that they can build houses or cattle sheds on them. The Government had even issued pattas (title deeds) for the land in 1982. But the Gujjars, who are financially stronger, built a seven-foot-high wall around the land last December, restricting the movement of the Jatavs in their own land. Sandeep Singh, the national president of AISA, who is a part of the civil society protest against the encroachment on the land by the Gujjars, said the attack on Tika Ram was part of a series of retaliatory attacks on Dalit youths who have been at the forefront of the protest against the land encroachment. "On March 14, Gujjars went to the Dalit colony on the margins of the village armed with sticks, country-made pistols and axes, and beat up its residents in broad daylight, severely injuring many. During the rampage, which lasted more than three hours, the Gujjars did not spare even women and children. The police did not arrive in time despite several phone calls to them. Gujjars want to suppress all kind of voice of protest against their oppression on the Dalits in the village and the attack on Tika Ram was aimed at that," added the AISA leader. Mr. Singh alleged that in order to deflect attention from the ongoing protest against land encroachment, the Gujjars have falsely named Tika Ram in a case of attempt to murder which is related to an incident of firing on a girl belonging to the Gujjar community few days ago. (The Hindu 20/7/12)

Dalit girl tied to a tree, assaulted (2)

Kendrapada: A dalit girl was allegedly tied to a roadside coconut tree and beaten up in Afsarpur village under Jajpur Sadar police station on Friday afternoon. A mob assaulted the 20-year-old girl Mamina, accusing her of being involved in a girl trafficking racket. "Her hair was chopped off and her complexion turned ruddy from being continuously slapped by many people. She sustained no serious injuries though," said Bijan Jena, a villager. The incident was prompted by the disappearance of a 19-year-old girl Anita Jena from the village on Wednesday. When Anita failed to return to the village by Friday, her parents and other villagers accused Mamina of selling her to some traffickers and assaulted her. Anita and the assault victim are friends. At the time when Anita eloped from the village, Mamina was staying at a relative's place in Jajpur town. Anita stayed with Mamina in Jajpur for two days and subsequently returned to the village on Saturday. Narrating the nightmare, Mamina said on Saturday that she was dragged out of her house by members of Anita's family, who thrashed her, tore her clothes and tied her to a tree. "I am innocent. Anita's parents had fixed her marriage with a boy but she was not interested in marrying him, due to which she left her house and met me in Jajpur town. She returned to the village on Saturday. The villagers unnecessary blamed me for her disappearance. I have never been involved in any trafficking racket. But some villagers including Anita's parents are hell-bent on tarnishing my image in the village," said Mamina. "The victim girl was not involved in any girl trafficking case," reiterated S N Das, police officer of Jajpur Sadar police station. "Anita left the village after her parents tried to marry her to a man against her wish. Police is investigating the case," he added. Naliniprava Tarei, secretary of the district unit of All India Democratic Women's Association, and other women leaders on Saturday demanded the arrest of the accused persons. They faxed letters to the chairpersons of State Human Rights Commission

and State Women's Commission, demanding stern action against the accused persons. The attackers could face up to seven years in prison for their role in the incident. (Times of India 21/7/12)

Rights of Dalits being violated: BSP (2)

Lucknow: The BSP on Friday said the Akhilesh Yadav government has failed to stop the atrocities against Dalits in the state. Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council and BSP general secretary Naseemuddin Siddiqui said the government did not protect the rights of the Dalits when they were barred from entering temples in Chandauli, Ghaziabad and Saharanpur districts recently. Attacking the government over the law and order situation in the state, Siddiqui said two communal riots (in Pratapgarh and Kosi Kalan) have already taken place in the state. He also said "the police were leaving unclaimed bodies by the roadsides, autopsies were being performed in the open and a jailed ruling party MLA was roaming around in the state and had even grabbed a police officer by his collar". Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Swami Prasad Maurya said the government had stopped counselling at Government Medical College, Kannauj, which was built under Special Component Plan meant for the uplift of Dalits, and in which 70 per cent of the seats are reserved for SC/ST students. He said the counselling was stopped at the medical college in violation of the Government of India's guidelines meant to bring the Dalits into mainstream. (Indian Express 21/7/12)

NHRC notice to UP government for attack on Dalits (2)

LUCKNOW: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh government in connection with a case in which a Dalit youth lost his legs after being assaulted and tied to a railway track in a village in the Ghaziabad district. In the notices issued to the state chief secretary and the District Magistrate (DM) of Ghaziabad, the NHRC has sought report on action taken against the accused involved in the attack on a 22-year-old Dalit youth Tika Ram and other Dalits in Ramgarh village of Ghaziabad. Acting on media reports, the NHRC has also asked the state government to provide information of a compensation, if any, has been or is being given Ram under the provisions of the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. According to reports, Ram and other Dalits were allegedly beaten up by the members of the Gujjar community living in the same village over a dispute on allocation of 4.75 bighas of panchayat land by the UP government to 60 Dalit families, as per the constitutional norms, The Gujjars have built a wall around the land, restricting movement of the Dalits. A few days back, Gujjars allegedly attacked the Dalits living in village. Armed with sticks, country-made pistols and axes, they allegedly assaulted Dalit men, women and children. Ram, who was most vocal, was allegedly tied to the railway track. He suffered grievous injuries as a train ran over his legs. Later, he was admitted to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi where both his legs were amputated. Ram's father Sheeshpal told media persons that the police, which initially was not taking any action, registered a case of attempt to murder against four people that Tika Ram had named after intervention of the All-India Students' Association and All-India Progressive Women's Association. Sheeshpal said that those named in the FIR include brother of the village pradhan who belongs to the Gujjar community. The land has been allegedly occupied by the gram pradhan. The Gujjars, however, have denied charges and have named Tika Ram in a case of attempt to murder related to an incident of firing on a girl belonging to the Gujjar community few days ago. (Times of India 26/7/12)

Dalit killed for refusing to sell liquor on credit (2)

HISAR: A 32-year-old dalit man from Panihar Chak village of the district was killed for refusing to sell liquor on credit to a group of upper caste men. Angered by the 'temerity' of Mahender Kumar, 20-odd men allegedly kidnapped and attacked him with sharp-edged weapons on Thursday night. His cousins also sustained serious injuries when they went to his rescue. According to Kuldeep, an eyewitness, the accused came to Mahender's liquor shop at 11.30pm. They were infuriated when he did not accede to their demand of providing them liquor on credit. Following an exchange of hot words, they bundled him into their vehicle and took him to an isolated area in a nearby village, where they set upon him with sharp-edged weapons, killing him. Kuldeep said when Mahender's cousins' Ramesh and Balbir followed the kidnappers to Mulkan village, they too were attacked. Raja, Kuldeep Singh, Anil Kumar and 18 other unidentified persons have been booked under various sections of the IPC and SC/ ST Act. Preliminary investigations indicate that Azad Nagar police post in charge ASI Partap Singh was negligent in performing his duties. He has been suspended and sent to the police lines. Police stepped up action in the case when relatives of the victim and other villagers blocked the Hisar-Rajgarh road. The protesters carried out the cremation only after officials of the district administration, including Hisar SP Anil Dhawan, promised them that the guilty would be brought to book. A police spokesman said sections under the SC/ST Act were added as the victim is from Dhanak community and all the accused are Jats. Hisar SP

said, "Action was taken against the ASI as he failed to act in time." (Times of India 29/7/12)

Three Ambedkar statues damaged in Azamgarh district (2)

VARANASI/AZAMGARH: Statues of dalit icon Bhimbaro Ambedkar were vandalized by unidentified persons at three places in Azamgarh, triggering protests from BSP workers who blocked roads and staged demonstration. The incident comes close on the heels of the statue of former UP Chief Minister Mayawati being damaged in Gomtinagar in Lucknow. An alert had been sounded in the state after Maya statue was damaged on July 26. Inspector general of police Brij Bhushan said: "Damaged statues of Ambedkar were noticed by the natives of Jutpalia, Karat and Jiyasar villages falling under the limits of Mehnagar police." The officials were also trying to know whether there was any laxity on the part of the local police," the IG added. Deputy inspector general Ram Kumar said: "The damaged statues have been replaced and repaired. A large number of villagers and Bahujan Samaj Party activists later blocked the main road but were pacified by the police and administrative officials." The IG claimed that the crowd did not pose any threat to law and order. "Senior officials have held talks with the villagers and convinced them that anti-social elements had tried to fan tension by indulging in such mischievous acts. There is no tension in any of the three villages on the issue. Adequate police have been deployed in the villages as a precaution," the IG told TOI. On Thursday, some miscreants had broken the head and damaged the arms of the four-feet high statue of the BSP supremo and former UP Chief Minister installed at the Bhimrao Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Sthal in the state capital. A little known political outfit, Uttar Pradesh Nav Nirman Sena, had claimed responsibility for the incident, saying it was their way of expressing anger over scams which took place under the Mayawati regime. (Times of India 30/7/12)

"Left parties, Dalit movements should work together" (2)

MADURAI: Dalits are psychologically made to think only about their everyday life and they are under a situation where they cannot think beyond their everyday concerns, so asset creation was never on the cards, according to P. Sivakami, former Civil Services Officer and founder-president of Samooga Samathuva Padai. Addressing a seminar, 'Land and Dalits: the present and future,' here recently, she said, "A kind of slave mentality has been thrust upon them, so they always are made to remain as tillers of the land while the dominant sections became landlords." Awareness of land should be created among Dalits as it was a major tool towards their emancipation. She also said that the struggle for 'panchami' lands and lands meant for Dalits was going to fortify and would ultimately determine the Dalit struggle for emancipation. "Though we have differences with the Left on certain issues, still we understand that it is a historical necessity to work together for Dalit emancipation." Speaking earlier, A. Kathir, Executive Director, Evidence, said that about 12 lakh acres were allotted to Depressed Classes in 1892, owing to the efforts taken by J. H. A. Tremenheere, the then Chengalpet Collector. However only 1,26,113 panchami lands in Tamil Nadu were identified in a study and among them only 3,000 acres were in the hands of Dalits. The remaining were encroached upon and grabbed from the Dalits over a period of time. N. Muthumohan, Head, Guru Nanak Chair, Madurai Kamaraj University, said that land question formed an integral part of the political discourse and praxis during the 1960s and early 70s but somehow took a backstage in the next two decades, and after the Dalit upsurge in the 90s it had come up, but still needed to be addressed in a big way as the caste-class axis was still a pertinent one. Ponnuthayi, All India Democratic Women's Association, said that an important phenomenon to note was that during most of the violence perpetrated against Dalits, it was the landless Dalits who backtracked without retaliating as they did not possess land. She cited the Uthapuram case where almost 80 per cent of Dalits owned lands and that was why they were able to stand and fight caste oppression for a long period. The meeting condemned the encroachment of 'panchami' lands meant for Dalits in the State by members of other castes and government. They demanded the lands should be retrieved. They made an appeal to the State government to make the Panchami Land Retrieval Commission functional. The State government, in the name of beautification, should stop displacing Dalits in urban centres and settling them in the city's margins. Advocate Rajni, P. Chandrabose of Thiagi Immanuel Peravai, and Adhi Tamizhar Peravai's Viduthalai Veeran spoke. (The Hindu 1/8/12)

Dalit organisations demand for amendment in the SC/ST Act (2)

Lucknow: Rising atrocities on the Dalits and tribal followed by lack of political willpower to implement the Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribes Act(SC/ST) has forced the organisations fighting for the cause to call a big demonstration in New Delhi on November 26 to highlight the lapses of the Act and to demand its amendment. As per the National Crime Record Bureau(NCRB) in India there are reports of four dalit or tribal atrocities in every 15 minutes while everyday three dalits are raped, two dalits are murdered and 11 are being beaten up. Every week, 13 dalits are murdered while houses of 5 dalits are torched and 6 dalits

are kidnapped. Releasing the facts of the NCRB, National Commission for Strengthen SC and ST (POA) Act, national convener Dr Sirivella Prasad said here today the situation of dalit atrocities in the country is on increase and with lack of political will power, the SC/ST Act enforced in 1995 is inefficient to prevent it. He said in Uttar Pradesh, the NCRB record says that only 25 per cent of the dalit atrocities cases have been registered in 2011 while the national average was just around 33 per cent. " During the 17 years of the SC/ST Act, more than 1.5 million people have registered their cases under the Act in the country," he said. However, Mr Prasad, who has called for a national level demonstration in the national capital on November 26, on the Constitutional Day, said there were at least 154 types of discrimination and atrocities against the dalits in the country besides now the new developmental programme and schemes of the Central government has also identified the rise in discrimination. " Denying the dalit to cook the food of the midday meal and refusing them to give work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act were some of the examples," he said. The dalit leader also criticised the previous Mayawati government for not looking into the dalit issue even after claiming herself as a messiah of the community and UP is among the three states, which had refused to reply on the Centre's move to seek suggestions on the amendment of the SC/ST Act. The other two states are Goa and Tamil Nadu. Mr Prasad said his organisation has recommended eight-point programme to strengthen the SC/ST Act which includes making the Act at par of the Indian Penal Code(IPC) including punishment, exclusive special court and time-bound speedy trial and protection of the witnesses. Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh unit of the organisation would hold a demonstration at all the district headquarters on September 11 while in October a statewide rally would be organised in Lucknow demanding the amendment in the SC/ST Act. (UNI) (New Kerala 5/8/12)

‘Cops suppress Dalits’ cases’ (2)

Mangalore: Dalita Hakkugala Horata Samiti President L Shekhar alleged the police of suppressing the Dalits who file atrocity cases in the police stations seeking justice, by registering counter case against them. Narrating one such incident at the Scheduled Caste Scheduled Tribe monthly grievance meet at the SP's office on Sunday, Shekhar said that a Dalit youth Dinesh Naik who had filed case against a few jeep drivers of Ujire in Belthangady police station a year ago was attacked again by a group of men a week ago. Soon after he filed another complaint against the assaulters, the attackers filed a counter complaint against Dinesh of robbing them of Rs 500. The Belthangady Sub Inspector is entertaining false counter cases against Dalits who file atrocity cases. If this pattern continues, what is the use of atrocity cases, he asked. He alleged that 4-5 such counter cases were registered against Dalits in Belthangady station. Clarifying the issue, Superintendent of Police Abhishek Goyal said that there was no point blaming the police as the counter cases filed were not self-motivated. "The police have no role in filing counter cases. In fact, they will have to file the case when the opposite party comes up with the complaint. As atrocity cases are much more stronger than robbery cases, the guilty will be punished," he said. Assistant Superintendent of Police Anucheth confirmed that 4-5 counter cases were not registered in Belthangady police station, but only one counter case against the atrocity case was registered this year. Shekhar also complained of the SC ST monthly meeting not being held at Belthangady police station for last six months. Dalita Sangharsha Samiti (Ambedkar vada) President P Anand demanded the police to address the Dalit complainants immediately at the police stations, rather than making them wait for the whole day. Alleging that the MLAs who are the heads of Ambedkar Nigama in each taluk are making favouritism while choosing beneficiaries for various jobs under the Nigama, he demanded the post of Chairman of the Nigama to be handed over to the Deputy Commissioner, like earlier. (Deccan Herald 5/8/12)

Dalit assaulted in Karnal village, hospitalized (2)

CHANDIGARH: In an incident of suspected caste conflict, a 32-year-old man belonging to the Balmiki community, was hospitalized following an armed attack by a group of men from Rod community, in Kutel village of Karnal district on Wednesday. With deep stab wounds, especially on left hand, which also suffered fractures due to attack with sharp-edged weapons, victim Ramphal is undergoing treatment at trauma centre of Karnal district. Police termed the assault as an outcome of clash between two groups over a street fight between children. Balmiki leaders as well as the complainant, however, alleged caste conflict in the village, which is largely dominated by Rods, an upper class community of landlords. "On Wednesday afternoon, Vikas, a student of class X, was allegedly assaulted by youths of Rod community. Ramphal approached the local police over the incident and Vikas was medically examined. In the evening, Soni, Dinesh, Jhely, Pawan and Rajbir (all belonging to Rod community and were allegedly involved in the brawl) spotted Ramphal and attacked him with swords and iron rods," said Rajesh, on whose complaint police have booked the youths in a case of assault registered against them at Madhuban police

station. "From head to toe, especially hands, there is hardly any place where Ramphal did not have stab wounds or injuries, caused by a blunt weapon," said Rajesh, who is attending Ramphal in Karnal's trauma centre. Rajesh minced no words in terming it as caste conflict which resulted in the incident. "They (upper caste) had been opposing our children from going to school. After this incident, our children are not going to school even," he said. Anil Tank, Haryana state president of All India Balmiki Samaj, also endorsed details given by Rajesh. "This is a long tussle residents of Kutel village are having against Balmiki samaj. We will have a panchayat on Sunday. We have also sought an appointment with Karnal SP Shashank Anand," said Anil. Though Karnal SP could not be contacted as he is on leave till Monday, Joginder Singh Rathi, DSP, Gharaunda and supervising officer, confirmed registration of a case. "We are verifying facts of the case and contents of FIR. We are also waiting for medical report from trauma centre to proceed further in the case. So far as sections related to SC/ST Act are concerned, investigations are in progress and appropriate action will follow," Rathi said. (Times of India 5/8/12)

BJP to seek more rights for Dalits (2)

Chandigarh: The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) will hold a maha-sammelan at Delhi's Talkatora Stadium on September 17 for the rights of people belonging to the Scheduled Caste (SC) community, the party's SC Morcha national president Dushyant Gautam said here on Sunday. Addressing the media after holding a meeting with the Punjab state executive of the SC morcha at the Punjab BJP headquarters in Chandigarh, Gautam said the party will mount pressure on the UPA government to give more rights to SCs in the country. Flanked by the Punjab Minister for Local Bodies Bhagat Chunni Lal, Punjab BJP media in-charge Vineet Joshi, Punjab president of the Morcha Avtar Singh Sikri and general secretary B D Duppada, Dushyant said the UPA government was sleeping over rights of the SC community. "The UPA government is now mulling plans to implement recommendations of the Raghunath Mishra report that has recommended reservation for converted Muslims and Christians. Whereas before Partition, the British and after Partition, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru disagreed over such reservations. Even the chairman of the SC/ST commission, who is from the Congress, did not allow this," Dushyant said. (Indian Express 6/8/12)

Key man held in Dalit woman assault case (2)

JAGATSIHPUR: Biswanath Patra who had absconded after allegedly assaulting a Dalit woman, Manjulata Mallick of Alipada village under Baisimouza area in Biridi block two weeks ago, was apprehended by the police from the Court Chhak here on Wednesday. Reports said that Manjulata's family had come under wrath of the accused and his accomplice following a dispute. The accused and his accomplices had brutally assaulted the woman, her husband and two minor children. The woman had lodged an FIR in the Biridi police station but the police allegedly did not reportedly file a case. As a result, the woman along with her family members had to leave the village on July 27 and take shelter in a relative's house, fearing further attack. After mounting pressure from some pro-Dalit outfits and social organizations, the Biridi police finally registered a case and launched a manhunt to nab the culprits. Finally, the key man Biswanath Patra was arrested on Wednesday while his accomplices are still at large. (Pioneer 10/8/12)

Teashop owners warned against double-tumbler system (2)

