**SKILLS FOR FREEDOM**

**Newsletter from India**

 **No: 6 October: 2015**

This electronic newsletter from **PEACE TRUST, INDIA** is addressed to NGO's, Social Activists, Media, Opinion makers, Leaders and Bureaucrats for improving their understanding on skilling the youth for gainful employment and addressing social issues like modern slavery, child labour, migrant labour, un-employability of youth. We also send this to people who we believe are involved in improving the migrant worker's conditions. You are welcome to unsubscribe yourself, if you so choose.

**-EDITOR**

Peace Trust is a Non Government Organization working on Child Labour and Bonded Labour issues since 1984. It has also focused on Migrant workers rights issue since 1999.

* Peace Trust’s Skills for Freedom is the only solution to end Modern Slavery in Tamil Nadu. It is a joint effort for enhancing the employment opportunities of rural youth in Dindigul, Karur, Tiruppur Districts.
* Reduce the risk for young workers - Beginning of this month Peace Trust has launched a new Initiative to "Support School Education, Health Protection, Livelihood Development and Skill Training for Gainful Employment among Vulnerable Young Population in Dindigul District" Geneva Global/ Freedom Fund are supporting this initiative
* SPSC Vocational Education & Employment Facilitation Centre provides access to vocational education and employment facilitation for rural poor youth in Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur District Tamil Nadu and Karaikal District, Puducherry.
* Peace Trust also provides training for Quality Teacher Education and gainful employment to young women from resource poor families in Dindigul and Karur District.

The views expressed are not of the donors but a compilation of field realities for the purpose of sharing and action.

**The Skills for Freedom e-newsletter is published by:**



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**MIGRANTS**

**HUNGARY ARRESTS 174 AS NEW ANTI-MIGRANT LAWS BITE**

AFP | Sep 16, 2015, 05.36 AM IST

ROSZKE: Hungarian police on Tuesday arrested 174 people after harsh new laws came into force which punishes "illegal border-crossing" with prison terms of several years, authorities said. Under the new legislation, which came into effect at midnight (2200 GMT yesterday), police arrested 60 people for "cutting or damaging" a razor wire barrier along the Serbian border.

Another 114 people were arrested throughout the day, and officials immediately began criminal proceedings. "Police have launched criminal procedures against them," Gyorgy Bakondi, chief adviser to Prime Minister Viktor Orban, told a news conference.

The new laws are part of Orban's strategy to stem the flow of migrants -- more than 200,000 so far this year - which cross Greece then the western Balkans before reaching Hungary on their way to Western Europe.

The changes mean that crossing the border illegally can result in a prison term of up to three years, rising to five years if people damage the razor wire or a more substantial four-meter-high barrier which is still under construction.

Budapest today effectively sealed off its southern border with Serbia, blocking a gap in a razor wire barrier where many of the migrants passed through, as well as closing two official crossing points.

"The number of illegal border-crossers has already reduced significantly," government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs told reporters at the same news conference.

Hungary is also planning another anti-migrant fence along part of its border with Romania, a minister said today.

"The measure is necessary as people-smugglers may change their routes because of the existing fence on the Hungary-Serbia border, hence a part of the immigration pressure may get directed towards Romania," said Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto

Hungary, a member of the European Union and the passport-free Schengen zone, has been sharply criticized over the fence it is building along the Serbian frontier, and today, Romania denounced the new construction plans as "out of step with the spirit of Europe." Romania is in the EU but not in Schengen, while Serbia is in neither.

"We don't want to turn the country into a fortress but we want to protect our borders," Kovacs said.

**PROS AND CONS OF WORKING ABROAD**

Working in a foreign country is a unique experience filled with new learnings, four professionals from diverse fields, who took up stints abroad before moving back to India, share their experience of working overseas.

**AASIT SHAH**

I don't consider any of my experiences in the US particularly appalling. In fact, the US proved to be a great training ground for me. I was working in the Silicon Valley and that favored me in terms of weather since we had a good number of sunshine days.