CHENNAI: The Madurai police have issued a notice to 463 teashops spread across 149 villages in the district warning the owners of stringent action if they practiced the double-tumbler system discriminating Dalits and Scheduled Tribes from others. The move follows a report by 'Evidence,' a human rights organisation, that conducted a study and submitted a report to the Additional Director-General of Police, State Human Rights and Social Justice wing, police sources here said on Friday. In its report, 'Evidence' alleged that double tumbler system was prevalent in 463 teashops where Dalits and STs were given 'use and throw' plastic cups while the Caste Hindus were served tea in steel or glass cups. In many villages, members belonging to the oppressed communities had to stand and consume tea as chairs or benches were meant only for upper caste people. Fact-finding teams found that the banned practice was prevalent more in Usilampatti taluk followed by Tirumangalam and Vadipatti taluks. "In a few villages, Dalits have to leave their slippers at home or at a distance before going to the teashop. This is happening in full public view...this is happening despite repeated warnings by law enforcing agencies," A. Kathir, Executive Director of 'Evidence' told The Hindu on Friday. The Human Rights and Social Justice authorities on Thursday issued a circular to Deputy Superintendents of Police of seven sub-divisions in Madurai district asking them to send notices to teashops. The notice warned of punishment against teashop owners under the provisions of the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989, if double tumbler system was found to be in practice, the sources said. Madurai Superintendent of Police V. Balakrishnan convened a meeting with police officials and representatives of 'Evidence' in which it was decided that a notice would first be

issued to the teashop owners. Mr. Kathir said a copy of the report was sent to top officials, including the Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police. He called for constituting a team comprising the Village Administrative Officer, tahsildar and Revenue Divisional Officer to prevent the practice of double tumbler system in the district. (The Hindu 11/8/12)

Dalit Christians seek Scheduled Caste status (2)

TIRUNELVELI: Demanding Scheduled Caste status, Dalit Christians staged demonstration at Jawahar Grounds in Palayamkottai on Friday. The protestors said the paragraph 3 of President of India's order issued in 1950, which was hampering the implementation of Justice Ranganath Misra's recommendations pertaining to according Scheduled Caste status to the Dalit Christians, should be removed. Moreover, the Central Government should immediately submit its affidavit in the case on giving reservation to Dalit Christians, which is pending before the Supreme Court since 2004. President of Dalit Christians Liberation Movement S. Ilosious presided over the agitation in which Rev. R. Dhanaraj, founder, Indian Dalit Christians Welfare Movement, former MLA and secretary, Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front, R. Krishnan spoke. (The Hindu 11/8/12)

Dalit Christians demand equal rights (2)

NEW DELHI: The Archbishop of Delhi, Rev. Vincent M. Concessao, along with priests, nuns and members from the public participated in a black flags demonstration near the Sacred Heart Cathedral at Gole Dak Khana here on Friday demanding equal rights for Dalits who convert to Christianity. The protest was organised jointly by the National Council of Churches in India, Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) and National Council of Dalit Christian. CBCI office for Scheduled Caste/Backward Classes, secretary, Fr. Z. Devasagaya Raj said: "The third paragraph of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950, popularly known as Presidential Order which stipulates that "no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Caste." This was later amended to include Sikhs and Buddhists in the Scheduled Caste net. This order violates the letter and spirit of many articles of the Constitution and against the secular nature of the country." "It is on the basis of the paragraph three of this order that Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims are discriminated. Today all the churches of India observed a black day. Slogans were raised demanding the UPA Government to reply to the Supreme Court Writ Petition Cases 180/2004. The black day was observed in many States in front of Central Government offices and post offices," he added. (The Hindu 11/8/12)

Chief Minister promises measures to address Dalits' issues (2)

KOLLAM: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy inaugurated the 15th State conference of the Kerala Dalit Federation (KDF) here on Saturday. In his address, Mr. Chandy said the demand for land by the Dalits was an important and justified need. "Remaining landless is the biggest issue the Dalits are facing. The paradox is that in spite of being a group of people who are the best farmers, they were denied the right to own land. Now, earnest efforts are being taken to rectify that social evil," Mr. Chandy said. "The government fully recognises the issues behind the agitation for land by the Dalits. But the government alone cannot achieve the goal. There is acute shortage and high cost of land in the State. In such a scenario, society too has a duty towards the Dalits," he said. He said changes to the social backwardness of the Dalits could be brought about only through education. They should come forward to make use of the educational opportunities provided to them. Mr. Chandy said the medical college in Palakkad under the Scheduled Communities Department would bring about revolutionary changes among the young generation of Dalits. While the prevailing reservation for the Dalits in professional colleges is 10 per cent, the Palakkad medical college will offer 45 per cent reservation. Expressing hope that the medical college will become reality next year, Mr. Chandy said the institution would be a model for the nation. (The Hindu 12/8/12)

Dodamafi incident: SC panel sends team to probe (2)

KANPUR: Taking serious note of Dodamafi incident in Chitrakoot district, where five members of a dalit family were massacred by dacoits, the National Commission of Scheduled Caste had sent its team on Sunday to conduct a probe and submit a report to it. NCSC has sought details from the district authorities about the crime perpetrated on Thursday against Scheduled Castes people and action taken to punish the criminals, said assistant director Tarun Khanna, who visited Dodamafi village on Sunday. "We have sought detail reports on the brutal killing of five dalits in Dodamafi village. We have also asked for copies of an FIR besides post-mortem report," he said. PL Punia, chairman, National Commission of Scheduled Caste, had slammed the state government for its 'failure' to apprehend the dacoits, who killed these Dalits. Police have failed to make any breakthrough in the dacoity case in which about a dozen armed

bandits had barged into the house of former gram pradhan of Dodamafi village in Chitrakoot district and massacred five members of the family besides injuring four others including minors in the wee hours of Wednesday. Former pradhan Durga Prasad (45), his brother Sunil (27), latter's wife Anita (25), Durga's mother Bhagwaniya (65) and his ten-year-old niece Lakshmi were gunned down on the spot, when they tried to resist the dacoits. All the injured persons were admitted at SRN Hospital in Allahabad. Senior police officials stated that raids are continuing in the jungles of Patha to nab prime suspect Sudesh Patel alias Balkhadiya, who is carrying a reward of Rs 2.5 lakh on his head and his gang members."An FIR has been lodged against Sudesh Patel and nine others involved in the crime with Markundi police," additional superintendent of police Prem Chand said. Police are waiting for injured persons to recover as they are the key eyewitnesses. They are still in a state of shock and have not been able to give details to the police. The district close to the MP border has always been a popular escape route for dacoits. "Taking advantage of the border, dacoits flee to MP after they commit crime," said a police official. Sources informed that the district police, in co-ordination with Special Task Force, have decided to deal with the menace. The STF have been combing the jungles of Patha to zero-in on Sudesh Patel alias Balkhadiya and his gang members. Several men found travelling in women coaches: The cops of Railway Protection Force and a team of North Central Railways conducted a raid in the women coaches of three trains and nabbed several men passengers travelling. The raid was conducted in Jodhpur-Howrah express, Muri and Puri express. As soon as the trains stopped at Kanpur Central railway station, the teams raided the women coaches and found men there. They were arrested. The RPF had been receiving complaints that male passengers travel in women coaches. A suitcase lifter was thrashed by the passengers when he tried to run away from a train while it had slowed down at Jhakarkati rail overbridge. (Times of India 14/8/12)

Dalit boy beaten to death for collecting wood from orchard (2)

Patna: A 14-year-old Dalit boy was beaten to death in Bihar's Samastipur district by an orchard owner who saw him collecting dry wood from his orchard without permission, police officials said. Sharvan Paswan, a resident of Tahbalpur village under Lodipur police station jurisdiction in Samastipur, about 80 km from here, was beaten to death on Thursday for collecting wood from the orchard of Pappu Mandal. The victim's elder brother Vakil Paswan has filed a police complaint. Police official Umeshwar Jha said a first information report (FIR) under Section 302 (punishment for murder) was lodged against Mandal on the basis of Vakil's statement. "Police raided Mandal's house but he is absconding, along with his family," Jha said. According to Vijay Kumar, another police official, Paswan was called by Mandal when he saw him gathering some dry sticks from his orchard. Mandal beat Paswan mercilessly, and Paswan's aunt rushed to help him on hearing his cries. Vijay Kumar said the aunt was also attacked with a sharp weapon. Mandal works in a bank in neighbouring Banka district. (Hindustan Times 17/8/12)

Dalit woman panchayat chief complains of humiliation (2)

Pudukkottai: A Dalit woman panchayat president has complained of caste-based humiliation and prolonged abuse allegedly by a section of persons belonging to upper castes at her village Kattathi in Karambakudi taluk on Friday. Accompanied by her husband, Ashok Kumar, Jayanthi submitted a petition to V. Kalaiarasi, District Collector, seeking stern action against the upper caste persons and demanded armed police protection for her safety. In her petition, she said that the vice president Balasubramanian, belonging to the upper caste, was reportedly instigating a group of villagers to abuse her. She also alleged that Selvam, son of a ward member and the vice president prevented her from discharging her administrative responsibility, through caste-based abuse. The problem was brought to light on Monday when she approached A. Kadhira, executive director of Madurai-based rights activist organisation, "Evidence" explaining her mental agony. The Collector, who received the petition, assured of prompt action. (The Hindu 18/8/12)

Wrong number call rings social boycott of 50 dalit families (2)

SADARPUR (PATIALA): A minor issue of a dalit boy dialling a cellphone number by mistake has snowballed into a major row and resulted in 50 dalit families of Sadarpur village facing a social boycott. The boycott started from August 16 - a day after India celebrated its 65th Independence Day - but cops are yet to take any action against the landlords, who have announced that any person violating this dictate will have to pay a penalty of Rs 50,000. On August 14, a dalit boy of the village happened to dial the number of an upper caste youth from the landlord community, and both had a heated arguments over it. Initially, the matter was sorted out by some village elders. But on August 15, youths from the landlord community attacked a group of dalit boys returning home from Gajju Majra village after attending an Independence Day function at a government school, and left them seriously injured. "We got the injured

boys admitted in Samana civil hospital and informed Pasiana police station. Angered by this, the upper caste members called a meeting at the local gurdwara the next day and announced a boycott of all dalits," said Amar Singh, who along with others met DSP Samana on Saturday to seek justice. Landlords have banned the entry of dalits in their fields and refused to sell them milk. Since, most Dalits don't have farmland, they are totally dependent on village landlords for animal fodder, too. "We are bringing milk from Channo village, which is around 3-4 km away, " said Dhanwant Singh. Some landlords confirmed the social boycott, but refused to say anything on record. (Times of India 19/8/12)

Dalit groups demand amendment to SC/ST Act (2)

JAIPUR: Major Dalit groups and human rights organisations have demanded amendments to the 23-year-old Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act due to increasing crime against SCs/STs, low conviction rates and lack of coordination among enforcement authorities. The groups, which met here during the weekend for a State-level consultation organised under the auspices of Centre for Dalit Rights and Rajasthan Coalition on Enforcement of SC & ST (PoA) Act, also sought exclusive special courts and public prosecutors for speedy trial. The proposed amendments include redefining the 'Scheduled Castes' and 'Scheduled Tribes' in the Act so as to add those members whose ancestors were SCs and STs at any point of time in any State in order to cover SCs and STs who migrate to other States. This was also needed to prevent offences committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes professing Christian and Islamic faiths, the groups noted. "Major areas of concern are non-registration of cases, delay in investigations, filing charge-sheets, not arresting the accused, and delay in trial leading to high rate of pendency and low disposal of cases," said SDJM Prasad, convener of National Coalition for Strengthening the SCs & STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The arrangements for relief and rehabilitation of the victims were found inadequate by the groups. This was the case both at the national-level and in Rajasthan which ranked second in the 2010 list of 10 States with maximum atrocities against Dalits. During 1995-2011, when a total of only 558,103 cases of atrocities against SCs and STs were registered in police stations, the estimated victims among them stood at around 1.5 crores. As against the national average of 2.9 per cent increase in crime against this category during 2009, Rajasthan reported 7.5 per cent increase. In 2010 it was 2.8 per cent at national level and 7.4 per cent in Rajasthan. "We want additional crimes which SCs and STs are commonly subjected to, such as forcibly tonsuring of head, cutting moustache and acts of garlanding the victims with chappals, employment of manual scavengers and obstructing the use of common property resources included in the amendments," said P.L. Mimrot, Chief Patron of the Centre for Dalit Rights. Obstructing a Dalit or Adivasi chairperson or the office bearer of any panchayat or municipality from the normal functioning, employing SCs or STs to remove bodies or carcasses, obstructing an Adivasi from enjoying the forest rights, refusing to pay equal wages, filing false counter cases, uttering words or act in the form of caste abuse or hate speech, forcibly removing clothes of a woman, social or economic boycott have also to be brought under the Act, it is being pointed out. (The Hindu 21/8/12)

Woman branded 'witch' , daughter harassed in Ajmer (2)

AJMER: A dalit widow, Bhuri Devi of Kajipura village in a remote Kekri block of the district, was allegedly branded a 'witch' and forced to leave the village. The marital alliance of her daughter was also 'broken off ' by the villagers and she was manhandled by some village leaders. Villagers forcefully tried to cut her hair and the two women were beaten badly. Following her daughter's harassment, Bhuri Devi approached the police station. Taking the issue seriously deputy superintendent of police Sarita Singh instructed that action be taken against the accused. An FIR was registered and the main accused was arrested while others fled the village. The dalit woman was working as a labourer. "There was a group of people that harassed me by calling me a witch whenever I passed by them," said the victim. Bhuri Devi tried to get her daughter married as she suspected some villagers of casting an evil eye on her. When Bhuri Devi tried to fix her marriage, the villagers broke it off by telling the groom's family that the girl's mother was a witch. "Modulal, Raju, Prahlad and Pushkar barged into my house on Monday night and started abusing me and even tried to throw me out from the village. They beat me badly saying a witch cannot live in this village and even abused my daughter," said Bhuri Devi. "We need security and action against the accused for the safety of my daughter," she said. (Times of India 23/8/12)

1.5 lakh Dalit youngsters to have skills in 5 years (2)

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday said his Government intends to provide skill-based training to 1.5 lakh SC (Scheduled Caste) boys and girls in the next five years. He said this while addressing a meeting of the SC Welfare Advisory Board here. Patnaik said Odisha has a unique distinction of having as many as 93 SC communities spread over all its 30 districts. Their contributions to

the State's socioeconomic development have been significant. However, in spite of a number of development strategies undertaken for them, many SC families are at the lower rung of the socioeconomic ladder and their Human Development Indices are lower than the State average. He said in order to enable the SC and ST mothers, among others, to have higher intake of nutritious food during pregnancy, the State Government has made provisions under the Mamata scheme for direct cash transfer to the bank accounts of pregnant women and mothers. The Chief Minister spoke of free uniforms and free cycles to SC and ST boys and girls which will help in bridging the gap between the SC-ST literacy rate and the average literacy rate in the State. The Patnaik said his Government has taken decision to enhance the pre-matric scholarship amount to Rs 620 per month for boys and Rs 650 for girls with effect from July 1 this year. Stating that a large number of hostels are under construction in the KBK districts for SC and ST students to arrest the dropout rate, Patnaik said under the School Certificate Programme, steps have also been taken to issue caste and other certificates to eligible SC students in schools. He said the Government has decided to open legal aid cells in all 314 blocks with two legal retainers in each block who will provide legal assistance to SC / ST beneficiaries free of cost. Stating that legal retainers have already been appointed in 227 blocks, he said this will provide substantial relief to SC families in accessing legal assistance. Present among others were SC & ST Development Department Minister Lal Bihari Himirika, Commerce and Transport Minister Subrat Kumar Tarai, MPs Arjun Charan Sethi and Bibhu Prasad Tarai and Chief Secretary Bijay Kumar Patnaik. (Pioneer 26/8/12)

Police take threat call to a dalit woman seriously (2)

MANGALORE: Mangalore city police has taken note of threatening calls made by an unidentified person to woman employee of a private institution in Moodbidri. The employee Kavitha (name changed) had approached Moodbidri police with a complaint about receiving phone calls threatening her on July 25. The police, despite summoning the accused to police station for inquiry, did not register any case against him. Lingappa Nanthoor, a dalit leader who raised the issue at the monthly SC/ST grievances redressal meeting convened by city police here on Sunday said neglect of such instances have often led to more serious crimes against women in general and women from dalit communities in particular. "Police after calling the accused for questioning strangely was not able to find him when the complainant came there," he said. Kavitha told M Muthuraya, deputy commissioner of police (law and order) that she visited Moodbidri police station on more than one occasion, taking time off from her work after being asked to come there in connection with her complaint. "However, the accused was not there whenever I landed at the station," she said. Muthuraya directed M Puttamadaiah, ACP, Mangalore north sub-division to produce the accused before him at the earliest. Reacting to query by SP Anand, a dalit leader, about delay that victims of SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act face in getting compensation on account of technicalities raised by the department of social welfare, Muthuraya said he would take up the issue with the city police chief. Anand said the department is insisting they get a report from city police commissioner about the incident. Citing the instance of delay faced by a dalit woman, the victim of an incident of sexual assault registered in Moodbidri police station limits, in receiving compensation, Anand said the victim should not be penalized for official procedures. Subashchandra, ACP, said the report of the investigating officer - ACPs in this case - is what matters in cases registered under the act. Muthuraya assured Anand that he would get the issue sorted out with the department. (Times of India 27/8/12)

TN school excludes dalit children (2)

Chennai: A shocking case of Dalit children being excluded from a Government Middle School in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu has come to light. Several children of Dalit families in Kurayur village near Kalligudi in Madurai District have been allegedly "barred" from admission to the Government school in that village by upper caste people there, forcing the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to take note of it and intervene. The attitude towards these Dalit children in depriving them access to a Government school had forced them to join a missionary-run Government aided school on the outskirts of that village. Dismayed at this development, the NHRC, on the basis of a complaint, -has sent a notice to the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary, seeking a report within four weeks on the allegations, the human rights panel said on Wednesday. Though the Government Middle school has been functioning since 1990 in the village, some of the officials working in the school had reportedly said they could not recall "even a single Dalit student" studying there, the NHRC pointed out in a communication, seeking the State Government's response. This incident comes close on the heels of another development in Velayuthapuram village in Tuticorin district further South, where a barbed fence had been put up by upper caste people to segregate the Dalit colony there. The NHRC had also sought an explanation from the State Government on that case. (Deccan Herald 30/8/12)

Cong slams State for not spending funds for Dalits (2)

Bhubaneswar: Pradesh Congress Committee SC Department chairman Ripunath Seth and convener Bankanidhi Behera on Saturday alleged that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has failed to execute Central-funded schemes for development of the Schedule Caste people in the State. Seth told reporters here that the State Government's various welfare schemes for Schedule Caste like providing training to the Schedule Caste students, set up special courts for SC atrocity cases in Cuttack, Balangir and Baleswar, construction of hostels for Schedule Caste students, legal aid for SC people at the block level, reservation for contractual appointment for Schedule Caste people, appointment of Public Prosecutors, Additional Public Prosecutors and enhancement of pre-matric scholarship to Schedule Caste students are just for propaganda. The State Government has siphoned the Central funds for SC development to other projects like the construction of the flyover from Rajmahal to AG Square in Bhubaneswar, Seth said. (Pioneer 1/9/12)

Dalit rape victim gets admission in school after UP admin intervenes (2)

Bijnor (UP): The minor dalit rape victim, who was denied admission by a village school here on a panchayat order, was finally granted admission following intervention by the district authorities. Following furore over the incident, the administration also ordered suspension of the accused school Headmaster Khalid Husaain, officials said today. The girl, who was denied admission to the junior high school in Hafizabad Beharipur village here, was admitted yesterday evening following intervention by the Sub Divisional Magistrate, who said he would soon take up the matter with the Basic Education Officer. Earlier, Husaain had alleged he was pressurised by the villagers for not admitting the minor girl, allegedly kidnapped and raped by four youth in April this year. He had said the villagers had threatened to withdraw their wards from the school if the girl was given admission. The villagers, in a Panchayat held on Thursday, had held that the girl's admission to the school would vitiate the atmosphere and their wards would be adversely affected in her company. (Indian Express 1/9/12)

Dalit woman gang-raped, seven arrested (2)

SASARAM: A Dalit woman was gang-raped by some youths near Sone river at the district police headquarters at Dehri-on-Sone under the same police station in Rohtas district late Friday night. The police, swinging into action, arrested seven youths aged between 18 to 25 years in this connection, according to Rohtas SP Manu Maharaj. Sources said the 30-year-old woman, hailing from Sasaram, had gone to Dehri-on-Sone on Friday to meet her friend. After she reached the railway station to catch a train for Sasaram, she was lured by the youths and taken near Sone river where she was raped by them one by one. She reached all-woman PS and lodged an FIR. The police, on the basis of her statement, conducted raids and arrested seven youths who belong to Pali Road, a locality of Dehri-on-Sone. The SP said the medical examination of the woman has confirmed the rape. The victim was produced before the SDJM, Dehri-on-Sone, on Saturday where her statement was recorded under Section 164 of CrPC. The SP said the chargesheet would be submitted very soon against the accused and the district and sessions judge (DJ) would be urged for speedy trial of the case. (Times of India 2/9/12)