Dignity of labour is extremely high in the US. Even though there is hierarchy in terms of designations, I loved the personal connect one can have with their seniors. You can walk in and out of your senior's cabin any time.

Work-life balance is excellent so much so that sending professional emails on a weekend is frowned upon. Organizations are extremely flexible. There were days when I could work from home.

Since the US is considered to be the melting-pot of the world, I got the opportunity to work with people from different migrant communities there. And that was a great learning experience. I didn't miss India much because there are too many Indians around in the valley. So, for me, it was a home away from home!

**PANKAJ KHOT**

Working in the UAE had its own upside and downside.

The biggest benefit for me was to receive a tax-free salary, which is very rare. Companies in Dubai ensure that their employees have a perfect work-life balance. A major benefit of working in Dubai is that a number of international organizations have their offices there. So apart from helping you mingle with professionals from different cultures, it also enables you to understand the working styles of different countries.

The city is strategically located and has great infrastructure. Restaurants in Dubai offer cuisines from all over the world making the place a gastronomic delight.

On the flip side, house rents are too steep. Furthermore, if you don't have any family or friends, it can get boring and difficult.

**KAVITA GUPTA**

When I think about my working stint in the UK, I am filled with mixed feelings. First, I worked for Nokia. The environment there was professional, yet friendly. Flexibility was granted, when required. What I particularly liked was the blurring of hierarchy in terms of accessibility. One could approach one's bosses anytime. Being able to interact with people from different countries was a great advantage too. Work-life balance was perfect and working beyond clocking hours was not appreciated. However, when I moved to another company and got pregnant six months into the job, it didn't go well down with my boss. My profile was changed and I didn't find that fair.

**GUATAM PAREKH**

The first thing that really impressed me about Singapore was the minimalistic bureaucracy. Be it taxes of work permit or anything, government authorities are very co-operative.

Every job or labour is treated with respect and this takes professionalism in the country to another level. Singapore being a first world country, infrastructure and connectivity are highly developed; both railways and roadways are well connected making travel hassle-free.

I was part of the event industry there and the best thing was that clients treated me as their associate and not merely a vendor. It was a ritual for us to take our clients out for dinners post events. Professionally, it was a great bonding exercise.

Technology is highly evolved in Singapore, so during events, each department knew their job to the T and that made our work easy. Since the country had professionals from all over the world, I got to learn a lot from people from varied cultures. Finally, Singapore is a welcoming country and doesn't let you feel homesick. My stint there was amazing.

**CROATIA PUTS ARMY ON ALERT AS IT REELS FROM MIGRANT INFLUX**

AP | Sep 18, 2015, 02.46 AM IST

BATINA (CROATIA) Croatian leaders asked the army on Thursday to be on alert after chaos erupted at the border with Serbia, where thousands of migrants and refugees have poured into the country. Some trampled over each other in a rush to get on limited buses and trains, causing dozens of injuries amid the mayhem.

The huge masses descended on Croatia after Hungary took tough measures to stop migrants entering its southern border. As Hungarian officials hailed their success in stopping the massive influx and moved ahead with plans to build yet more border fences, leaders in Croatia pleaded that their country was at full capacity and unable to cope with the sudden flow.

Interior Minister Ranko Ostojic told reporters he had a message for migrants: Don't try to go to Western Europe through his country.

"Don't come here anymore. Stay in refugee centers in Serbia and Macedonia and Greece," Ostojic said. "This is not the road to Europe. Buses can't take you there. It's a lie."

Hungary sealed off its border with Serbia this week with a razor-wire fence and began arresting people who tried to cross. Police used tear gas, batons and water cannons on those who tried to push open a border gate on Wednesday.

Croatia represents a longer and more difficult route into Europe, but those fleeing violence in their homelands had little choice. By late Thursday a total of 9,200 people had entered the country in the past two days, police said, and already groups were trying to cross into neighboring Slovenia and Hungary.

Yet Slovenia, like Hungary, appeared unwilling to take in the inflow. Slovenian police said those freshly arrived from Croatia would simply be sent back there, according to the country's state news agency.