Use of derogatory terms irks Dalit organization (2)

Mangalore: A Dalit rights organisation in the city has expressed dissatisfaction at the alleged "apathy" of the police department in reacting to their complaints of use of derogatory terms and gestures against the backward classes. While one complaint refers to the use of the word 'toti' for Dalits, the other alleges demeaning gestures and phrases during a play staged by the Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy. "Purusha Prakasham", a booklet dealing with sexual problems and their solutions, carries a foreword remembering social reformer Kudmul Ranga Rao, wherein, Mr. Rao is stated to have said in his will that a portion of his property should be given to "Totis" (the writer even puts it under quotes). S.P. Anand of Karnataka Dalit Sangharsha Samiti (Ambedkar Vada) who filed the complaint said the derogatory term does not feature in the will. "Why would Ranga Rao who worked for the downtrodden even use a word like this? In his will he says the property should be handed over for dalit welfare," he said. 'Toti', Mr. Anand explained, is the term used by upper caste persons while referring to those cleaning the roads. "In the olden days the upper castes would not even call out the workers by their name. Instead, they would call them Totis," he said. Though first printed in 1999 by Prasad publishers, it was only after Mr. Anand got hold of the book that the issue came to light a few months ago. The book – which carries the thoughts and opinions of Prakash Kadri of Karavali Ashrayadhama as told to journalist C. Bhaskar Balaya – has since gone through three reprints, the last being April 2011. Meanwhile, Mr. Anand also alleged that a similar derogatory remark was made by artistes at a cultural programme and award ceremony organised by Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy at Town Hall on June 16. During a drama, he said, artistes folded

their arms as if accepting alms while calling out "dikka" (a derogatory term implying 'children of the field'). Umanath Kotian, Chairman of the Academy, refuted the allegation saying it cannot be an insult as all 35 performers on stage were from the Scheduled Caste category and were "recreating the language" that was spoken decades ago. On June 24, Mr. Anand filed a complaint urging the Police Commissioner to file cases under Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 in these two instances. "It's been three months and the police have not taken action," he said. T.R. Jagannath, Assistant Commissioner of Police, said no charges had been filed against the author or the Tulu Sahitya Academy and the matter was "still under investigation". (The Hindu 3/9/12)

Does BJD have a 'Dalit killer' MLA, Congress asks Naveen Patnaik (2)

Bhubaneswar: Opposition Congress today sought a clarification from Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik over the reported 'Dalit killer' remark of a minister against a former minister and a senior BJD MLA. The issue was raised during the zero hour by Congress Chief Whip Prasad Harichandan who wanted a clarification from the Chief Minister, who is also the president of BJD. Health and Family Welfare minister Damodar Rout in an interview to an English daily described Jagatsinghpur MLA and former minister Bishnu Charan Das as a 'Dalit killer', Harichandan pointed out. Similarly, Das retaliated and dubbed Rout as a "Devil" in another English daily, the Congress leader said. Referring to a rally held against Rout yesterday, Harichandan said the allegation and counter allegation by two senior BJD members - Rout and Das - had diminished the dignity of the Assembly. Under such situation, the Chief Minister should come forward and give clarification on the matter concerning his party MLAs. "Should we take it (Rout's Dalit killer remark) as the state government's version," Harichandan asked adding that a minister's statement is generally considered as the stand of the government. Is it a fact that the ruling BJD has a "Dalit killer" MLA? Harichandan asked seeking immediate clarification. Rout and Das are known rivals in Jagatsinghpur district and quite often they accuse each other for some matter or the other. (Indian Express 4/9/12)

15 year-old Dalit boy tortured in custody in Odisha (2)

KENDRAPRA, ODISHA: A 15-year-old Dalit boy was allegedly tortured in custody in front of his father in Odisha's Kendrapara district earlier this week leading to the ordering of a departmental inquiry into the incident. Official sources today said State Human Rights Commission has also sought a detailed report on the incident following the outrage among the people and demands for punishment of the concerned police officer. Fifteen-year-old Ranjan Jena of Rajagada village, a standard nine student of a government high school, was summoned to Rajnagar police station for allegedly playing on the road with his friends on Monday. He was allegedly made to do sit-ups and then beaten up in front of his father and other villagers inside the police station by a police officer. The boy was later hospitalised. His father Gopinath said the boy was 'beaten black and blue' inside the police station. "My son is physically and mentally hurt." Local police, however, said the boy was a perpetual mischief monger and to discipline him he was asked to do the sit-ups. Kendrapara superintendent of police Sarthak Sadangi said allegations regarding police excesses were being looked into and disciplinary proceedings would be initiated against the accused official in the event of the inquiry finding him guilty. (Times of India 5/9/12)

Mayawati seeks special session to pass promotion quota Bill (2)

NEW DELHI: The Bahujan Samaj Party, prime mover behind the Constitution amendment Bill for promotion quota for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in government jobs, on Friday sought a special session of Parliament for the passage of the legislation. It wanted the government to find a "middle path" on Coalgate to ensure that the House runs smoothly. On Thursday, the party sought an extension of the monsoon session to clear the Bill. The session was a washout, as the BJP remained adamant till the last day on its demand for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's resignation on coal blocks allocation. On the other hand, the Samajwadi Party and the Shiv Sena opposed the Bill, which was tabled amid unruly scenes. Terming the Congress-led UPA government "anti-Dalit," BSP president and Rajya Sabha member Mayawati blamed the ruling coalition for getting the Bill deferred for another 2-3 months. "We have requested the government to call a special session this month to get this Bill cleared, but before that the government should ensure that the House functions smoothly," she told journalists. The BSP chief favoured a "middle path" on the coal scam. "[The government should] find a middle path on the coal scam so that there is peaceful atmosphere in the House. We had talked about this with the government, but they did not accept our request." The government had listed the Bill for consideration and passage on Friday but it was not taken up. "For the last two days, their Minister stood up to take up the Bill but today he did not even stand up to move for discussion. This shows their anti-Dalit mindset," she said. Significantly, the BSP leader directed her ire only at the UPA and the Congress. She made no comment on her arch rival in Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party, with whom some of her party members were

involved in a scuffle during introduction of the Bill. The SP later stalled the Rajya Sabha to prevent the Bill from being taken up for consideration and passage. (The Hindu 8/9/12)

Women urge SP for safety to Sambalpur Dalit victim (2)

Sambalpur: A group of women from various walks of life met the SP of Sambalpur on Saturday demanding security to the Dalit woman tortured at Jayghant village and her family members. Such incidents are only seen in uncivilised societies and, hence, stringent action must be taken against all those involved in the indignities perpetrated on the victim," demanded the women before SP Nikhil Kumar Kanodia. "The police must ensure her safe living in the village with her family members. If needed, there must be day and night protection for the family," demanded Kavita Purohit, Pusparani Mahapatra and Bijayini Patnaik while the delegation met the SP. However, the SP said, "It is only police who rescued the lady from the argumentative villagers." More people would be arrested soon, he assured. The Dalit woman was beaten up, tonsured and made naked. The police have so far arrested 10 persons, including three women. (Pioneer 8/9/12)

Dalit woman tonsured, assaulted; 10 arrested in Odisha (2)

SAMBALPUR, ODISHA: A Dalit woman was assaulted, tortured and tonsured by locals after holding her responsible for the death of a youth in Sambalpur district, police said on Saturday. "Ten persons were arrested on the basis of an FIR lodged by the victim Subidha Buda, a Dalit woman of Jayaghanta village in Dhama police station," Inspector-in-Charge G Barla said. 18-year-old daughter of Buda had an affair with Sudam Mahananda of the same village. The duo had eloped from the village on August 11 but Sudam fell ill on the way and was declared brought dead at the government hospital at Jharsuguda, he said. Holding the 45-year-old woman and her family responsible for Sudam's death, the villagers had staged a road blockade on August 12 by keeping the body on the road to demand inquiry into the incident and arrest of the culprits, sources said. They had also asked the family to leave the village, the police said. The family was staying at their elder daughter's place in nearby Baunsura after leaving the village. However, the woman had come to the village house to take some household goods on Thursday when villagers dragged her out, assaulted and tortured before shaving her head. However, no case was registered under the SC/ST Atrocities Act as both the complainant and accused belonged to the Scheduled Caste, police officer Burla said. Cases were registered against 18 persons and effort is on to nab the others involved in the incident, police said. (Times of India 9/9/12)

Five arrested for tonsuring Dalit boy (2)

Jaipur: The police on Tuesday arrested five persons, including the owner of a home pipe factory, at Subhadrapur in Jajpur district on the charges of tonsuring the head of 14-year-old Dalit boy Ganesh Guni and parading him on the streets on Monday. All the arrested persons and some others had also tied the boy to a tree and blackened his face allegedly for stealing Rs 30 from the pocket of a worker in the pipe factory,. Acting on an FIR filed by the victim's mother Minati Guni on Monday, the police arrested Minaz Ali Khan (50), owner of the pipe factory, Satya Ranjan Sahoo (20) of Mnangalpur under the Pattamundai police station in Kendrapada district, Sk Riyauddin (23) of Bhadrak, Arjuni Sahoo (21) of Bhandaripokhari and Chanda Babu (20) of Kazimahal of Bhadrak under Sections 342, 294, 323, 355, 504, 506 and 34 of IPC and Sections 3 of SC and ST (Atrocities) Prevention Act, 1989. They were produced in the court of the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) at Chandikhol. The court rejected their bail applications and remanded them into jail custody. The shocking incident of the boy being tortured in such an uncivilised manner has triggered anger among social activists, who demanded exemplary punishment to the persons responsible for it. "It was a totally inhuman act. Such incidents should be condemned strongly," said local social worker Manjoor Ali. (Pioneer 12/9/12)

After rape, school violates Dalit girl's rights, NHRC steps in (2)

New Delhi: Perturbed at denial of school admission to a Dalit girl as she was a rape victim, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) today sought a report from Uttar Pradesh government on the issue. Acting on a media report, the NHRC asked the Chief Secretary and Director General of Police to file a report within four week on the allegations related to the girl from Bijnore. The 14-year-old girl was denied admission in a village school in Bijnor as she was the victim of a gang rape, a Commission spokesperson said quoting reports which appeared in a media report on September one. The Commission also directed the government to inform them as to what action had been taken against the accused under the provisions of Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (POA) Act including protection to the family of the victim and the monetary relief as admissible under the rules. "The culprits had also made an MMS of the incident and circulated it in the market, revealing her identity and making it difficult for her to go out.

The parents of the victim approached a school for her admission in an apparent attempt to allow her overcome her trauma and start life afresh. "But the school management refused to admit her on the ground that the parents of the other students had threatened to withdraw their wards if the girl was given admission," the spokesperson said quoting media reports. (Indian Express 13/9/12)

Dalit beaten to death by upper caste landlord (2)

JIND: A 42-year-old dalit labourer was allegedly beaten to death by his upper caste landlord father-son duo for coming late to work on Tuesday. Police have booked the accused landlord Amir Singh and his son Buta, of Rashida village in Jind district, on the complaint of victim Miya Singh's wife Nanhi Devi under Section 302 (murder) of IPC and certain provisions of the SC/ST Act. They have detained one person for interrogation while the two accused are absconding. Narwana DSP Rameshwar Singh told TOI that the victim had been working for his upper caste landlord for many years. "In her complaint, Nanhi Devi said her husband returned for tea in the afternoon and was supposed to go back to work," said the DSP, adding that Miya stayed back for around half an hour more. "Soon after, Amir Singh with his son came to their house and thrashed her husband. They took him away on their motorcycle and sped away," he added. According to Nanhi, the accused father-son duo returned with Miya about three or four hours later. "They dumped him outside the house and drove away. I immediately took him (Miya) to the civil hospital at Narwana, where doctors declared him brought dead," she told police. The DSP said that the body has been sent to a Rohtak medical institute for post-mortem examination. "Internal injuries were inflicted. We are waiting for the postmortem report," said the DSP. Amir is a prosperous farmer and owns around 50 acres of land, said a villager. "Miya had been working on his field for several years and used to get an annual quota of food grain and other monetary assistance on special occasions. Although Amir Singh has been strict with his workers in the fields, nobody has complaint about thrashing earlier," he said. (Times of India 13/9/12)

Dalit youth burnt alive in Junagadh (2)

RAJKOT: Tension mounted in Una town of Junagadh district on Thursday after a 27-year-old dalit youth was charred to death by a group of 12 people in Akolali, a village about 25 km from the coastal town. The attackers suspected that the youth, Lalji Sarvaiya, had eloped with a girl from their community. The girl had been missing since two days. They came to Lalji's house at around 8am and started asking for his whereabouts. They also threatened his father Kala Sarvaiya to hand over his son or face dire consequences. After heated arguments, some people barged into his house while others climbed onto the roof and started breaking it. "Seeing him sleeping, the attackers closed the main door of the house and those on the roof poured some inflammable liquid on him and set him ablaze. They also tried to set the house on fire but escaped after the commotion," Dipanker Trivedi, SP, Junagadh, said. In his complaint, Lalji's father named Bhana Koli and 11 others as the killers. Trivedi said that eight of the 12 have been arrested. (Times of India 14/9/12)

Dalit youth burnt alive in Una, family blames BJP MLA (2)

Rajkot: A day after a dalit youth was burnt alive by fellow villagers of another caste at Akolali in Una taluka of Junagadh district over his "love affair", the family of the deceased on Friday alleged that the attack took place at the behest of a BJP MLA. They claimed that the leader has been eying their land. Lalji Sarviya, 27, was thrashed and locked up in a house in the village before a mob, allegedly by sarpanch Bhana Vaja, set him on fire. They also allegedly injured Lalji's father Kala and his brother alleging Lalji, who was married, had an affair with a village girl who went missing three days ago. A complaint of murder, criminal conspiracy and atrocity was registered against 12 persons, police said, adding that 10 suspects, including the sarpanch, have been arrested. His family alleged that Lalji was not killed over any love affair but it was done in a bid to grab their land. "Lalji has been killed at the behest of a BJP MLA, who has eye on our 17 bigha land, which is near to stone mines," said his father. Junagadh BJP president Madha Boricha, who is also a dalit leader, however, refuted the allegation against his party MLA. "The incident is begin given political colour," said Boricha, who visited the affected family today with some dalit party members. Police, meanwhile, said the girl in question is still missing. "The girl is missing. Police will also investigate the murder angle and interrogate all," said Junagadh Superintendent of Police Dipankar Trivedi, adding, "The family has not mentioned name of any politician in the FIR." (Indian Express 15/9/12)

Dalit priest prevented from entering temple (2)

CHENNAI: It has been more than a decade since Nagamuthu has been climbing the hill to perform pooja at the Kailasanathar temple in T Kallupatti village in Theni district. No one raised an objection to a dalit

performing pooja at the temple till it got a facelift four months ago. On May 5, 2012, non-dalit members of the temple committee told Nagamuthu not to come to the temple as some devotees were unhappy with the pooja being performed by a dalit. When Nagamuthu questioned the decision, he was allegedly beaten up. For Nagamuthu, the issue in fact began a couple of years ago. "A couple of years ago, the committee members had called me and said not to perform pooja on auspicious and festival days. They hired a Brahmin priest for those days. I didn't object to this because I was getting the opportunity to perform pooja on normal days. Now, they have asked me not to enter the temple because some devotees don't want a dalit performing pooja. They even slapped and abused me when I questioned this," said the 23-year-old priest. Even though Nagamuthu approached the police, they didn't take any action. With the help of some activists, he filed a writ in the Madurai bench of the Madras high court, which eventually directed the police to do a proper investigation into the case. Based on this, the Thenkarai police registered an FIR (420/2012) on August 2, but no action has been taken so far. "We can't take immediate action in these matters considering the casteist angle in the case. The temple is maintained by a trust and it has the power to terminate a priest. At the same time, investigation is on whether Nagamuthu was beaten by anyone or not," said a police officer, who didn't want to be named. The more the investigation gets delayed, the more it's difficult for Nagamuthu, whose sole income depends on the money he gets from the temple. There is, however, another angle to the story. "At a time when no one was there to take care of the temple, there was no problem with the dalit priest. Now, the temple got a facelift with the help of some influential people in and around the village. They want a Brahmin priest. It's unfortunate," said A Kathir, director of Evidence, an NGO based in Madurai, which helped Nagamuthu fight his case. (Times of India 17/9/12)

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Dalit woman makes history in Rajasthan (2)

Four kilometers from the famous village of Tilonia is Harmada. A land of freedom fighters, Harmada today has a dalit woman sarpanch -- Nauroti. This plucky woman had earned a name in the region for her struggle against injustice long before she was elected to this post a few years back. As she walks towards you, bare foot and clad in a simple, inexpensive sari, Nauroti is a picture of humility but the moment you start talking to her you know that she is no ordinary woman and no ordinary sarpanch either. Nauroti was born in an extremely poor dalit family in Kishangarh district of Rajasthan and had to work on a road construction site for a living as a stone cutter. But despite the toil, she and many fellow labourers were not paid full wages on the pretext that they had not performed work according to the wages. It was like putting salt on fresh wounds, she felt. Nauroti raised her voice against this injustice, mobilised labourers and became the voice of the agitation. Finally they got justice when their case was taken to a court by an NGO. That was more than three decades ago. From then till now, Nauroti has continued her unrelenting

battle for empowerment of the marginalised and her journey from a stone cutter in Puharu village to a sarpanch of gram Panchayat in Harmada is the story of unflinching courage and impeccable honesty in the face of every adversity. It was in the early 1980s that she joined the barefoot college in Tilonia founded by Bunker Roy. What made her stand apart from other women was her boldness, her ability to learn fast and above all the leadership qualities she displayed when she mobilised the construction workers. She became a sathin for women's empowerment and would travel to villages in the region and educate them about their rights. She also joined adult literacy classes and later learnt to work on computers. Later, she trained many other women who had never gone to school like her. She has also had the chance to go to the US and China. Above everything else, it is working amongst the people that gives her real satisfaction, she says. Nauroti first became member of her gram panchayat – Harmada -- and about three year back was elected as its sarpanch with an overwhelming majority. As sarpanch, she waged a battle against the daru (alcohol) mafia and stopped encroachment of the graveyard in Harmara. She has been working tirelessly to get approval for development projects in the region and has achieved a lot in the past two and a half years. Nauroti says that there are two things she can never tolerate -- injustice and dishonesty. When it came to her notice that a mate working for a project of the Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was committing fraud, she immediately took action. Despite resistance from many quarters, she did not stop till the person was jailed. It is the villagers who talk about what she has done for them and the development of the village, whether it is the construction of water bodies, hand pumps, toilets, houses for those below poverty line, but when you ask her, she speaks about her unfinished agenda. "There is a lot more to be done before my tenure is over", she says and lists a number of projects that remain to be completed. (The Hindu 18/9/12)

Father commits suicide after dalit girl gangraped (2)

HISAR: A dalit man committed suicide after his 16-year-old daughter was gangraped by a group of uppercaste youth on Tuesday in Dabra village of Haryana's Hisar district. The girl, a class XII student, was raped by her boyfriend and his friends on September 9 but she informed her parents of the incident on Tuesday evening. Police said the girl told her parents that she was on her way to meet her uncle at Patel Nagar, around 20 km from her village. She was walking from the bus stop to meet her uncle, when her boyfriend Mahender, 20, came and took her to a secluded place on his motorcycle and raped her. He also phoned seven of his friends who arrived and took turns to rape her after which Mahender dumped the girl near her uncle's house. The girl returned home without telling anyone what had happened. When her father Krishan (43), a farm labourer, came to know of the incident he informed the village elders who questioned the youth involved in the rape. Mahender and his friends threatened Krishan that his daughter's nude pictures would be made public if he approached the police. A depressed Krishan went back home and consumed poison on Tuesday evening. Neighbours took him to the hospital where he died. Police registered a case on Wednesday after the dalit panchayat met Hisar SP B Satheesh Balan, who directed the cops to book the accused. No arrests have been made till now. "A case has been registered under Sections 376 and 306 of the IPC and an inquiry is on. The postmortem will be conducted on Thursday," said Balan. The girl's medical examination confirmed rape. Meanwhile, local BSP leaders Bajrang Indal and Sanjay Chauhan said influential people of the village are pressurizing Raj Kumar, elder brother of the deceased, to withdraw the case. (Times of India 20/9/12)