Croatian President Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic asked the country's military to be on higher alert and be ready to act if needed to protect the border from the migrants. The country's interior minister meanwhile suggested that his country may close its borders if faced with thousands more newcomers.

After bus trips through Serbia, many migrants crossed fields on foot to enter Croatia, where dozens of police at first directed them to trains and buses heading to refugee centers. Authorities warned them to avoid walking in areas along the Serbian border that were still being demined from the country's 1991-95 war.

Soon matters got out of control.

Hundreds of angry asylum seekers pushed through police lines in the eastern Croatian town of Tovarnik after waiting for hours in the hot sun, demanding to be allowed to move on toward Western Europe. An Associated Press photographer saw one man collapse on the ground and dozens injured.

More than 2,000 men, women and children had been stuck at the local train station for hours. When buses finally arrived, groups charged toward them, overwhelming Croatian police. The situation calmed down but some migrants moved off on foot, with police unable to stop them.

In Croatia's north, police in the town of Batina struggled to cope as hundreds of other asylum seekers came over a Danube River bridge after being bused there by Serbs. Some families were separated as dozens of policemen tried to establish order.

As an EU member state, Croatia is required to register the asylum seekers. But almost all are trying to reach Germany or elsewhere in Western Europe, and want to move through quickly without a paper trail.

Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic said his country cannot hold down migrants who wish to move on. "Our resources are limited," he said. "I will not and cannot stop those people and they will pass through Croatia."

Some opted for a detour, trying to cross from Croatia into Hungary on a stretch of border with no fence. That move did not prove very successful. Hungarian state media said police had detained dozens of migrants near the village of Illocska, opposite the Croatian town of Beli Manastir.

By nightfall hundreds were approaching the border with Slovenia, one of several countries on the migration route calling for the European Union to take urgent action to manage the crisis.

While many refugees quickly decided to switch tack and try their luck through Croatia, some were unprepared as they were stranded in Serbia on the border with Hungary.

"We've run out of money and we only know the way through Hungary," said Mohamed Jabar from Diyala, Iraq, who was traveling with a son in a wheelchair and other family members. "All the other ways are unknown to us. They say ... there is a way through Croatia but who will welcome me there?"

"Are there humanitarian organizations? I have no clue!"

Mohamed Bader, who fled Aleppo, Syria, sold his father's shop to raise $10,000 for the journey with family, among them women and children. He said he is now quickly running out of money and was afraid of spending the little he has left for an uncertain end.

"If anyone cares about us, let them let us in, or from the beginning they could have stopped us by cutting the road in Turkey or Greece," Bader said. "They should have cut the road instead of having us come all this way with great difficulty only to be told at the end of the road `that's it, we can't enter, stay here.' I don't know what to do."

Hungary has faced strong international condemnation for its handling of the migrant crisis. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called Hungary's use of water cannons and tear gas unacceptable.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto lashed out Thursday against the criticism.

"I find it bizarre and shocking that certain esteemed international figures have stood on the side of people who for hours were throwing stones and pieces of cement at the Hungarian police," Szijjarto said. "And I'd also like to make it very clear, no matter what criticism I receive, that we will never allow such aggressive people to enter Hungary. Not even for transit purposes."

Hungarian police said they detained 22 people, including one Syrian man suspected of terrorism. The European Union's migration commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, declared Thursday that walls and violence are no solution and urged Hungary to work with the 28-nation bloc to alleviate the continent's migration crisis.

"The majority of people arriving in Europe are Syrians," Avramopoulos said at a news conference alongside Szijjarto in Budapest. "They are people in genuine need of our protection. There is no wall you would not climb, no sea you wouldn't cross if you are fleeing violence and terror. I believe we have a moral duty (to) offer them protection."

Hungary, in contrast, has been insisting that most are simply economic migrants seeking better jobs. Prime Minister Viktor Orban has also said that by keeping out Muslims, Hungary is defending "Europe's Christian culture."

His government celebrated its sealed border on Thursday as a success.

"The assertive, uncompromising defense of the border has visibly held back human trafficking and forces them to change direction," said Janos Lazar, Orban's chief of staff. "That was the aim of the entire action."

**TURKEY: 13 DROWN, INCLUDING 6 CHILDREN, AFTER SHIP HITS MIGRANT DINGHY**

AnkAt least 13 migrants – six of them children – drowned off Turkey on Sunday after the inflatable dinghy carrying them to Greece was hit in the dark by a Turkish-flagged ship, Turkish media reported. The children’s bodies were recovered by the Turkish coastguard with reports from Greece indicating that another two children may still be missing. They were on a flimsy vessel taking at least 46 migrants from Turkey’s northwestern coast to the Greek holiday island of Lesbos when the accident happened, the private Dogan news agency reported.

“It was dark, we saw the ship bearing down on us. We tried to signal with flashlights and cellphones but they did not see us,” a survivor called Haseen told Greece’s state news agency, ANA. Thrown into the water, the passengers were left fighting to keep their heads above water as a succession of big waves from the ship’s wake crashed over them. “We lost the children. We could not see them in the dark,” Haseen said. A mother and baby, who had spent at least two hours in the water, were among the survivors, according to ANA. The Greek coastguard said it had rescued 22 people from a boat that sank off Lesbos, apparently referring to the same incident, claiming there were 48 people on board. Greece’s marine ministry said a search was underway for those missing. The Greek coastguard later recovered the bodies of a woman and a young girl. It was not clear whether they had drowned in the same accident. On Saturday, a five-year-old Syrian girl drowned and several other refugees were reported missing after their boat also sank trying to reach Lesbos.

**GREEK COAST GUARD SEARCHES FOR 26 MISSING MIGRANTS**

The coast guard says, a Lithuanian helicopter from the European border patrol agency Frontex spotted people in the sea off the southeastern coast of Lesbos in the early morning.

Athens:Published:Sep 20, 2015, 12:45

Greece’s coast guard was searching Sunday for 26 migrants missing off the coast of the eastern Aegean island of Lesbos after the boat they were traveling in, sank. The coast guard says, a Lithuanian helicopter from the European border patrol agency Frontex spotted people in the sea off the southeastern coast of Lesbos in the early morning. Two coast guard vessels headed to the area and rescued 20 people, who said they were in a boat that sank with a total of 46 people on board. No information was immediately available on the nationalities of the survivors. Hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers, mostly Syrians and Afghans fleeing conflict at home, have arrived in Greece from the nearby Turkish coast so far this year. The vast majority pass through Greece, heading north through the Balkans overland toward the more prosperous countries of the European Union. A search was also continuing east of Lesbos for between 10 and 12 people missing in a separate sinking Saturday morning east of Lesbos. The coast guard rescued 11 people in that incident, and recovered an unconscious girl from the water, who later died in hospital. Another two people managed to swim ashore, while a man among the survivors was treated in a hospital for hypothermia

**MIGRANTS SURGE INTO WESTERN EUROPE THROUGH AUSTRIA**

Austrian police reported 6,700 new arrivals from Hungary since midnight.

Budapest: Published:Sep 19, 2015, 15:30

Thousands of migrants who had been stuck for days in southeastern Europe started arriving in Austria early Saturday after Hungary escorted them to the border. Austrian police reported 6,700 new arrivals from Hungary since midnight. Spokesman Helmut Marban said that about 4,200 people crossed the border at Heiligenkreuz, near the southern city of Graz, while the rest used the Nickelsdorf crossing near Vienna. Police said border controls continue to be in place, with vehicles being selectively checked and those inside asked for valid travel documents. The development comes after thousands of migrants, many lacking food and water, were trapped in southeast Europe, in some cases for several days, after countries began putting up barriers that blocked their passage to Western Europe. The migrant path was first blocked by Hungary, which sealed off its southern border with Serbia with a razor-wire fence and tough other tough measures to keep people out. That caused a massive influx of more than 15,000 people over three days into Croatia, which could not cope and then began escorting people to the border with Hungary. In response, Hungary transported the migrants to the border with Austria by bus and train. Meanwhile, Slovenia has blocked off its borders and used pepper spray on migrants late Friday. Some, however, made it in earlier and hundreds of people camped out overnight in Obrezje, a town in Slovenia just across the border from Croatia. Authorities only allowed limited numbers of families with women and children to continue on. Many migrants put up tents while others tried their best to keep warm as the temperatures dipped overnight.