Hisar Dalit gangrape case: One arrested, cops hunt for 11 other accused 92)

Hisar: Claiming a breakthrough in the alleged gangrape of a teenage Dalit girl in Hisar, which prompted her father to commit suicide, police said it has arrested one accused who revealed there were 11 others involved in the crime. Hisar police chief B Satheesh Balan said the accused, arrested on Saturday, has revealed names of the other 11 accused and they will be arrested soon. The incident had sparked furore as irate residents of Dabra village staged protest demanding immediate arrest of people accused in the crime. It was only after assurances by Deputy Commissioner Amit Kumar Aggarwal and Superintendent of Police Balan that the protesters allowed the body of victim's father Krishan, who had committed suicide after the incident, to be taken for post-mortem. His body was later cremated at his native village on Sunday. "We will support the family in whatever way we can, also will take into account that such crimes are not committed and the people found guilty are punished," said Geeta Bhukkal, Haryana Education Minister. Meanwhile, opposition INLD's leader Ajay Singh Chautala has also demanded immediate arrest of all the remaining accused. The teenage Dalit girl was allegedly raped by a group of men who had also threatened to make public her objectionable pictures, following which her shocked father committed suicide on September 18. "At times the victims due to shock become hostile. For seven days the girl also didn't speak and after she spoke, the inquiry started. Those boys who made her MMS must be punished," said Nina Nayak, member, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). A case was

registered by the police under Sections 376 for rape and 306 for abetment to suicide. (NDTV 24/9/12)

3 dalits killed in Than police firing (2)

RAJKOT: Three dalit youths were killed and one seriously injured in police firing after dalit and Bharwad community members clashed in Thangadh town of Surendranagar district late on Saturday night. Dalit members have accused the police of firing at them without warning, leading to a major controversy. The incident took place close to the ongoing Tarnetar fair where lakhs of people have gathered and 70 km from Limbdi where chief minister Narendra Modi was addressing people as part of the Swami Vivekananda Youth Convention and Bharwads and dalits first came face to face on Saturday night after a petty fight at a local fair organized by the Thangadh municipality. It snowballed into a major clash with both sides using stick and sharp weapons. Police officials say they lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the rampaging crowds. When this did not work, they fired at the crowd. Seventeen-year-old Pankaj Sumra was seriously injured in the firing and later died in a hospital in Rajkot. News of the death sparked outrage among dalits in Thangadh who took to the streets demanding that a complaint be filed against police officials responsible for the death. With tension in the town, police officials called in reinforcements. However, on Sunday afternoon a group of dalit youths clashed with the police at Dholeswar area. The police again opened fire in which three people received bullet injuries. They were rushed to the Rajkot civil hospital where Mehul Rathod, 17, and Prakash Parmar, 21, died. The condition of Chana Vaniya, 25, is critical. "My son was innocent and was only passing through the railway crossing when he was shot. I will not take my son's body from the hospital until a complaint is filed against the police official," said Mehul's father Valji Rathod. Dalit rights activists have condemned the police action. "Even after the Pankaj's death, police did not take their complaint against those responsible. They opened fire on innocent and unarmed dalits," said Babulal Solanki, an activist in Thangadh. Praveen Sinha, inspector general of police, (Rajkot range), said, "A magisterial inquiry will be ordered in this case." Gujarat's director general of police Chittranjan Singh said, "Strict action will be taken against the policemen if they are found guilty." (Times of India 24/9/12)

Thangadh firing: Dalit leaders give 'Chalo Than' call (2)

RAJKOT: Dalit rights activists on Tuesday gave a 'Chalo Than' call to their community to protest against the killing of three dalit youths in police firing in Thangadh on Saturday and Sunday. The community will hold a massive gathering in the town on October 2. Even as an uneasy calm prevailed in Thangadh, the anger over the killings spread in other parts of Saurashtra where community members took out rallies and demanded immediate action against the policemen responsible for firing without any warning. Rallies were held Chotila, Vallabhipur in Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Mehsana, Keshod in Jungadh and many other places. Dalit leaders have called for a complete bandh in Limbdi town, roughly 70 kms from Thangadh, on Tuesday. "This is a heinous crime against dalits and action must be taken against the culprits. We have called for a bandh in Limbdi to press our demands," said dalit leader from Limbdi Ashok Chavda. Situation in Thangadh, which has turned into a ghost town since two days, was calm but fear was palpable among people, especially shop keepers. Very few opened their shops and business establishments fearing fresh trouble. Dalit community members requested them to open the shops, but not many wanted to take a risk. Close to 500 dalit women also took out a silent rally in the town to express their resentment. Three dalit youths - Pankaj Sumra (16), Mehul Rathod (17) and Prakash Parmar (26), were killed on Saturday and Sunday. (Times of India 26/9/12)

Case against panchayat chairman for assaulting Dalit (2)

TIRUNELVELLI: The Radhapuram police have filed a case against district panchayat chairman B. Narayana Perumal and his son for allegedly verbally abusing and assaulting a Dalit youth. Police said complainant C. Kathirvel (28) of Soundarapandiapuram under Radhapuram police station had opposed the move to cut a trench across the land of his relative for laying pipes to take drinking water to Mr. Narayana Perumal's relative Chelladurai's house. Following the argument between Mr. Kathirvel and Mr. Narayana Perumal's son N. Bala Richard (29), the latter was allegedly threatened by the former. Based on the complaint filed by Mr. Bala Richard, police arrested Mr. Kathirvel. When he was released from jail on bail, Mr. Kathirvel was allegedly attacked by Mr. Narayana Perumal and Mr. Bala Richard on last August 4. In his complaint filed with Radhapuram police in connection with the incident, Mr. Kathirvel alleged that the father and the son had attacked him and referred to him by his caste. Since he was "injured" in the attack, he was admitted to the hospital. The Radhapuram police have filed a case against Mr. Narayana Perumal and Mr. Bala Richard under the Indian Penal Code Section 341 (wrongful restraint), 294 (b) (uttering obscene words), 355 (Assault or criminal force with intent to dishonour

person), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 506 (II) (criminal intimidation) and Section 3(1) (X) of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. (The Hindu 27/9/12)

Dalit allegedly beaten up by policeman (2)

NAGAPATTINAM: Villagers of Neivillaku here in Vedaranyam staged a road blockade over the alleged beating up of a man suspected of selling liquor by a senior sub-inspector on Thursday. Namachivayam (30), a Dalit, was allegedly beaten up by Chelladurai, a senior sub-inspector attached to Vedaranyam police station. Speaking to The Hindu over phone, the victim, Namachivayam said he was intercepted by the police officer just after dawn, as he was taking a walk in the Neivilaku bazaar. He said he was beaten up despite his health condition. He had just recovered after six months of bed rest from a spinal fracture. Following this, the villagers intervened and detained the policeman, who was in civilian clothes. People blocked the road and staged a dharna demanding action against the SSI. Assurances of having the SSI transferred failed to convince them. They demanded a case be registered against him under SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act. (The Hindu 28/9/12)

Two more arrested in Hisar gang-rape case (2)

Hisar: Two more persons were arrested on Saturday in connection with the gang-rape of a teenage Dalit girl here, taking the total number of arrests made in the case so far to 11. Kuldeep alias Moosa of Dabra village and Sunil, a resident of Mangali village, were arrested and produced before a local court which remanded them to three-day police custody, police sources said. With this, the total number of accused arrested in the case has gone up to 11, they said, adding that one of the accused, Sunil, who was arrested earlier, will be released as the victim declined to identify him. The teenage Dalit girl was allegedly raped by a group of youths who had also threatened to make public her objectionable pictures, following which her shocked father had committed suicide on September 18. The incident had caused widespread furore, with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes seeking an action taken report (ATR) from the Haryana administration in connection with the case. – PTI (The Hindu 30/9/12)

Dalit woman sarpanch assaulted in Haryana (2)

CHANDIGARH: A 37-year-old dalit woman sarpanch was assaulted on Sunday when she was presiding over a meeting to broker peace between two groups fighting over distribution of land for poor families at Aambwalan village in Haryana's Yamunanagar district. The sarpanch, Rajrani, and two other villagers were seriously injured in the attack and were admitted to a government hospital. Yamunanagar SP Mitesh Jain said the injured were not in a position to give a statement in this regard. "The police will take further action once the injured people give their statements," Jain added. Investigation officer Satpal Singh, who had visited the spot, said the sarpanch was assaulted after arguments over the land distribution. The sarpanch's husband, Sandeep Singh, who also received injuries in the attack, said around 20 dalits attacked the sarpanch and others present in the panchayat. The dispute began at a meeting called on September 27 to remove encroachments on a 7.5-acre plot so that it could be distributed among poor families to build houses as part of Haryana's governmential plots to below poverty line families, Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. "Two villagers — Pala Ram and Krishan Kumar — picked up a fight at the meet," said Sandeep. "To resolve the matter, a panchayat was called in the village on Sunday. When the panchayat was going on, a group got angry and started pelting stones at people present in the panchayat. They were also carrying swords and iron rods." (Times of India 2/10/12)

Cong protests against killing of dalit youths in police firing (2)

AHMEDABAD: The state capital turned into a fortress on Monday in response to the Congress's rally to protest against the killing of dalit youths in police firing at Thangarh in Surendranagar. On Monday afternoon, all roads leading to the state capital were blocked and each and every vehicle was checked. Several commuters were detained on the basis of suspicion. However, some Congress leaders managed to sneak into the city despite adequate police bandobast and protested at Pathik Ashram. The Congress leaders claimed that the police even demolished the podium which was set up near Pathik Ashram to pay homage to the dalits youths who died in the police firing. Three youths were killed in police firing on September 21. Congress leaders, who had visited Thangarh, had given cheques of Rs 1 lakh to families of those killed in police firing and Rs 50,000 to those who were injured. The traffic at Pathik Ashram came to a halt with Congress leaders obstructing the road. The Gandhinagar traffic cops had to divert the traffic through alternate roads. Some of the workers who were detained and released later were seen coming back and joining the protest. Earlier at 7 am, some officials of the district police ransacked the stage and pandal which was set for the prayer meeting. State vice-president of the Congress and a dalit leader,

Girish Parmar, said that earlier the police had given permission for the rally, but all of the sudden retracted the same. No reasons were given for the cancellation. "We wanted to pay homage to the departed soul but the police even did not allow us to hold the meeting," said Parmar. Superintendent of police, Gandhinagar, Sharad Singhal, said that the Congress has taken permission for a gathering of 2,500 people, but we were told that the number of protestors could increase to over 25,000. "In order to maintain law and order we spoke to the senior Congress and informed them why the permission was withdrawn. The meeting ground was too small to accommodate such a huge crowd," he said. The state government wanted to play safe in the election year and had instructed the police staff not resort to lathicharge and allow the Congress leaders to register their protest. "We were asked to just ensure that they do not resort to violence. Senior officials instructed to detain the protestors and take them away from the spot. The instruction was clear that no one should be allowed to move out of the area and especially towards the CM house," said senior officials. Congress's charter of demands: * Cases against dalits youths should be withdrawn* Action against police officer involved in the firing * State government should give Rs 10 lakh compensation to victims' kin * Rs 2 lakh compensation to the family of those injured (Times of India 2/10/12)

Than firing: 30,000 dalits hold meet, press for aid, action against cops (2)

Rajkot: Around 30,000 dalits on Tuesday held a mega convention in Than area of Surendranagar, where three youths were killed in police firing a few days ago, and demanded immediate arrest of the "accused" policemen, compensation for the affected families and a probe by SIT or CBI instead of CID. At the convention, held a week after an FIR was lodged against four policemen including two sub-inspectors by CID, the dalits passed resolutions to press their demand. Dalit leader Raju Solanki said it was an apolitical convention where resolutions were passed and threatened to intensify their protests if their demands were not met. The resolutions include immediate arrest of the policemen, especially SI K P Jadeja against whom an FIR of murder and criminal conspiracy has been lodged. In another resolution, the dalits have demanded investigation by a special investigation group. "SIT should be led by the officers of the choice of affected families," said Solanki, adding, "Or else hand over the case to CBI." "Its not fair to ask junior level officer to conduct probe against a senior," he added. In other resolutions, the dalits also demanded Rs 15 lakh compensation to each of the kin of those deceased and Rs 10 lakh the injured. Besides, according to last resolution, the state government should either give affected families 5 acres of land or a government job to at least one the member of affected families. On September 25, two youths were killed when police opened fire on a mob that was demanding action against Jadeja. On previous night, a minor was also killed in police firing when a mob consists of dalits was demanding action against the Bharwads, whom they alleged of abusing and beating them. (Indian Express 3/10/12)

Minor dalit girl raped in Rohtak (2)

CHANDIGARH: Adding to the spree of crimes against women in Haryana, a minor Dalit girl was allegedly kidnapped and raped in Rohtak, while a mentally challenged woman was sexually assaulted in Jind district. Main accused in both the cases have been arrested. A 15-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly lured by three women relatives in Kachchi Garhi Mohalla colony of Rohtak and then raped by a youth last evening, police said. The girl was called out of her house by the accused women and was taken to an abandoned house by car on the Hisar road on the outskirts of the village where she was raped. Police have registered a case against five persons, including the three relatives of the victim and also arrested the key accused. The latest incident occurred in chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda's home district Rohtak, where opposition BJP-Haryana Janhit Congress women leaders took out a rally and raised slogans against the Hooda regime for allegedly failing to protect the women of the state. Yesterday, a mentally challenged woman was allegedly sexually assaulted by a man in Narwana area Jind. The accused has been arrested. (Times of India 4/10/12)

Dalits on rampage torch one more bus in Surendranagar (2)

RAJKOT: Miscreants torched another state transport (ST) bus near Surendranagar late on Wednesday as the outrage over desecration of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's statue in Limbdi showed no signs of abating. A mob of around 200 people forcibly stopped a bus in Ratanpur village and asked all the passengers to alight. After all of them got down, they ransacked the bus and set it ablaze. "It was a new bus and it travelled only 90,000 km. The mob was on rampage. They first started pelting stones and then set the bus a fire," a bus driver Pratap Patel said. This is the fourth incident of ST buses being torched in the district. Bus services in the district are adversely affected after drivers in Surendranagar, Dhrangadhra and Limbdi went on a strike on Thursday morning demanding safety. "Drivers fear that they will be attacked by mob. They went on a strike at three depots and no buses operated as per their schedule in the morning. They

resumed duties only in the afternoon following assurances by authorities of immediate action against the culprits," depot manager, Surendranagar, Prithvirajsinh Rana said. Patel filed a police complaint with Joravarnagar police station against 200 people. He told the police that the bus was completely destroyed by the mob. Earlier on Wednesday afternoon, a bus was set on fire near Wadhvan. Government officials said two buses were set ablaze after the murder of Popat Bhavard in Dhrangdhra town and two buses were targeted by mob after dalit youths were killed in police firing in Thangadh last month. Meanwhile, police arrested one person indentified as Deepak Rathod from Ratanpar village in connection with Wednesday evening's incident. Dalit rights activists, however, denied that any member of their community was involved in attacking buses. Sources said violent reactions from dalits have happened after 15 years in Surendranagar. "In 1997, dalits came out on streets in reaction of similar incident in Mumbai at that time. But since then dalits have not reacted in this manner," an activist from Limbdi Ashok Chavda said. Dalit rights activist Martin Mackwan said there is so much anger among the people, especially youngsters, against the system and they are frustrated. "There is mounting frustration among youths and the government has not provided a chance to relieve it. So, it turns violent. Now, assembly polls are round the corner and some elements may try to take the advantage of it for their benefits," Mackwan added. (Times of India 5/10/12)

Dalit girl gangraped in Jind, attempts suicide (2)

Chandigarh: In yet another incident of sexual assault on women in Haryana, a teenaged Dalit girl of Sacchakhera village in the Jind district was allegedly gangraped by two youths on Saturday after which the victim attempted suicide by setting herself on fire. The incident took place when the 16-year-old victim was forcibly dragged and raped by one of the accused, identified as Pradeep in his house, police said. Later, another youth joined him and committed the crime. In a state of shock, the girl went to her house and sprinkled kerosene on herself in an attempt to commit suicide. However, the girl was admitted to a hospital with serious burn injuries, they said, adding that the accused duo has been arrested. Further probes are on, police added. Meanwhile, rattled by the series of sexual assaults against women at various places in the State, the Haryana government on Thursday formed a three-member committee at district level to investigate, monitor and ensure speedy prosecution of such crimes. (Hindustan Times 6/10/12)

Two more arrested in Jind dalit rape case (2)

JIND, HARYANA: Two more persons were arrested today in connection with the rape of a teenaged dalit girl who later attempted suicide by immolating herself in the Narwana area in the district, police said. The incident took place yesterday when the 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by two youths, identified as Pradeep and Naveen while the former's sister-in-law Meena kept guard standing on the terrace of the house. However, another accused Sanjeev, according to the complaint of the victim, also came to the room and bolted the door. In a state of shock, the girl went to her house and sprinkled kerosene on herself in an attempt to commit suicide. However, the victim was rushed to the PGIMS Rohtak, but she succumbed to her 90 per cent injuries later last evening, they said. While Sanjeev and Meena were arrested yesterday, the main accused were arrested this morning, they said. Further probes are on into the case, police added. Yesterday's rape incident was the 12th in Haryana within around a month's span. (Times of India 7/10/12)

Dalit woman burnt alive in Bihar (2)

Gaya: A demand for the money allotted to her under Indira Vikas Yojana cost a mahadalit woman her life in Bihar's Gaya district. The former block pramukh, who had siphoned off the funds, allegedly sprinkled kerosene on Putukwa Devi and set her on fire. Putukwa Devi died in hospital on Sunday. The 35-year-old woman was a member of the poorest of dalits. The category was created by chief minister Nitish Kumar to provide them with special benefits. An FIR has been lodged and accused Subedar Yadav is on the run. Indira Awas Yojana is a Centrally-sponsored housing scheme for the poor. "In 2008, the money had been sanctioned in Putukwa Devi's name for the construction of her house, but Yadav had kept it," said Pitamber Roy, station house officer, Mohanpur. She had been repeatedly demanding for the return of the money, said Roy. On Saturday, he barged into her house in an inebriated state along with a few other men. "The woman's husband Barhan Manjhi works in Bhutan and neighbours allege that she had illicit relations with the ex-pramukh. But that day, heated exchanges followed when she objected to the entry of his associates," the SHO said. Then Yadav, who was already peeved over her demands for money, sprinkled kerosene on her and set her on fire. "Then they left, but Putukwa Devi, despite her condition, followed Yadav to his home. He took her to the hospital where she died a day later," said Rajesh Kumar, deputy superintendent of police, Sherghati. (Hindustan Times 8/10/12)

Haryana: Woman alleges gang rape, cops deny claim (2)

Kaithal: The Kaithal police arrested two youth on Tuesday evening for allegedly gang raping a 19-year-old married woman at Kalayat town, near Kaithal. However, the district police claim that the circumstantial evidences and investigations rule out the possibility of a gang rape and that she had illicit relations with both accused since long. As per the complaint, the woman had gone out to answer nature's call but was abducted by Rakesh and Pawan on October 8. She was allegedly raped in a room in the town before she was dumped at the village street in the evening. A police complaint was made on Tuesday and the accused were arrested last evening. Meanwhile, the superintendent of police Kuldeep Singh told Hindustan Times on Wednesday that scrutiny of call details of the woman's mobile phone confirm that she was regularly in touch with both accused over phone for past several weeks including, minutes before she was alleged kidnapped. "Victim alleged that she was kidnapped at around 4 am on October 8 whereas her phone details revealed that a call was made to Rakesh from her mobile phone at 3.20 am," he said. Singh said that probably the trio was seen by someone in an objectionable situation and she cooked up a story. However, the SP clarified that following a specific allegation, both were arrested on rape charges. He said that during prosecution the phone call details and other evidences would be put forward in the court. "After the accused told the investigators that they had illicit relations with the woman and that she herself had called up Rakesh on Monday morning to come to him, we checked her phone call details and got the conclusion of the case," says the SP. He further added that contrary to the allegations of being abducted, she was frequently making calls from her mobile phone to various persons known to her till Tuesday evening but did not speak about the incident to anyone. "The alleged victim is unable to give a satisfactory reply on call detail issue that why she called up Rakesh in the early morning and if she was kidnapped then how she was allowed to make calls from the illegal confinement but did not ask for help," says the SP. He said that the family said that the woman had married few months back but was not staying with her husband for unspecified reason. (Hindustan Times 10/10/12)

Only Dalit village in Gurgaon deprived of electricity supply (2)

GURGAON: Residents of a Dalit-dominated village near Gurgaon say they are being denied adequate power supply because they are from depressed communities. Village elders of Sihi say that while neighbouring villages have got attached to an urban sub-station of Gurgaon, they alone have been denied similar benefits. Sihi, 8 km from the city with its corporate towers and high-rise residential apartments of the rich, is home to around 1,200 people. It is the only Dalit-dominated village in Gurgaon district. A total of 38 villages were included in the Municipal Corporation Gurgaon (MCG) after their panchayats were dissolved. Authorities had said they would provide basic amenities to these villages - including good roads and electricity supply as in urban areas. Kherki Daula, Narsinghpur and Mohamadpur villages on the Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway along with Sihi were to get 24-hour power supply from the urban electricity feeder. Six months ago, all the other villages except Sihi were attached to the urban sub-station, Sihi village elder Sundar Lal Kataria said. Sihi's former sarpanch Surender Kumar said 99% of the village was made up of Dalits and backward castes. "We tried to get our rights. We made several complaints to the authorities including local legislator and former minister Rao Dharampal. But there was no response," Kumar said. When asked, Haryana's power minister Ajay Singh Yadav said: "I am not aware of this. I will be able to reply after I get a full report. I will look into the matter." Sanjeev Chopra, a superintendent engineer in the electricity department, promised to dig out 'the facts'. As a rural entity, Sihi will be entitled to six to eight hours of power a day. Urban sub-stations supply round-the-clock electricity. Sihi wants to get into the urban sub-station - like the other villages. (Times of India 13/10/12)

Beyond quota, promotion: The dalit crorepati club (2)

Lucknow: They are dalits. Dalit crorepatitis to be precise. And they are here flaunting their crorepati status for a cause-- to promote entrepreneurship amongst dalits and connecting them to mainstream business scene with the motto 'Be job givers, not job seekers'. To take their motto forward, they on Sunday launched the UP chapter of Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI), getting no less than 74 dalit entrepreneurs from across UP to its fold almost immediately. "There has been political, social, intellectual leadership of dalits, but they lacked business leadership. DICCI fills that gap," said Milind Kamble, the founder chairman of the DICCI while launching the UP chapter. Kamble founded the chamber in 2005, which now has a number of state chapters - in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra- and 3,000 members. Almost all the dalit businessmen who came from other states and those who joined the UP chapter are all crorepatitis and pay taxes in lakhs and crores annually. "Almost all of them are first generation entrepreneurs," said Chandra Bhan Prasad, DICCI mentor (think tank) and also a columnist and writer, who lives in Delhi. "Any samaj (community) that faces tough conditions and

struggles long rises. Look at Marwaris who originally hailed from desert and dry land of Rajasthan-Gujarat, look at the Parsis who came from Iran or Sindhis who came from Sindh. They all lived in tough conditions and emerged rich. It is time for Dalits to 'arrive'. In business we are rising on merit," said Kamble. A large number of participants spoke openly against reservation. "People think Dalits are those who cannot do without reservation, NREGS, midday meals, BPL tag and ration cards. Many Dalits too feel they are an oppressed class. We want to change all this," said Kamble. After the launch of the UP chapter, there was a session dedicated to success stories. "I was not educated enough but now I own a couple of hospitals. Initially, doctors were averse to joining my hospital but now many upper caste doctors use influence to get a job in my hospitals," said one of them. "I was in a government job in Rajasthan where I used to earn Rs. 30,000. Now, I pay Rs. 60,000 per month to my manager who is an upper caste. The taxes I pay run into lakhs," said another. "A decade ago, I went to a bank for a Rs. 15,000 startup loan. The bank was reluctant but eventually agreed and now it is goading me to take a Rs. 100 crore loan," said yet another. PL Punia, the chairman of National Commission For Scheduled Castes, was the chief guest at the event. "We need entrepreneurship all the more because Dalits do not have land. It is entrepreneurship that would get them economic power," he said. Speaking on the occasion, Bhagwat Saran Gangwar, UP minister of state of small scale industries and export promotion, said: "The government would do whatever possible to promote or aid Dalit entrepreneurship." Jayant Krishna, principal consultant and regional head, Tata Consultancy Services, Lucknow said: "I appreciate this endeavour of wealth, values and job creation that is not riding on crutches." (Hindustan Times 15/10/12)

Dalit forum starts parallel English school (2)

Kochi: The Dalit Human Rights Movement (DHRM) in Kerala, which has been exhorting Dalits to shun Hindu religion and embrace Buddhism, has floated a parallel English school for children. Started on an experimental basis, the move is significant as DHRM wants to demonstrate the Dalit identity without the tag of the Hindu society. Titled Home School, 4-year-old children, eligible for LKG class, would sit in their homes, where DHRM cadre would go frequently to take lessons. The outfit has selected 42 students from south Kerala, who will not go to regular schools, but will attend the classes imparted by DHRM cadres at their homes. They would be given general education for next three years. The initiative was launched in Thiruvananthapuram last week. The students were given textbooks with each one's photo on the front cover and their parent's on the back. "Dalit children were found wanting in English education. Many are neglected and insulted in mainstream schools. We decided to start a new school system exclusively for Dalits. Buddhist teachings would get special thrust in the higher classes in the coming years," said Elakamon Vinod, DHRM leader in charge of the school project. DHRM state committee member K Saji said it has been a difficult task to convince parents about this parallel education system. The home school would be shifted from houses to a common centre next year. "We want our children grow with a Dalit perspective," he said. Started in 2007 as a regrouping of Dalit workers in various political parties, DHRM has been campaigning against caste system. Its followers have stopped going to temples and Ambedkar is being worshipped in homes. (Indian Express 17/10/12)

Caste-ing a shadow on Dalits' lives (2)

Sakohaan (Patiala): "We want to live a dignified life. Are we asking for too much?" asks Charanjit Kaur, 47, echoing the view of 50 Dalit families of Sakohaan villages (Nabha), 40 km from Patiala. For the past 20 days, it has been an ordeal for them to keep the pot boiling. On September 27, a heavy police contingent, on the pretext of helping the panchayat install a water tank, cleared the 'shamlat deh' (village common land) of the baked cattle dung that Dalit families use for cooking purposes. "An LPG cylinder has always been out of our reach. We have to make do with baked cattle dung. Now, we have been deprived of that as well," said Manjit Kaur, another villager. Nabha subdivisional magistrate (SDM) Poonamdeep Kaur said the 9-kanal land in question was not being used for any purpose. When asked why a police contingent went to the village, she said it was a preventive measure taken to avoid any untoward incident. The sarpanch, Bhupinderjeet Singh Sekhon, said, "Dalits are against the proposed water tank." When it was pointed out that each Dalit family had submitted Rs. 400 to the panchayat for the water tank, he said, "Some organisations have instigated villagers against the panchayat." It is not for the first time that Sakohaan Dalits have been at the receiving end. About 25 years ago, they were asked to shift the spot being used for baking cattle dung as a gurdwara was to be constructed on the site. They complied because alternative land was provided. Seven years ago, it was the same story, with one difference: that time, a school was to come up. In the present instance, Dalits confronted the panchayat, dominated by so-called upper-caste men, because they were not provided with alternative land. "There is ample land available with the panchayat for installing the water tank. The fact is they are eyeing the 'shamlat' land which we were using," said Narang Singh, a Dalit member of the panchayat. Kesar Singh, 24, who has

done a course in food and beverages from the Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Nabha, offers an insight into the changing scenario. "Our fathers and grandfathers used to work as siris (bonded labour) for landlords (Jats). As we, the Scheduled Castes, who were once at the mercy of upper castes, have started getting education, we are now looking for jobs in other avenues. This decrease in economic dependence on landlords irks them and so they target our sources of livelihood." His elder brother, Chamkaur Singh, is more direct. "Azad mulk hai. Asin kise di ghulami kyon kariye? (We live in an independent country. Why should we be slaves to anyone?)," he asserts. On October 8, Dalits protested outside the mini secretariat in Nabha to press for their demands, including an alternative piece of land for baking cattle dung. Bowing to their pressure, the administration promised to meet their demands. "The administration and the panchayat have passed a resolution to provide land to Dalits for baking dung," the SDM had said on the day of the protest. Later, the sarpanch backtracked. "How can the panchayat give land like this?" he told Hindustan Times. When SDM Poonamdeep Kaur was apprised of the sarpanch's stance, she said the administration would hold a meeting with the panchayat. "The administration is delaying the matter. If this dilly-dallying continues, we will be forced to take to the streets again," said Beant Singh, state press secretary of the Punjab Students' Union, who is leading the agitation. (Hindustan Times 18/10/12)

Dalit girl kidnapped, raped in Punjab (2)

MUKTSAR: A court on Thursday asked the police to investigate the alleged kidnapping and gangrape of a minor dalit girl of Muktsar district. The 13-year-old girl, a student of class VIII, was allegedly kidnapped from her village house, which falls in Lambi constituency, was gangraped for days before and after she was sold off twice. According to the complaint filed in the Malout sub-divisional court by the parents, the girl, a class 8th student, was kidnapped from her paternal uncle's house on June 4. However, when the police did not register a case despite repeated requests, the parents of the girl, who are farm labourers, were forced to file a complaint in the district court on July 23, 2012. The accused allegedly physically exploited her for over four-and-half-months before she managed to escape and fled from a village in Rajasthan and reached Malout on October 16. She and her parents appeared in the Malout court the same day and named Deepak Manga and Sonu as the accused, who kidnapped her and raped her, said victim's advocate Vikas Setia. As per the complaint, the girl was raped by her kidnappers and later they sold her off to a married man who took her to Bathinda where she was again raped by different men. The complaint states that after some days she was again sold, this time to a man in Rajasthan, who also allegedly raped her. The complaint states that the girl managed to escape from the clutches of this man with the help of a woman and came back to Malout on October 16. Advocate Setia said that the girl only identified the three accused, who first kidnapped her, gangraped her and then sold her off. "She does not know who the rest of the men were she was sold to or where exactly she was in Rajasthan," said Setia. He added the victim's parents were being pressurized by the accused to strike a compromise with them. Meanwhile, girl's medical examination was conducted on Thursday the report of which is awaited. A senior police officer said no arrests have been made in this case so far. (Times of India 19/10/12)

Maregaon Dalits acquire entry to temples (2)

Bhopal: In a historical positive step, the Dalit residents of Maregaon in Narsinghpur district, who had been facing social boycott from upper caste fellow villagers for several months now, were allowed access to the village temples. The decision was ceremoniously implemented on Wednesday in Maregaon in presence of representatives of district administration and NGOs who played a crucial role in rapprochement between the Dalits and other villagers. Maregaon Dalit villagers had been complaining of social boycott since March this year after they refused to continue with their traditional vocation of skinning carcasses. Not only were the villagers not allowed to take services from village common facilities like grocery shops, barbers and water from wells, they were also not allowed in the village temple and children were subjected to discrimination in the school, it was alleged. HT did a series of stories on the issue during last few months. NGOs Rashtriya Secular Manch, Nagrik Adhikar Manch, Vikas Samvad and others had been working with the district administration and the villagers for a rapprochement. In a first step, the villagers decided to open up the temples to everyone in the village. "It was decided that only the priest would be allowed in sanctum sanctorum, while the entire other parts of the temple campuses would be open to all," LS Hardenia of Rashtriya Secular Manch, who was present when the ceremony to open temple to all was held on Wednesday at Maregaon, told HT. SDM PN Yadav, local tehsildar, police station in-charge, Deepak Bhatt of Secular Manch and Arvind of Vikas Samvad were also present. (Hindustan Times 20/10/12)

Fasting dalits call off hunger strike (2)

RAJKOT: The 11 fasting dalits, including parents of youths killed in police firing in Thangadh, have called

off their protest following assurance from the government authorities. The dalits had been sitting on a fast-unto-death in Surendranagar since October 16, demanding immediate arrest of the cops accused of killing three youths from the community last month. On Tuesday, district collector of Surendranagar Pradeep Shah offered juice to agitators in the presence of other government officials at the venue of the fast outside his office premises to signal the end of their protest. "We have been given an assurance that our demand will be met soon. We have put our faith in the officials.. We will wait for a while and in case they do not take action against the accused, we will revive our agitation," dalit leader B G Parmar said. The dalits have been demanding the arrest of four police personnel against whom CID (Crime) has registered a case of murder. (Times of India 24/10/12)

Dalit men stop burning of Ravan effigy (2)

SIRSA: Amid high drama, a group of dalits on Tuesday did not allow the organizers to burn the effigy of Ravan at Odhan suburban town, 30 kilometers from here on Dabwali-Sirsa road. Odhan is a village-turned-suburban township with a population of 25,000. The incident took place during evening hours when organizers of Shri Durga Natya Mandal were preparing to burn an effigy, which was prepared by children of the village. A group of dalit men, headed by Karnail Odhan, reached the venue and asked organizers not to burn the effigy. Karnail and his group stopped the burning of effigy, terming Ravan as god of dalits, sources said. As the situation turned tense, a police party headed by SHO of Odhan police station, inspector Bhartender, rushed to the venue to sort out the issue. "The issue was amicably resolved and both parties refused to lodge any complaint," Bhartender said. He also confirmed that the Ravan effigy was not set on fire and was removed by the organizers. Ramesh Rangeela, president of the club, who organized the function, also confirmed resistance by Karnail's group. "We had staged Ram Leela after a gap of six years. Children had been insisting on burning the effigy, hence they made one. As there was opposition, we removed the effigy from the venue," said Rangeela. He, however, expressed inability to elaborate further, as to what made Karnail and his companions oppose the burning of effigy. (Times of India 25/10/12)

BJP should focus on dalit, SC, ST votes to win next elections: Shettar (2)

Bangalore: Karnataka Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar on Saturday said BJP should focus more on dalit, SC and ST votes to gain majority in the next elections to the state Assembly and the Lok Sabha. Speaking at the inauguration of BJP SC Morcha National office bearers and state presidents' convention, he said: "BJP has to concentrate on dalit votes to gain majority both at the national and state level." Confidence has to be instilled in the minds of dalits, SC/ST and backward class people, he said, charging Congress of exploiting them as vote banks and neglecting their welfare, Shettar said. Shettar claimed that after the BJP came to power in Karnataka, it concentrated more on the development of people belonging to dalit and backward class. "Thus now the BJP has become party of all sections of people." He said his government had increased the budget allocation to Rs 1,000 crore for Backward Class and Rs 1,200 crore for SC/ST. Shettar said in the elections held for MP and MLA reserved seats, the BJP candidates had bagged most of the seats and more and more leaders were joining the BJP. BJP SC Morcha national president Dushyant Kumar Gautam, in his address, said since Congress was seeped in various corruption charges, BJP should make the most of the opportunity to win the next election and come to power at the Centre. He said while BJP president Nitin Gadkari was ready to be probed by any agency into the corruption charges levelled against him, the Congress-led UPA government was not willing to investigate into corruption charges against AICC supremo Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra. (Indian Express 27/10/12)

Dalit leaders allege harassment by cops (2)

MANGALORE: Nearly 50 cases of atrocity against dalits registered under the SC/ST Atrocity (Prevention) Act in various police stations under the city police commissionerate's limits were rejected in the past three years. Police disclosed the details of cases registered under the act and those which were rejected with B report at a SC/ST grievance redressal meeting held at the Police Commissioner's office in the city on Sunday. Dalit Sangharsha Samiti leader SP Anand told police commissioner Manish Kharbikar that there were many instances where complainants were harassed at the women's police station. "They behave rudely with complainants and there are instances of torturing them too," Anand alleged and demanded action against such officers. Responding to Anand's complaint, the commissioner asked him to file a writing complaint detailing specific incidents. "We will surely take action, if any officials are found guilty," Manish said. Further, Anand demanded a detailed investigation into the case of death of construction worker Basavaraj, who died at a private hospital in the city. "Basavaraj was admitted to the hospital following complaints of fever. However, his workplace supervisor Vasanth has filed a case of unnatural

death at Mangalore East police station. Vasanth also had complained that Basavaraj jumped from the fourth floor," Anand said. The commissioner directed cops to seek expert doctor's second opinion on the postmortem report of Shobha (23), a dalit girl who died while working as a housemaid in a house in the city about eight months ago. Shobha, daughter of Sesa and Saroja from Shirralu village in Belthangady taluk, was serving as maid at the house of Leonel Mascarenhas at Shivbagh in the city for one and half years. Shobha's parents and dalit leaders had alleged foul play in her death. Meanwhile, the postmortem report also could not ascertain the actual cause of death. Hence, the commissioner took the decision of reviewing the postmortem report through an expert doctor at the meet. (Times of India 29/10/12)

Dalit woman alleges rape by Haryana MLA kin (2)

Bhiwani: Ram Phal, a dalit, and daily wage earner told HT on Monday that Rajinder, nephew of INLD legislator Dharam Pal Obra, had been raping his wife for almost four months. Phal said that Rajinder had been blackmailing his wife with an MMS and also threatened her not disclose the rape to any one or else he would kill her husband. He said, "When Rajinder's advances became unbearable for my wife she disclosed to me on February 21, 2012. First time she was raped on October 27, 2011. During this period I had been away to Rajasthan to earn bread for the family. My mother Manbhari and brother Ram Kishan are farm labourers and my father Ghadsi Ram had expired in 1992. My wife is handicapped and remains at home." "Rajinder used to come to visit my brother, who lives in the adjoining house. On October 27, 2011 he entered our house and raped my wife at about 10 am," said Ram Phal. He said, "After I came to know about the rape from my wife we went to complain about the whole issue to Master Dharam Pal Obra, uncle of Rajinder, and instead of giving us justice he abused and beat both of us. Ultimately I filed complaint with the police on May 27 and sent my application to National Women Commission also." "When the Commission sought details of the case from the police we were again called by the legislator and he threatened us with dire consequences on July 14, 2012. A DSP who had come with our representation got some papers signed by us and left." "Since then we have been getting threats from them. Last week we went to Hisar and met IG police who provided us police protection. We want arrest of the accused. I am without work and depending on my brother for subsistence of my three children and wife," said Ram Phal. When contacted by HT, IG Police AS Chawla said, "SP Bhiwani has recommended that the case be handed over to the crime branch for investigation because the incident occurred last year. The next action will be taken after getting the report from the crime branch. We want a fair probe into the case because earlier once the victim had changed her statement before a lady lawyer. The police want to know the actual facts of the case." SHO Ashok Kumar disclosed that since the victim is a married woman and mother of three children the medical examination could not support the charge of rape at this stage. No arrest has been made in this case. When contacted by HT, Dharam Pal Obra, INLD legislator, said, "First of all Rajinder is not my nephew as such. He is grandson of my first cousin. The charges are fabricated. I welcome an open inquiry in the village where people of all castes and communities be called. If proved guilty I am ready to face any charge. There is some conspiracy against us." (Hindustan Times 29/10/12)