**MIGRANT CRISIS: CROATIA SHUTS MOST SERBIA BORDER CROSSINGS, ANGERING SERBIA**

Many of the migrants are Syrians and Iraqis fleeing war, who are seeking safety and prosperity in Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe.

Croatia closed all but one of its border crossings with Serbia after straining to cope with more than 13,000 migrants who have entered the country after Hungary closed its border. Huge numbers of people surged into Croatia after Hungary erected a barbed wire-fence and took other tough measures to stop them from using it as a gateway into Western Europe. Croatia represents a longer and more difficult route into Europe, but those fleeing violence in their homelands had little choice. Many of the migrants are Syrians and Iraqis fleeing war, who are seeking safety and prosperity in Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe. Serbian officials, fearing the closure in Croatia would block thousands of migrants inside the country, protested Zagreb’s move. Aleksandar Vulin, Serbia’s social affairs minister, said Serbia will take Croatia to international courts if the international border crossings remain closed, arguing that it should have been prepared for the influx. “We will not pay the price of someone else’s incapability,” Vulin said. “I am sorry to see that Croatian humanity and solidarity lasted just two days.” However, despite the border closures, many continued entering Croatia through cornfields. Women carrying children and people in wheelchairs were among the thousands rushing in the heat in hopes of finding refuge. One of the more desperate situations was unfolding in the eastern Croatian town of Beli Manastir, near the border with Hungary. Migrants slept on streets, on train tracks and at a local petrol station. People were scrambling to board local buses, without knowing where they are going. Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orban says that his country has started building a razor-wire fence along a stretch of its border with Croatia to keep migrants from entering the country there. The migrants would prefer the quicker route to Europe through Hungary, instead of taking the longer route to Western Europe through Slovenia. Orban says the first phase of the 41-kilometer (25 mile) barrier will be completed on Friday, with coils of razor wire in place before an actual fence goes up. Meanwhile, Slovenia has been returning migrants to Croatia and has stopped all rail traffic between the two countries. Slovenian police have intercepted dozens of migrants who tried to cross through the forests overnight into the country from Croatia— and will be returned there. As the sun rose on Friday, refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan woke up to a new day with no hope in sight. “Returning back to our country is impossible, because we have no financial means or the moral strength to go back home,” said Abu Mohamed who fled Idlib in Syria, leaving his wife and children behind in the hopes of making it to Europe. He said Europeans have nothing to fear from people like himself. “We are coming with our modest Islamic perspectives. Terrorism remains back home, terrorism is not coming with us,” he said. “We were the victims and oppressed back home in our societies.”

**EUROPE MIGRATION CRISIS: 500 MIGRANTS STRANDED AT A CEMETERY IN NO MAN’S LAND BETWEEN SERBIA, CROATIA**

The influx of mainly Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans has caused tensions between Balkan rivals Serbia and Croatia, with countries criticizing each other over border closures and traffic blockades.

About 500 migrants have been stranded at a Christian Orthodox cemetery in no man’s land between Serbia and Croatia. Croatian police on Thursday blocked their entry from Serbia near the Tovarnik border crossing, which has been one of the main entry points for migrants as they seek to continue their hazardous journey toward Western Europe. The influx of mainly Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans has caused tensions between Balkan rivals Serbia and Croatia, with countries criticizing each other over border closures and traffic blockades. Croatia is blaming Serbia for busing migrants to the Croatian border, instead of channeling them further north toward Hungary.