Availability of quality land impedes dalit progress: Study (2)

MANGALORE: Dalits in rural Karnataka suffer from landlessness. As land is important source of income and livelihood of rural folk in Indian society, it determines economic and social status of families. Poverty of rural dalits is mainly determined with level of land assets. Nearly 53% of dalit households do not have any piece of agriculture land, a study carried out by Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Mangalore University observes. Land possessed by dalit households in the Gulbarga, Chitradurga and Kolar districts villages are dry land and utility of land is very marginal. Cultivation mainly depends on monsoon and rainfall is very scanty in these areas. The most important fact is that these three districts regularly face acute drought due to failure of monsoon. In all, 52.6% households are landless and remaining 47.4% households have access to agriculture land in rural Karnataka. The size they possess is important from economic point of view of dalit families. Only 32.7% of dalit households have marginal land which is less than 2.5 acre and in many case small piece of land not viable for any cultivation not only in terms its size but also in its quality. Access to land by sub-castes is another parameter that helps one to understand ground reality of resources owned by different sub castes in study area spread over five districts. The marginal farmers who own less than 2.5 acre are not in a position to make any descent living. Most of these farmers do not have access to credit and other factors of production and cultivate some food or vegetable crops to make pity income. Around 12% of families are small holdings families and their land varies 2.51-5 acres. They cultivate crops based on rain. Around 2% of families are medium farmers own 5.01-10 acres land in rural areas. The large farmers who own land more than 10 acres are very few and insignificant in the state among rural dalits. The marginal farmers are more in Kolar district

villages than other district villages. Medium farmers are more in Gulbarga district than other districts. This is only relative difference between different districts and not much important from economic viability point view, because these districts are having acute dry land areas. Average size of landholdings by dalit families is 1.14 acres. District wise situation is completely different than state average. Gulbarga district has 1.97 acre average in which 1.95 is dry land. In Kolar average landholding is 0.94 in which 0.91 is dry land. Belgaum district average landholding is very lowest among all districts and it is 0.62 acre and dry land is 0.45, Chitradurga district landholding average is 1.06 and dry land is 0.95. (Times of India 30/10/12)

Dalit succumbs to injuries (2)

VIRUDHUNAGAR: An eerie silence prevailed in the villages around Tiruchuli on Thursday, after one of the nine Dalits assaulted in Virudhunagar district on Wednesday succumbed to injuries late in the night. The body of P. Mayandi (40) of Poompidagai, located on the Virudhunagar-Sivaganga border, was cremated in the village after it was brought amidst tight police security from the Government Rajaji hospital in Madurai on Thursday night. Mayandi, along with his fellow villager, K. Pannerselvam (30), were intercepted while riding on a motorbike outside the village on Wednesday evening by a five-member gang that attacked them with lethal weapons. The Superintendent of Police, Najmul Hoda, said that the assailants were from the neighbouring Allinagaram of Sivaganga district. Mayandi had contested from the Manamadurai Assembly constituency on a Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam ticket in 2006 Assembly Election. He was the ward member of Poompidagai panchayat. The supporters of Mayandi refused to take the body at the GRH pressing for the arrest of the culprits behind the murder. They also demanded a job for one of the family members of the deceased and to set up a new a police station in their locality. The Revenue Divisional Officer, P. Gunasekaran, who held the talks, pacified them. Madurai reporter adds Meanwhile, hundreds of villagers of Puliyanikulam in Madurai district blocked the Madurai-Tiruppuvanam highway for more than four hours on Thursday. The villagers, cutting across all castes and communities, demanded a written assurance from the officials that the State Government would foot the medical bill of all those victims of October 30 bomb attack admitted in private hospitals. Petrol bombs were hurled on a Tata Sumo in which twenty persons, mostly from Puliyanikulam, were returning from Pasumpon after attending Muthuramalinga Thevar Guru puja along the Ring Road near Chintamani junction. Initially, four persons who had sustained grievous injuries were referred to a private hospital in Madurai. Later, five more persons were shifted to three different private hospitals. The protestors, led by the vice-president of Puliyanikulam panchayat, A. Abdul Pari, complained to the revenue officials that the private hospitals were asking the relatives of the bomb attack victims to pay for the treatment. "The hospital authorities claimed that they were not paid by the Government for having provided treatment to the fire accident victims in the past," one of them told the officials. However, after the Madurai District Revenue Officer, Ravindran, produced before them the copies of letter sent by the district administration to the State Government that the medical expenses of the fire victims would be borne by the Government, they dispersed. Villagers want the government to bear medical expense of victims towards treatment (The Hindu 2/11/12)

Dalit boy beaten to death for plucking vegetables (2)

NEW DELHI: The National Human Rights Commission has issued notices to the Director General of Punjab Police and the Kapurthala District Magistrate calling for reports within four weeks on media reports that a Dalit boy was beaten to death for plucking vegetables. The Commission, acting on media reports, said Joginder Singh, who was a farm labourer and resident of Kokalpur in Kapurthala district, had gone to collect fodder for the cattle. After collecting grass, Joginder plucked some vegetables from the fields owned by one Balbir Singh. Seeing this, Balbir's son Amrik Singh thrashed him severely resulting in his death. The Commission observed that the contents of the Press report, if true, raised a serious issue of violation of human rights of the deceased. (The Hindu 3/11/12)

Ban 'Made Snana' before 'Shashti' in Kukke: Dalits (2)

Mangalore: With only a month left for 'Shashti' celebration at Kukke Subrahmanya temple which will also mark the Made Made Snana ritual, the Dalit community members on Sunday, demanded the government to ban the ritual prior to the festival. Raising the issue at the SC/ST monthly grievance meet at the Superintendent of Police's office on Sunday, Dalita Hakkugala Horata Samiti President Shekhar Laila said that the ritual which suppresses the members of lower castes in the name of 'belief' and 'tradition' should be banned from this year. "The government has not yet taken a decision on banning the ritual and the ritual is most likely to be continued this year too. If the cattle fair at Kulkunda in Subrahmanya which was organised annually from several decades could be banned due to the pressure from a particular

organisation, why not Made Made Snana be banned? The Samiti condemns the ritual and urges the government to ban it," he said. Responding to the plea, Superintendent of Police Abhishek Goyal said that he has already sought the report on Made Made Snana ritual, its inception and growth from the local police. "Based on the report and considering the popular public opinion, I will write to the Deputy Commissioner and the government asking to address the issue," he said. Shekhar also complained about the increased selling of illicit liquor in the villages in Belthangady taluk. Illicit liquor is sold in most of the small shops on the way from Laila to Bajila in the taluk, but the police are not acting against it. Pointing out at the loopholes in the Police Department, he said the liquor sellers are not caught red-handed owing to the information leakage by the police even before the raid is carried out. "During most of the raids, either the shop owners abscond or the illicit liquor is cleared even before the raid, which is due to the nexus between a few police personnel and the illicit liquor shop owners," he alleged. Reacting to allegation, the SP said action will be taken to set right the issue and asked the public to inform police about shops selling illicit liquor. Another Dalit member Dinesh Kumar expressed concern over the rise in eve-teasing gangs in the district. Reacting to the issue, the SP asked the public to give complaint about such gangs to the police. "Eve-teasing gangs mostly consist of locals, hence it will be quite easy for the people to identify them. Along with the public, the college authorities too should join their hands in identifying such elements and inform the police. We will take the necessary action even in the smallest of such cases." (Deccan Herald 5/11/12)

Dalit school dropouts narrate their discrimination accounts (2)

TIRUNELVELI: The public hearing held here on Sunday on 'child rights violations' and discriminated children subsequently becoming school dropouts may pave way for the victims entering the school premises once again in the next couple of weeks, if the recommendations given by an expert panel that listened to the affected children are transformed into action. The Palayamkottai-based Human Rights Education Protection Council, in its survey conducted in 52 villages of the district, claimed that 1,680 Dalit school dropouts had been identified. Based on a case study submitted by the organisation, the public hearing was conducted. Of the 23 Dalit school dropout cases presented at the meet in document format, 19 were from Arunthathiyar community and 10 appeared before the panel to narrate how they were tormented physically and emotionally in their schools by teachers and their classmates. All students said that they were referred repeatedly by the name of their caste and discriminated. When Nagaraj, a former fifth standard student of an aided primary school at Kalakkad, alleged that he was beaten by his teacher without any valid reason and the pain of being beaten up in front of his classmates ultimately drove him out of the school, Dr. Vasanthi Devi asked the official from Office of District Elementary Educational Officer to place under suspension the teacher, Rajeshwari, and make enquiries with the Headmaster. The former Vice-Chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University said that the teachers, besides clearing the doubts of slow learners by conducting special classes, should teach students, particularly to the socially and economically marginalised ones, special skills and equip them to face the competitive situations in future. K. Sekar, former 9th standard student of Theerthapathi Government Higher Secondary School at Ambasamudram, explained his case of discrimination on the school premises and how his transfer certificate was issued to him during the midway of academic year. P. Murugan, District Educational Officer, Cheranmahadevi Educational District, assured that he would conduct a comprehensive enquiry before Friday and submit a report to the panel. The officer also assured that he would take immediate steps for readmitting the students in the schools of their choice to avoid recurrence of such unpleasant incidents in future. Former Readers' Editor of The Hindu S. Viswanathan, one of the panel members, suggested that the human rights activists, besides assisting the victims to file complaint with the police immediately after the incident, should also inform the officials of Department of Education about these uncivilised acts and submit a separate complaint to them. "Even though the police chose to close the case stating that the complaint was false, education officials cannot do so in a hasty fashion as they will have to take some corrective measures through their department to settle the issue amicably and permanently," Mr. Viswanathan said. Tirunelveli MP S.S. Ramasubbu, who inaugurated the public hearing, said that though the governments through their schemes were taking sincere efforts to provide education to all children, the purpose was being defeated by the social discrimination prevailing on the school premises. "If we can provide better education to the Dalit children, it will empower them economically which will automatically ensure a social status for them. Hence, there should be no caste-based discrimination on the school premises. Anyone, including the teachers, violating it should be taken to task. At the same time, the Dalits' security ensured by the law should not be misused," Mr. Ramasubbu said. The MP assured that he would discuss with the Collector the issue of operating more number of buses from Vallam to other areas to enable the students to reach their schools without any hassle. Panel member and advocate T. Lajapathi Roy said that the victims' parents and the activists should always take

steps for filing of cases against the offenders so that it would gradually put an end to problems of similar nature in future. Another panel member K.A. Manikumar said that the education officials should be proactive to the complaints of this nature so that it would check the menace of school dropouts. Speaking to reporters, Dr. Vasanthi Devi said that the human rights education, which had already been included in the school curriculum in 18 States, should be introduced in Tamil Nadu also. She stressed that complaint boxes should be installed on all school premises so that the victims would come forward to make complaints while concealing their identity. (The Hindu 5/11/12)

Dalit, backward community organizations form front (2)

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Around 30 organisations representing backward communities and Dalits among Hindus came together on Tuesday to form a new front - Kerala Dalit and Backward Classes Front (KDBCF) - and accepted a charter of rights. The movement, formed close on the heels of the NSS-SNDP alliance, is viewed as a step to assert social and political rights by the oppressed classes. The supremacy of minorities in the present government and the counter move by the NSS and SNDP have prompted the unification of backward communities. "We don't deny that the NSS-SNDP cooperation was the immediate provocation for the front," said Punnala Sreekumar, leader of a faction of Kerala Pulayar Maha Sabha and general secretary of the KDBCF. He said the dilution of stand by the SNDP regarding reservation gave the final push. On Tuesday, inaugurating the Charter of Rights proclamation of the front, rebel SNDP leader Gokulam Gopalan said reservation was not a scheme to provide jobs to Dalits and backward classes. "It is a process to correct past mistakes by providing share of power to the oppressed," said Gopalan. Besides the Punnala faction of KPMS, Vaikunta Swamy Dharma Prachara Sabha (VSDP) led by Vishnupuram Chandrasekharan, Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha led by C K Janu, Dheevara Sabha led by V Dinakaran ex-MLA, Viswakarma Service Society led by T U Radhakrishnan ex-MLA, Akhila Kerala Ezhuthachan samajam, Vanika Vaisya Sangham, Kerala Chetti Maha Sabha and Kerala Dalit Federation have joined the new front. The front demanded a reservation commission to review the present system of reservation in education and employment in the state. The charter of rights also demanded the implementation of second land reforms movement so that all Dalit families get land. Another demand is to ensure the protection of environment and traditional employment while going ahead with development projects. However, the front doesn't plan to enter politics soon. "We have not discussed our entry into politics. The first priority will be to ensure our basic rights and for the time being the entire energy will be devoted to that," Sreekumar said. (Times of India 6/11/12)

State committed to empowering Dalits: Minister (2)

ONGOLE: Municipal Administration Minister M. Mahidhar Reddy on Tuesday asserted the Congress government was committed to empowering Dalits and tribal people through the Indira Jala Prabha scheme. Inaugurating the borewell sunk to benefit 15 Dalit beneficiaries under the IJL scheme dovetailed with the MG-NREGS and with the assistance from Nabard, at Yerrareddypalem in Lingasamudram mandal, he said the government would bring under irrigation 10 lakh acres in the State and turn landless poor into farmers with self-esteem. He exhorted the beneficiaries to make best use of the scheme launched in the backward Prakasam district by Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy last year, to improve their living condition and create permanent asset for their children. They could only enjoy the benefits from land developed under IJL and the same could not be sold. The Minister exhorted them to go for inter-cropping of vegetables and other crops as the mango orchards would start giving yield only after four years. (The Hindu 7/11/12)

3 Dalit colonies face mob fury in Dharmapuri (2)

DHARMAPURI: Three colonies of Dalits (of the Adi-Dravida community) near Naikkankottai in Dharmapuri district of western Tamil Nadu remained benumbed on Thursday by the fury unleashed on them by a rampaging mob of caste Hindus on Wednesday. As many as 268 dwellings – huts, tiled-roof and one or two-room concrete houses – were torched by the mob after a caste Hindu man, Nagarajan, committed suicide over his daughter marrying a Dalit boy from one of the colonies. Police said there was no casualty as occupants of the houses escaped and took shelter in another village. Ninety persons were arrested by Thursday evening and cases registered against another 500 "unidentified" persons. The prime target of the attack was Natham Colony, whose resident, Ilavarasan (23) had married N. Divya (20), a caste Hindu. But, the mob's fury was also directed at the adjoining Anna Nagar Colony and Kondampatti Old and New Colonies. It is said that Ilavarasan and Divya got married in a temple a month ago. Fearing attack by caste Hindus, the couple approached the Deputy Inspector of General of Police, Salem Range, Sanjay Kumar, only a week ago for protection. Though the police assured them safety, a kangaroo court directed Ilavarasan's family to return the girl on Wednesday. The girl refused to go with

her father, who later hanged himself at his house in Sellankottai, just half a km from the Dalit colonies. And then, the mobs went on the rampage. According to police, one group of incensed members of his community protested on the Dharmapuri-Tiruppattur Road, blocking traffic with the trees they felled as well as with boulders and signboards. At the same time, another group entered the Dalit colonies and set ablaze the dwellings. The Dalits alleged that their houses were looted and the valuables taken away. The attack started around 4.45 p.m. and went on till 7 p.m. Police reinforcements and fire tenders could not reach the spot in time because of the hurdles placed on the road leading to the colonies. Some vehicles of the Dalits too were torched. The mob fled when police reinforcements arrived. Superintendent of Police, Krishnagiri, M. Ashok Kumar, reached the spot and took control of the situation, as Dharmapuri's SP Asra Garg was away in Madurai. Mr. Garg, however, reached the spot at night. Police personnel drawn from five districts restored order. Fire tenders put out the blaze in the colonies and recovery vans were deployed to clear the road blocks. A core police team headed by Mr. Sanjay Kumar worked out strategies to keep the situation under control. Inspector-General of Police (West Zone), visited the colonies on Thursday and supervised the security arrangements and the investigation into the attack. Police said Ilavarasan and Divya were safe and under police protection. After spending the night in shock, fear and without shelter, close to 1,500 Dalits were on Thursday accommodated in Government schools. District Collector R. Lilly visited the affected persons and ordered relief for them. (The Hindu 8/11/12)

Dharmapuri violence: Dalits rue loss of belongings (2)

DHARMAPURI: C. Ravi lost in the mob fury what is most essential for his livelihood – a stock of teakwood. The carpenter could save his wife and five daughters as they hid behind the house. “But, the teakwood is gone and I have to start afresh, hopefully, with some assistance from the Government,” he said. As most of the men had gone to Bangalore, Tiruppur and other neighbouring districts for employment, aged parents and women and children had to face the brunt of the attack from a mob that targeted Dalit houses in Natham Colony and two nearby habitations on Wednesday. When the mob started looting the houses before setting them alight, many women fled with their children to nearby agriculture fields and relatives' houses that were farther away. Poda Palanisamy, a former naxalite, alleged that in spite of prior information to the police that the majority communities had planned the attack, only a handful of police personnel were initially deployed in the vicinity. If the intelligence input had been acted upon properly, the attack could even have been averted, he lamented. S. Kaliappan, who runs a petty shop in Bangalore, said the mob took away 21 sovereigns of gold jewels and Rs.2 lakh cash kept in the almirah for his daughter's marriage slated to be held early next year. K. Selvam, priest of the Kodagari Amman Temple, said that gold jewels weighing 4.5 kg and silver ornaments weighing 15 kg kept in two big boxes in his house were taken away by the mob before the house was torched. The jewels and ornaments were offered by devotees, he said. Most of the families lost their documents including educational certificates, ration cards and land documents in the fire. (The Hindu 9/11/12)

92 held for attack on Dalit colonies in TN (2)

Dharmapuri : Normalcy has returned in three Dalit colonies in the district where caste Hindus torched 268 huts after a man committed suicide over his daughter marrying a Dalit even as 92 people were arrested today for the violence, a senior police official said. Complete normalcy had returned in the colonies and heavy police pickets posted, Salem Range DIG Sanjay Kumar, who is camping in the area along with three SPs, said two days after a group of caste Hindus targeted Natham, the boy's village, and Kondampatty and Anna Nagar on November 7 night. Some more people were wanted in connection with the incident and they would be secured soon, he added. In a related development, Madras High Court directed the state government to file a counter affidavit giving the entire details of the incident and the action taken by the administration as also the result of the investigation. A Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice M Y Eqbal and Justice T S Sivagnanam, said it would be fit and proper if the investigation was done by an officer in the rank of the Deputy Inspector General of Police. The bench was informed that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has already directed the range DIG to maintain law and order in that area and take action against the miscreants. When a PIL on the attack came up for hearing, the bench also said those displaced should be provided shelter and proper security extended to them. The couple had got married on October 14 and upset over it the father of the girl ended his life. Angered over this, a group of his community set afire 268 huts in the three colonies. But there were no casualties as all the people had fled to neighbouring areas, police said. Sanjay Kumar told PTI that armed police personnel had been posted in the villages and warned that anyone indulging in Kangaroo courts would face stern action. He said the couple were now in a safe place under police protection. The DIG said he had ordered District SP Asra Garg to hold a probe on whether there was any slackness on the part of police personnel in taking prompt action. Collector Lilly said the situation was now under control and that the

administration had made all arrangements to provide those affected with food and water. The villagers would also be provided ration cards, she said. (Deccan Herald 10/11/12)

Dalit gang-raped outside court complex (2)

SHIMLA: A dalit woman from Churah tehsil of Chamba district was gang-raped by five youths, including a minor, on Thursday night in Chamba town while she was heading towards a hospital for treatment. According to police, the victim was overpowered by the accused near the court complex before being raped. Hearing her cries, a police patrolling party rescued her from the clutches of the accused. While four accused managed to flee from the spot under the cover of darkness, one was arrested. A case was registered against all five accused on the complaint of the victim. Thursday's incident has again exposed vulnerability of women in Himachal Pradesh. On an average, over 140 women are being subjected to rape in the hill state every year. Many feel that the number could be more as in many cases the victims and their family members prefer to keep silent fearing social stigma. While in 2011, the state had registered 131 cases of rape, this year till now 147 cases have already been registered. In the last 10 years, 1,459 rape cases have been registered in Himachal. The state government earlier this year approved a support scheme for rape victims that would entail monetary aid and related help like provision for shelter, counseling, medical aid, legal assistance, education and vocational training. (Times of India 11/11/12)

Attack on dalits was planned, says national panel (2)

DHARMAPURI: Taking a serious view of the recent violence in which 268 huts in three dalit colonies in the district were set on fire, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), which visited the violence-hit areas on Monday, said the attack was planned. The commission inferred from the visit that it was "out and out pre-planned and an organised crime" against the dalit community, NCSC Chairman P L Punia told reporters. The violence was triggered after a man committed suicide on November 7 over his daughter's marriage to a dalit. Punia said the mob had attacked a dalit family in Kondampatti village where an inter-caste marriage had taken place three years ago, revealing that they were taking revenge. Petrol bombs were hurled at four-wheelers, two-wheelers and valuables looted from houses showing that it was not a sudden attack but a planned one, the NCSC chairman said. No casualty was reported. But all the houses in the colonies suffered damage, Punia said, adding that the villagers were in a state of shock. The commission praised the district administration and the police personnel who acted swiftly to arrest 126 culprits in connection with the violence. As many as 40 houses were damaged and 175 houses suffered partial damage, Punia said, adding that the government had provided only temporary relief measures. The estimated loss was about 7 crore. The district administration should constitute a peace committee, Punia said. Meanwhile, three police personnel were suspended for alleged dereliction of duty in connection with the violence. "An inspector, a sub-inspector and a constable have been placed under suspension for not tackling the situation properly," DIG Salem Range Sanjay Kumar said. (Times of India 13/11/12)

Dalit sarpanch's house torched in Bhiwani district (2)

ROHTAK: Houses of two Dalit families, including the village sarpanch, were set afire by an upper caste family after a clash at Budhera village in Bhiwani district on Diwali evening. The incident caused tension in the village and senior administrative and police officials later brought the situation under control. The police registered a case against nine upper caste persons on the complaint of sarpanch Hosiar Singh and his brother Rohtas Singh. The police arrested four of the accused on Wednesday even though the two sides had reportedly struck a compromise resulting in restoration of peace in the village. Bhiwani SP Simardeep Singh informed that the police registered a case under various sections of IPC and SC/ST Act and arrested four persons - Mahender, Rohit, Sukhbir and Sombir. Though the village sources said both sides had indulged in arson in which besides the house of dalits, house and a motorcycle of upper caste family were also torched by each other, the SP denied this stating that the victim sarpanch had lodged the complaint and the police had not received any complaint from another group. When contacted by TOI, the sarpanch alleged that a fight had broken out between Mahender (accused in the case) and some other persons three days back after which Mahender lodged a complaint to the police that some persons had snatched Rs 60,000 from him and also named his son (Hoshiar's son) as an accused though he was not involved in any such incident. "I also tried to broker a compromise between Mahender and those against whom he had lodged a complaint. But on Diwali eve Mahender and his family created ruckus in the street and torched the house of my brother Rohtas and my house also," he said. He alleged that Mahender himself had set his own house and motorcycle afire in a bid to frame them in similar cases. The sarpanch, however, maintained that in a meeting on Wednesday, Mahender's family and relatives had promised to

rein him in after which he had decided to strike a compromise in the case. Police sources also stated that though four persons had been arrested, both sides had reached a compromise and there was no tension in the village. Policemen have been deployed in the village as a precautionary measure, a police official said. (Times of India 16/11/12)

Dalit sarpanch's house torched in Bhiwani district (2)

ROHTAK: Houses of two Dalit families, including the village sarpanch, were set afire by an upper caste family after a clash at Budhera village in Bhiwani district on Diwali evening. The incident caused tension in the village and senior administrative and police officials later brought the situation under control. The police registered a case against nine upper caste persons on the complaint of sarpanch Hosiar Singh and his brother Rohtas Singh. The police arrested four of the accused on Wednesday even though the two sides had reportedly struck a compromise resulting in restoration of peace in the village. Bhiwani SP Simardeep Singh informed that the police registered a case under various sections of IPC and SC/ST Act and arrested four persons - Mahender, Rohit, Sukhbir and Sombir. Though the village sources said both sides had indulged in arson in which besides the house of dalits, house and a motorcycle of upper caste family were also torched by each other, the SP denied this stating that the victim sarpanch had lodged the complaint and the police had not received any complaint from another group. When contacted by TOI, the sarpanch alleged that a fight had broken out between Mahender (accused in the case) and some other persons three days back after which Mahender lodged a complaint to the police that some persons had snatched Rs 60,000 from him and also named his son (Hoshiar's son) as an accused though he was not involved in any such incident. "I also tried to broker a compromise between Mahender and those against whom he had lodged a complaint. But on Diwali eve Mahender and his family created ruckus in the street and torched the house of my brother Rohtas and my house also," he said. He alleged that Mahender himself had set his own house and motorcycle afire in a bid to frame them in similar cases. The sarpanch, however, maintained that in a meeting on Wednesday, Mahender's family and relatives had promised to rein him in after which he had decided to strike a compromise in the case. Police sources also stated that though four persons had been arrested, both sides had reached a compromise and there was no tension in the village. Policemen have been deployed in the village as a precautionary measure, a police official said. (Times of India 16/11/12)

Dalit Muslims, Christians demand Scheduled Caste status (2)

NEW DELHI: Civil society groups of Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians protested in New Delhi on Thursday demanding that the "discriminatory" 1950 Presidential Order be amended. The Order held that only Dalit who professed Hindu religion could be treated as Scheduled Caste (SC). Addressing the protesters, Samuel Jayakumar executive secretary, Commission for Policy, Governance and Public Witnesses, argued that "given the fact that the SC status and the benefits that go with it are aimed to address historical caste-based socio-economic deprivation, the Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims have more compelling case for SC status than many others". "Because of being deprived of SC status for more than half a century, the two minority communities are worse off in terms of major socio-economic indicators, than many of the so-called 'Hindu' Dalits. Not only that they are denied reservations in jobs and elected bodies but they are also not protected from anti-SC atrocity legislation," he added. Highlighting what he termed "double standards of the democratic India", Hafeez Ahmad Hawwari, a leader of the Hawwaris, who have historically been engaged in the vocation of washing clothes argued: "Soon after the country got freedom Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians were deprived of the affirmative action in 1950. The Indian State extended the SC status to Sikh and Buddhist Dalits in 1956 and 1990 respectively. Yet, it continues to deny the same to Christian and Muslim and Dalits which is a clear violation of the Constitutional rights of millions of backward people." Saleem Mansoori, a backward leader from Bihar, questioned the logic of the denial of the SC status to the two minority groups. "We are unable to understand that if religion cannot be the basis of providing reservation, how can it be made the basis to deny people their SC status?" Fr. Z. Devasagayaram, a representative of Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, said the continued denial of SC status to Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims makes "complete mockery" of the Indian State's credentials of being democratic and secular. He highlighted that a petition for the amendment in the 1950 Presidential Order is currently pending in the Supreme Court. "The Apex Court has been repeatedly asking the Government to file an affidavit about its stand on the issue but the Government's false credentials about minority welfare has been betrayed by the fact that it still has not filed its reply." (The Hindu 17/11/12)

Dalit corner of Andhra Pradesh village named after Suu Kyi (2)

HYDERABAD: A dalit enclave in a village in Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur district was named after

Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi to mark her visit on Saturday. Honouring the visiting dignitary, the local authorities grandiosely re-named the segregated scheduled caste (SC) enclave in Papasanipalli village as Aung San Suu Kyi Colony. A huge banner with the new name of the colony greeted the Noble laureate during her visit to the village. Thanking the villagers for this gesture, Suu Kyi said this had given her a special link to the village. "My name means broad collection of strange victories and I hope you will have bright and unusual victories," she told the villagers. "Victory doesn't come by itself. You have to work hard for it," she said. Andhra Pradesh's revenue minister N Raghuvveera Reddy, who translated Suu Kyi's remarks in Telugu, advised villagers to take inspiration from her life. "She spent 25 years in jail for the sake of democracy," the minister told the gathering. (Times of India 17/11/12)

Dalit students face discrimination in Dharmapuri (2)

DHARMAPURI: Even as they are yet to get over the November 7 attack on their houses, the children of Natham, Kondampatti and Anna Nagar Dalit colonies in Naikkankottai village have run into another problem in one of the schools: caste Hindu students are keeping away from them for the last two days at the Government High School. The students are being taken in police vehicles to schools in and around Dharmapuri and brought back home. They are still in the grip of fear, the students said on Friday. M. Nishanthi of Natham Colony, a Class X student of the school, said after the attack, students from the three colonies resumed going to schools and colleges on Wednesday. But, for the last two days, caste Hindu students were keeping away, even sitting separately in class. M. Suresh of the same colony, recalling the attack, said he was attending classes amid an atmosphere of fear. When this was brought to the notice of Headmaster of the Government High School G. Ramakrishnan, he said steps would be taken immediately to eliminate caste discrimination. A police officer in-charge of security for the students said that out of 217 school students and 70 college students in the three colonies, 24 attended college and 209 attended school for the past two days. S. Amuthavalli, Chief Educational Officer, told The Hindu that the department would take steps to weed out discrimination, if any, in the school. Both Dalit and caste Hindu students would be given counselling. The Dalit students said that the counselling given by Superintendent of Police Asra Garg and a team of doctors headed by Resident Medical Officer of Government Hospital in Dharmapuri M. Elangovan was helpful. Meanwhile, the case has been transferred to CB CID for investigation. (The Hindu 18/11/12)

JSpur YC demands adequate compensation to Dalit families (2)

JAGATSINGHPUR: The Jagatsinghpur district Youth Congress staged a demonstration in front of the Collector's office demanding adequate compensation to the deceased's families of the Kujang firecracker blast incident that claimed life of five Dalit people and injured three here on Friday. They also demanded compensation for those who sustained injuries in the mishap and action against the high profile persons involved in the incident. They fumed against the police and civil administration and blamed them for shielding the real culprits involved in the incident and ignoring the victims' plight. "Even though a year has elapsed, the police have failed to file charge-sheet in the court," alleged Youth Congress leader Sarada Acharya. Dalit leaders like Deva Mallick, Shankar Kandi, Pabni Bhoi and Aruna Bala Mallick participated the demonstration. (Pioneer 19/11/12)

Dalit ostracisation sparks protest (2)

Chamarajanagar: Demanding action against the upper castes who are socially boycotting people belonging to dalit community at Banahalli in the taluk, the villagers staged a protest in front of the deputy commissioner's office in Chamarajanagar on Tuesday. They alleged that the system of untouchability is still in place in the village and the dalits are not allowed to participate in the Kondotsava and no entry to Sathyavathy temple in the village. The agitators claimed that no steps has been taken so far against the upper castes who are involved in such practice that has turned into a great problem for the members of dalit community. Moreover, the officials too are hesitating to provide government benefits for these dalits fearing wrath from the upper caste people. The dalits have begun protest against the accused since several days and memorandum submitted to deputy commissioner, superintendent of police and district social welfare officer, but in vain, they complained. Atrocities on dalits are on the rise and has created anxiety among the people in the village and demanded deputy commissioner to take suitable action and provide necessary protection for the villagers. The protesters also warned of intensifying the protest if no action is being taken on the case registered at Santhemarahalli police station. Their other demands included entry into the temple, government benefits to the dalits who are financially weak and others. Chalavadi Mahasabha district unit president Anagalli Basavaraju, R Ramesh, K R Narayan, Shivaprasad, Deepa and others participated in the protest. (Deccan Herald 21/11/12)

Dalits demand timely possession of allotted land (2)

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha Dalit Adhikar Manch (ODAM) on Thursday at a State-level convention on 'Dalit land issues in Odisha' here demanded that the Government give timely possession of the lands allotted to the Scheduled Caste people. A Manch delegation later handed over a memorandum to Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Surjya Narayan Patro on land issues of the Dalit communities. Attending the convention, the Revenue Minister said the State Government has distributed land rights to 2, 68,000 landless people across the State. Recently, the Government has introduced a programme by which the land demarcation and distribution process would become easier than before, said Patra, adding, "An intermediary would work as a bridge between the Government and poor people while allotting Government land in the names of the proper beneficiaries." He also said the intermediaries along with the local Revenue Inspectors would find out Government lands in a particular area for distribution among the landless poor. The intermediary would get `4,000 per month, he said, adding, "We have already started the work in 117 scheduled areas." O DAM coordinator Prashant Mallick said a majority of Dalit families has no homestead Patta land to construct houses as they occupy the so-called Government land or community land for generations which has not been recorded in their names because there has been no survey and settlement initiative carried out by the Revenue Department. He also demanded that the Vasundhara programme be time-bound and the beneficiaries be given Patta and possession at the same time because many of the families have Pattas for years and still they have not received possession. He also alleged that the Dalits' access to natural resources like forest and water bodies is increasingly being restricted by people of dominant castes and communities in some areas. (Pioneer 24/11/12)

Dalit houses torched in Cuddalore (2)

CUDDALORE: A mob torched eight huts and two two-wheelers at a dalit colony in Pacharapalayam village near Vadalur in Cuddalore district on Tuesday morning. Eight dalits were injured in the attack. A van belonging to a dalit was also damaged. This is the second such case of violence against dalits in the state in recent weeks. On November 7, non-dalits set afire dalits huts in three villages in Dharmapuri district after the suicide of a man whose daughter married a dalit youth. In Pacharapalayam, police said, a group of dalits teased a girl belonging to a dominant caste while she was going to school around 7am. The girl complained to her relatives. Soon, around 50 non-dalits went to the dalit colony and set huts and two-wheelers on fire, damaged television sets, grinders and other home appliances. The windscreen of a van was damaged. Three huts were completely gutted while five were partially burnt. Eight tiled houses were partly damaged. Police teams from Vadalur and other places rushed there. Eight dalits, including two women, who were injured were first taken to the Kurunjipadi government general hospital and then to the Cuddalore government general hospital. They are said to be out of danger. Sub-collector R Lalitha said a police team rushed to the spot within 30 minutes of the incident was reported. "A large posse of police, led by two SPs and three DSPs, is now posted there. A fire tender has been stationed there as a precautionary measure. Police have intensified patrolling in neighbouring villages to prevent spread of violence and have set up pickets at sensitive pockets," Lalitha said. The Vadalur police registered cases against the members of both groups following complaints and counter complaints. (Times of India 28/11/12)

Dalit woman gang raped, 2 of five accused commit suicide (2)

Rohtak: Two accused of a gang-rape case allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a moving train on the Rohtak-Delhi railway track near Kanheli village in the wee hours of Friday. The duo, identified as Sandeep (24) and Sunil (25) of Ajayab village, along with three others were booked by the Meham police under Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and SC/ST Act on Thursday evening on the charge of committing gang-rape of a 30-year-old married woman belonging to Schedule Caste (SC) at Ajayab village on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday. "We had received information in the wee hours that two youths had ended their lives by jumping before a moving train near Kanheli village. The youths were later identified as Sandeep and Sunil through their mobile phones. No suicide note was recovered from their pockets," said Ashok Kumar, an official of Government Railway Police. Earlier, the victim in her complaint lodged with the Meham police station had alleged that two persons, identified as Kala and Fouzi, along with their three friends, had barged into her house in Wednesday night when she was sleeping alone there. They raped her and also threatened her of dire consequence before going out from the house after perpetrating the crime. Taking a swift action on the complaint, police not only registered a rape case against the accused but also started conducting raids at their possible hideouts in the village but failed to arrest any of the accused. "During police investigation, the victim revealed on Friday morning that Sandeep and Sunil were also involved in the crime and she did not know till then that the duo had ended their lives. Since the woman was traumatised after the incident hence could not

recollect the names of other accused at the time of registration of the case," said Rohtak DSP (City) Virender Singh, who was investigative officer of the case. (Pioneer 1/12/12)

Four held for attack on dalits in Dharmapuri (2)

DHARMAPURI/CHENNAI: The CB-CID on Monday arrested four men in connection with the attack on three dalit colonies in Dharmapuri in November even as, in Chennai, the district administration informed the Madras high court that security has been stepped up in the area. Investigating officers said they had arrested Vijayan, Palani, Thangavel and Dharman for the attack. The CB-CID produced the suspects before a Dharmapuri magistrate's court, which remanded them in judicial custody. "We arrested them after confirming that they either took part in the attack or instigated others to ransack and torch dalit houses," an investigating officer said. "They belong to the vanniya community and are from Naickenkottai village in Dharmapuri district." Mobs went on the rampage near Naikkankottai on November 7, torching more than 260 houses. In a status report filed on Monday, district collector R Lilly said the government had paid cash relief of 50,000 each to around 300 families whose houses the mobs had set ablaze. She said the state had also provided shelter, food, clothes and medical attention to villagers targeted in the attack and repaired their houses. (Times of India 4/12/12)

Country has subdued Dalit rights, says Brinda Karat (2)

New Delhi: Left parties are firm on raising and debating Dalit issues in the ongoing Parliament session, said CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat while addressing the National Dalit Assembly at Jantar Mantar on Tuesday. "Dalits are given one-third less ration in the name of economic growth. The country has subdued the rights of Dalits, but all political parties are not the same," said the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader. "We believe in removing all forms of discrimination. Every road in Delhi is cleaned by Dalit women, but ask them how much they get?" She said the 17 per cent reservation approved by the Andhra Pradesh government is a positive step, and should have been given much earlier. "Forty houses were burnt down because a Dalit boy made the mistake of loving someone from another caste. Just 40 km away from New Delhi, Dalit children are being killed just because they are Dalits. What is the government doing?" said Karat. The 'Dalit dignity march' saw over 3,000 people from 20 states marching from Ramlila Maidan to Parliament Street on the eve of the death anniversary of Babsaheb Ambedkar on Wednesday. "The divide between the rich and poor is increasing by the day. Land lying vacant with the government should be distributed equally among the poor for their progress," said Ashok Bharti of National Confederation of Dalit Organisations. Following the recent approval of the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan, Dalits want the government to pass a legislation to spend proportionate resources on the well-being of their community. They also want the government to ensure that money allocated for their cause are used only for their benefit, instead of diverting it to other development projects. Former CPI(M) general secretary A B Bardhan said the concerns of the poor cannot be solved by Parliament, where a majority of MPs are "crorepatis". He called for electoral reforms, adding that "proportional allocation of seats in Parliament should be according to votes received." (Deccan Herald 5/12/12)

Woman who married dalit knocks on HC door for cover (2)

CHENNAI: At a time when Tamil Nadu is gripped by debates on inter-caste marriages, a non-dalit girl who had married a dalit man against her family's wishes has come knocking on the doors of the Madras high court saying she faced harassment by police and threats from her father. Kiruthika, hailing from Salem district, said in her petition she met D Vallal, a dalit, in college and fell in love. They were in love for about a year when her father came to know about the relationship. Meanwhile, Vallal completed his BBA course and joined a private company in Chennai as a sales executive. When her father kept her in confinement and made arrangements for marriage with someone else, Kiruthika fled her home and got married to Vallal on December 12, 2011. It was duly registered in Salem on December 19, 2011. Kiruthika said her father Panneerselvam had disapproved of her marriage and even lodged a complaint with the all-woman police in Athur claiming that she was being harassed for dowry by Vallal and his father. She denied any harassment by her husband's family and claimed that personnel from Yethapur and Ammapettai police stations harassed and threatened her. She wanted the court to direct the authorities not to harass her. When the matter came up for hearing before Justice D Hariparanthaman, the special government pleader, however, denied any harassment from police and offered an undertaking that police would not interfere with Kiruthika or her husband. Justice Hariparanthaman, recording the categorical undertaking by the government pleader, cited the Supreme Court rulings which noted that any form of harassment and threats issued to couples of inter-caste weddings a serious offence. Decrying brutal, feudal-minded persons perpetrating campaign against inter-caste marriages, the apex court had said

such barbaric practice should be ruthlessly stamped out. Noting that the judgment would squarely apply to Kiruthika's case, the judge said no direction was required because the special government pleader had made a statement before the court that there would not be any interference by police in the married life of the young woman. (Times of India 6/12/12)

Barred from Theni temple, dalit priest commits suicide (2)

THENI: A dalit priest, who was prevented from entering a temple in Theni district, allegedly committed suicide on Friday. Police said S Nagamuthu, 23, left behind a note saying he was threatened by some non-dalit members of the temple administration committee and police officers to withdraw a case he had filed against them. On September 17, TOI had reported that Nagamuthu, a priest with the Kailasanathar temple at T Kallupatti village, was asked by the committee members not to enter the temple and perform puja. When Nagamuthu questioned the decision, he was allegedly beaten up. With the help of some activists, Nagamuthu filed a petition in the Madurai bench of the Madras high court, which directed the police to do a proper investigation. The Thenkarai police registered an FIR on August 2 based on his complaint. Nagamuthu's father K Subburaj said he was under pressure to withdraw the case. "He was threatened by influential people to withdraw it. My son was scared. He mentioned the names of seven people, who threatened him, in his suicide note." (Times of India 9/12/12)

Dalit girl buried in Dharmapuri (2)

DHARMAPURI: Six days after the death of A.Mangammal, the Dalit girl was buried at Naikkankottai village on Saturday afternoon with heavy police bandobust. After hectic parleys with the revenue and police officials in Salem and Dharmapuri districts, the body was brought from Salem Government Medical College Hospital on Friday night and buried. As a precautionary measure, the police blocked traffic on the Dharmapuri-Tirupattur Road for an hour during the funeral procession. The traffic on this road was diverted to an alternative route by the district police to avoid unnecessary tension during the procession. About 500 people including relatives, Dalit organisations and leaders from political parties participated in the funeral. The last rites were performed by women at the Natham Colony burial ground instead of men. Later, a condolence meeting was held at the Natham colony. Mr. Velmurugan, State general secretary, Bahujan Samaj Party, M. Nandan, State deputy secretary, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, P. Dillibabu, Harur M.L.A. and representatives from various rights groups were present. The girl had died at the Salem Government Medical College Hospital on December 3, allegedly due to 'brain fever.' She was referred to the Salem Government Medical College Hospital from Dharmapuri Government Medical College Hospital on November 29 with high fever. Her relatives and Dalit groups had refused to accept her body claiming that the death of the girl, presently registered under Section 174 of Cr. PC (suspicious death) be altered to 302 (Murder) of Indian Penal Code. Earlier on Friday, the Superintendent of Police Asra Garg, reportedly told them that an inquiry would be held into the circumstances that led to the death of Mangammal, by a 'neutral' officer in the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP). The Collector had assured them adequate compensation. Following assurance, the relatives of the deceased and Dalit outfits agreed to accept the body. (The Hindu 9/12/12)

Dalit panel asks govt to implement SC order on promotion quota (2)

NEW DELHI: The national dalit watchdog has urged the government to start implementing the Supreme Court order on 'promotion quota', apprehensive that a stalemate over the bill to overturn the judgment may leave SCs/STs stranded. The National Commission on SCs has asked the Centre to form a committee to start collecting "quantifiable data" on "backwardness" and "inadequacy of representation" of dalits in jobs and get similar ones formed in the states too with a deadline of three months. The need for data on the twin parameters was laid down by the apex court as a prerequisite for quota in promotions, triggering uproar from dalits and forcing the Centre to amend the Constitution to overturn the court judgment. However, the stalemate in Parliament over quota bill seems to be forcing a rethink. NCSC chairman P L Punia has written to personnel minister V Narayanasamy that the government move towards implementing the court order. "Efforts will continue to get the bill passed but in the meantime, we must start the exercise envisaged in Nagaraj case," he said. The argument is driven by the apprehension that putting all eggs in the legislation basket will be risky. The quota will remain stalled till the bill to amend the Constitution is passed. Instead, availability of data on parameters laid down by the apex court will give another route to reinsert quota if the bill is stuck in Parliament. The move towards marshalling data to implement the court order would mark a compromise. Dalit quarters have been loathe to accept the judgment, arguing SCs/STs were automatically backward unlike OBCs who face the litmus test of 'creamy layer'. While there was no quarrel over adequacy of representation, few states have data on this score to satisfy the court. The states chose to use the judgment as legal cover to annul reservation laws instead of

collecting data and constitutional amendment was seen as the easier route to restore status quo. The roadblocks in passing the bill seem to have sent quota proponents back to the drawing table with a relook at the court order. Sources said even if the bill is passed in Rajya Sabha, it would face serious resistance in the lower House where the protesting SP has a bigger squad of 23 MPs and would be joined by Shiv Sena's 11 MPs. The government may find it difficult to enforce order in the House as constitutional amendment requires, especially with Shiv Sena, unlike SP, having no understanding with UPA. (Times of India 12/12/12)

National Dalit Conference to bring community politicians together (2)

Mumbai: To harness the electoral strength of the 16.5 per cent Dalit population, community leaders from across the political spectrum will gather in Mumbai Wednesday for a national conference. The novel exercise will see Dalit leaders from BSP, Congress, LJP, BJP, NCP and RPI come together to discuss the way forward for the community. "It is a meeting to review the economic and social status of the community and to plan a course that will empower it further," RPI president Ramdas Athawale said. He claimed there was no political agenda to the meeting. Other RPI leaders, however, said the conference was to discuss consolidation of votes to send a large number of Dalit representatives to Parliament. "There will be discussions on how we can empower the community politically," one said. Apart from Athawale, Ram Vilas Paswan of Lok Janshakti Party, BJP MP Ram Nath Kovind, senior BSP leader Veer Singh, Congress leader and Maharashtra ministers Nitin Raut and Laxman Dhoble are expected to participate. (Indian Express 12/12/12)

NHRC to probe Dalit murder in Puri dist (2)

Puri: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken up the killing of Susant Das, a Dalit fish vendor of Siala village under Krusnaprasad block, and registered a case. Susant was beaten to death mercilessly by a group of errant people on April 4 in Rayaghat village under Brahmagiri police limits. Suspecting him a thief, villagers severely manhandled him while he was on way to house through Rayaghat village. Cruelty had surpassed all limits as the villagers had cut the vein in his wrists and crushed his chest with a heavy rock despite his repeated requests to leave him alive as he was innocent. Even the villagers had thrown him into a water pool as he lost his consciousness. On being informed by a villager, the police had rescued him on the morning. He was declared brought dead at the Kerandia community health center (CHC) by the doctor. Sources said the Dalit youth who was staying in a palm leaf cottage along with his spouse, two children and old parents, was the only earning member of the family. After a complaint by his father, the Brahmagiri police had lodged a murder a case and apprehended Tuku and Bhisma of Rayaghat village. After languishing in jail for over five months, they, meanwhile, have returned home. Though 50 to 60 villagers are learned to have perpetrated the murder, the police just arrested two paying no heed to others allegedly under pressure of a leader of the ruling party. Even the case had been sent to Superintendent of Police (SP), Puri, Anup Sahu and later to the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC). (Pioneer 16/12/12)

Juvenile held for raping minor Dalit in Karnal (2)

Karnal: Two other under-age friends of the main accused were also arrested, for conspiring, but not raping the victim at Byana village, near here. The fourth juvenile accused of hatching a conspiracy, is still absconding. The official spokesman of the district police said that the 17-year-old victim had gone to a bookshop on December 14 when four accused, known to her, kidnapped her and sexually assaulted her at a shop in the nearby market. Acting on a complaint filed on December 15, the police arrested three accused under Prevention of Children for Sexual Offense Act, rape, SC/ST Act and other charges. The three were sent to judicial custody by a local court on Tuesday. (Hindustan Times 18/12/12)

Bizarre anti-Dalit ritual continues amid court storm (2)

BANGALORE: It's half past noon at the famous 5000-year old Kukke Subramanya temple near Mangalore. Brahmins have been served a hot, festive, south Indian fare in seclusion within the temple precincts. But once they are done with the meal, the plantain leaves with the leftover food isn't cleared. Instead, some 300 devotees in traditional dhotis roll on the leftovers in the belief that it will heal skin diseases. The centuries-old practice known as "made snana" (literal translation being 'bathing in leftovers') is one of those blind, superstitious rituals performed over three-days during the annual Champa Shasti festival at the temple which counts cricket maestro Sachin Tendulkar among its devotees. The controversial festival began on Sunday again amid tight police security as certain Dalit groups have waged a battle against it for the last couple of years. Teams comprising five DySPs, as many as 200 police personnel and 100 home guards will stay at Kukke till the completion of the 3-day ritual. Made

snana first hit headlines in 2010 when the state government decided to ban the practice following pressure from progressive thinkers and Dalit organizations. But it soon back-tracked following pressure from devotees. Earlier this year, the ritual got into a legal tangle with the Karnataka high court staying the practice and allowing a modified version as suggested by the state government. But some devotees opposed to change in the system challenged the court ruling and secured a stay from the Supreme Court. B K Bhaskar, secretary, Adivasi Bodakattu Samithi, which had approached the Supreme Court challenging the Karnataka High Court order, is convinced about the inherent goodness of the bizarre ritual. "This is a tradition that is being practiced for more than 1,000 years. People who have no knowledge of the ritual have been objecting to it. It's a tradition as good as when we pray to God everyday in the hope that he will help us in our day-to-day lives." Most, however, are shocked by the brazenness of it all, that too in this day and age. Writer and social critic G Rajashekhar says, "The government should ban this practice in all temples of the state for there is humiliation of the lower castes involved in the ritual." Those opposing the "barbaric tradition" aren't giving up, though. Dismissing it as "nonsense", they are pushing for it to be banned. "If it can cure diseases effectively, the state government should close down hospitals and set up such temples across the state," says Veerabhadra Channamalla Swami, chairman of Nidumamidi Mahasamsthana Mutt, which had filed a case in the high court against the practice. "I will continue to fight the case in the SC and get the made snana banned." (Times of India 19/12/12)

8-year-old Dalit girl raped, killed in Bihar (2)

PATNA: In yet another shocking reminder of the routine violence suffered by women, an eight-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly raped and murdered in Bihar's Saharsa district. The body was found in a canal on Tuesday morning, a day after she went missing from home. The incident took place in the remote village of Belwara Punarwas, situated at a distance from the Kosi river. The child was from the Paswan community and belonged to a family of labourers. District hospital sources confirmed to The Hindu that the post mortem found evidence of rape. "Around 6 p.m., my daughter had gone to my brother's chicken coop to call him home," the girl's father told The Hindu on the phone. "The place is located around half-a-kilometre from our house. She gave the message to him and started to return home. My brother told her to go ahead and that he would follow suit. The pathway to the coop is a proper road with houses on either side. I don't know what happened on the way," he said. The police have so far registered a case of rape, murder and causing disappearance of evidence against unknown persons. Saharsa SP Ajit Kumar Satyarthi told The Hindu that the police were "sure" the crime has been committed by someone from the village itself. "We suspect rape. Since this is an inside job, she could have been murdered lest she named her assaulter," Mr. Satyarthi said. The girl's mother was inconsolable. "She ate, she went out; she was all of eight," cried her mother on the phone. "I was born in this village and grew up here. But I have never witnessed such an incident. She was not a grown woman; she was just a child. She was the oldest of my four children," the father said. The victim's uncle said no top official had come to visit the family. "Only one inspector came to investigate. If someone is raped in Delhi, the nation is outraged. If someone is raped here, no one knows about it." (The Hindu 19/12/12)

Dalit boy's murder triggers caste clash in Tamil Nadu (2)

CHENNAI: Another inter-caste relationship, another murder, more bloody caste clashes. The cycle of love, hate, violence and death is likely to be repeated, with police confirming that a dalit youth who went missing in Cuddalore on December 12 was murdered. The boy's father, who filed a habeas corpus petition in the Madras high court on Wednesday, alleged that his son was killed because he was in a relationship with a non-dalit girl. Police on Wednesday fished out the decomposing body of M Gopalakrishnan out of a tank near Paradhur village, where he was last seen after he accompanied the girl home from college. A senior police officer said the body had been sent to the Chidambaram General Hospital for autopsy to determine the cause of death, but added that knife wounds on the youth's neck clearly indicated that he had been murdered. As news spread that the body had been found, a mob torched the house of a close relative of the girl. Dalit outfit Viduthalai Chiruthaikal Katchi (VCK) and Gopalakrishnan's relatives staged a road roko, demanding arrest of the girl's family members. Police fear the situation could spiral out of control if the caste clashes that broke out in Dharmapuri district last month spread to other parts of the state. Gopalakrishnan's father, Mayakrishnan, lodged a complaint against Jayamkondam MLA J Guru, of the Pattali Makkal Katchi, alleging that he was behind the murder... (Times of India 20/12/12)

Dalit man beaten up for refusing to beat drum (2)

Hassan: Tears rolled down Gowamma's cheeks as she narrated how her husband, a Dalit, was beaten

up and threatened with dire consequences allegedly by "upper caste" people for refusing to continue with the traditional profession of their community. Her husband, Rangaswamy (38), a daily wage worker, has been admitted to the government hospital at Channarayapatna after he was beaten up at Baddikere in Channarayapatna taluk on December 17. "They ripped his clothes off, tied him up to a pole and beat him up severely. They also threatened to harm our two school-going daughters if he refused to obey their orders," Ms. Gowamma told The Hindu here on Thursday. "All this began after he refused to go around the village beating a drum to inform the residents about a village festival scheduled for next week. A few people came to our home in an autorickshaw around 10.30 a.m. on December 17 and took him away. I ran behind the auto only to find my husband being beaten up," she said. Ms. Gowamma said the "upper caste" people did not listen to her pleas. "They threatened to harm our daughters if the police was informed about the incident," she said. Their relatives, Murthy and Kumar, rushed to the spot to rescue him. Mr. Murthy told The Hindu that the "upper caste" people continued to assault Mr. Rangaswamy in their presence. "They were about 200 people and we only two. They abused us and threatened us with dire consequences if we did not obey their orders," he said. Mr. Rangaswamy's family has filed a complaint against 12 people at the Nuggehalli police station. A first information report (FIR) was registered under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act on December 18. However, no arrests have been made yet. The Nuggehalli police said four teams had been constituted to arrest the accused. The Hassan district unit of the Karnataka Dalit Sangharsh Samiti staged a protest outside the Deputy Commissioner's office here demanding immediate arrest of the accused in the case. (The Hindu 22/12/12)

Dalit priest suicide: Father moves HC seeking CBI probe (2)

Madurai: The father of a Dalit priest, who allegedly committed suicide leaving a purported suicide note alleging that a brother of a Tamil Nadu Minister was responsible for his death, on Thursday filed a plea in the Madras High Court bench here, seeking transfer of the case from police to CBI. The note by the deceased, Nagamuthu, a dalit priest, had charged Raja, brother of Minister O.Panneerselvam, as being responsible for his death. In a petition, his father, N.Subburaj, sought transfer of the case from Tenkarai Police station at Theni to CBI. He also prayed to transfer the case, registered by police under Prevention of Atrocities against SC/St Act against two close associates of Raja, for allegedly intimidating Nagamuthu and abusing him using his caste name and preventing him from entering Kailasanathar shrine on October 11, to the CBI. The complaint against the duo was given by Nagamuthu. Police closed the complaint as mistake of fact, after he approached the High Court to direct the Judicial Magistrate to register the case. Nagamuthu was threatened to withdraw his complaint against the duo, it was alleged. The petitioner said in his suicide note, his son had said Raja was responsible for his death. He alleged that police were hand in glove with the accused, and they would not conduct a fair investigation. Besides, Raja was an influential man. Nagamuthu allegedly committed suicide on December 7. (Indian Express 28/12/12)

UP: Dalit teenager raped, another molested (2)

Jhansi/Sultanpur/Bhadoi: A teenaged dalit girl was raped, a 21-year-old from the backward community molested while a doctor was accused of attempting to rape a woman patient in three separate cases from different parts of Uttar Pradesh. The 15-year-old dalit girl was allegedly raped and held captive for 15 days by three men in Dharauli village in Sultanpur district, police said today. The girl went missing on December 14 while going to school, police said adding she was "freed" yesterday after which the matter came to the light and an FIR was registered against three persons. While Raju has been charged with rape, Basantlal and Sahabdeen have been booked criminal conspiracy. Police were trying to arrest the accused, who are absconding. In a separate incident, a 21-year-old dalit woman was molested by her neighbour in Gopiganj area of Bhadoi district. Police said that the accused Ram Sajeevan alias Baba (25) has been arrested. A doctor allegedly tried to rape the woman when she had gone for treatment along with her two family members in Bdagaon area in Jhansi district yesterday, police said. A case was lodged last night and efforts were being made to arrest the doctor, they said. Agitated with the incident the local residents on Sunday shut their shops. The incidents come amid national outrage over the Delhi gangrape incident whose victim died on Friday night after battling for life for nearly two weeks. (Hindustan Times 30/12/12)

Dalit woman raped in God's Own Country (2)

Thiruvananthapuram: Even as the State mourned the death of the 23-year-old girl in Delhi following brutal gang rape, reports on an incident of sexual persecution of a 22-year-old Dalit woman, a student, in the Kerala capital came to light, on Saturday. The incident was revealed only after the girl was hospitalized after trying to commit suicide by consuming rat poison, had taken place at Kallampally near Srikaryam in

Thiruvananthapuram on December 22, six days after the horrific incident of Delhi gang rape. The police have taken into custody a youth who lived near the girl's house in connection with the atrocious incident. The youth had reached her house when she was all alone at about 2.30 pm on December 22 and raped her after making her unconscious using chloroform. The girl understood about what had happened only after she regained consciousness, three hours later. Without revealing the matter to anyone, she consumed rat poison in a bid to commit suicide on December 24 to save herself from the embarrassment. The girl told the doctors of the rape after she was admitted to Medical College Hospital in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday. The police took statement from the girl after being informed by the hospital authorities and registered a case. (Pioneer 30/12/12)

HC comes to rescue of dalit woman (2)

CHENNAI: Marriage to a Christian or visiting a church regularly cannot be a reason to deny a dalit woman the benefits that the state gives members of the community, including employment under the SC category, the Madras high court has held. A division bench comprising Justices Chitra Venkataraman and R Karupiah, passing orders on a writ petition of A Jothimani, said: "She belongs to the Hindu adi dravidar community and got married to a Christian. In the absence of any evidence that she has in fact converted to Christianity, the mere fact of her marriage to a Christian by itself would not be grounds to hold that she loses her status as Hindu adi dravidar." As for the contention that she visits churches regularly, the bench said: "We do not understand how visiting church per se would result in the conversion from one religion to another... The constitution recognises the freedom to practice any religion. Visiting places of worship is a matter of individual choice." Jothimani, a dalit, married D Manuel, an adi dravidar who was a Christian. The woman did not convert to Christianity after marriage. In 2003, she was appointed as a junior assistant on consolidated pay to fill a temporary vacancy in the state government rolls. She later wrote a special examination conducted by the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission regularise her job. Since the Tamil Nadu Public Services Commission insisted on a community certificate from her father's place of birth instead of her own place of birth, Jothimani applied for a fresh community certificate from the zonal deputy tahsildar in Bhavani. In his report on August 1, 2008, the revenue inspector held that she was of Christian adi dravidar community, which meant she would be eligible for backward class (BC) benefits and not those meant for dalits. Though she explained to a state appointed anthropologist and a district-level vigilance committee that she had remained a Hindu after her marriage and had not been baptized, the committee rejected her claim and issued a BC certificate to her on December 26, 2011. Rejecting the official stand, the judges said the inquiry merely revealed that Jothimani observed rituals of Christianity and nowhere stated that she had embraced Christianity. "We do not think the claim of the committee, that Jothimani is not entitled to a Hindu adi dravidar community certificate, can be accepted," they said, directing the authorities give her SC certificate immediately. (Times of India 31/12/12)