Croatian police say more than 51,000 migrants have entered the country since they first started arriving more than a week ago. Police say 3,500 people crossed Thursday morning into Croatia from Serbia around Tovarnik, where migrants have been coming in through nearby cornfields. The influx has caused tensions between the Balkan rivals, with countries slamming each other with border closures and traffic blockades. The migrants began entering Croatia after Hungary closed its border on Sept. 15. Croatia says it’s so overwhelmed that authorities have been shipping the migrants toward Hungary or Slovenia. Most want to travel on to wealthier nations in Western Europe such as Germany or Sweden. Meanwhile, Hungarian troops have started laying down spools of razor wire at a new border — this time, a crossing with Slovenia. Government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs told The Associated Press on Thursday that the razor wire was being installed near a checkpoint between the Hungarian village of Tornyiszentmiklos and Pince, Slovenia. State television showed soldiers in thick protective gloves installing the razor wire across hundreds of meters (yards) on the Slovenian border. Kovacs called it a precautionary measure. But both Hungary and Slovenia are part of the European Union’s Schengen zone of passport-free travel, so, theoretically at least, there’s no need for border checks or fences between them. Hungary has already built a 4-meter (13-feet) high fence on its border with Serbia and hopes to finish a similar barrier on the Croatian border shortly. Preparations are also underway to extend the fence along the Romanian border as well. The fence has succeeded in stopping most migrants from entering Hungary from Serbia but over 10,000 entered Hungary from Croatia on Wednesday.

**EU LEADERS AGREE TO SEND MORE AID FOR AGENCIES HELPING REFUGEES**

European Union leaders, faced with a staggering migration crisis and deep divisions over how to tackle it, managed to agree early Thursday to send 1 billion euros ($1.1 billion) to international agencies helping refugees at camps near their home countries The leaders also agreed to set up “hotspots” by the end of November where EU experts can quickly register and identify people eligible for refugee protection, said European Council President Donald Tusk, who chaired an emergency EU summit in Brussels. The move is intended to also quickly filter out economic migrants who are unlikely to qualify for asylum in Europe. “The measures we have agreed today will not end the crisis. But they are all necessary steps in the right direction,” Tusk said at the conclusion of the more than seven-hour meeting.

He added that European leaders, who have disagreed acrimoniously with one another over how best to tackle the flow of migrants into the continent, finally appeared to reach a common understanding and consensus at the meeting. Exact details of the decisions taken by the leaders were not immediately available. Proposals they discussed also included deploying more personnel to patrol EU borders, and boosting support to Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan to help them cope with the millions fleeing the fighting in Syria. Around half a million people have fled to Europe so far this year in search of sanctuary or jobs. As numbers swell, nations have tightened border security. Hungary has put up a razor-wire fence along its border with Serbia and is close to completing a similar fence separating it from fellow EU member Croatia. Many of the migrants are arriving via risky boat crossings from Turkey to the Greek islands. British Prime Minister David Cameron said his country would donate 100 million pounds ($152 million) \_ including 40 million pounds ($61 million) to the World Food Program \_ to help feed refugees in camps close to the conflicts they are fleeing. “We must make sure that people in refugee camps are properly fed and looked after, not least to help them but also to stop people wanting to make, or thinking of making this very, very difficult and very dangerous journey to Europe,” he said. As the session began Wednesday evening, Tusk urged divided EU nations to set aside their differences and work together to hammer out a concrete plan “in place of the arguments and the chaos we have witnessed in the last weeks.” French President Francois Hollande was more blunt. “Those who don’t share our values, those who don’t even want to respect those principles, need to start asking themselves questions about their place in the European Union,” he said on his way into the meeting. His remarks came after four eastern European nations, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, voted = against a plan adopted Tuesday to relocate 120,000 asylum-seekers to other member states over the next two years to ease the strain on Italy and Greece, which are on the front line of the crisis. European officials said the vote was binding on all countries, including those that voted against it.

**EU MINISTERS AGREE TO RELOCATE 120,000 REFUGEES; EASE STRAIN ON GREECE, ITALY**

The office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees urged the EU to quickly set up facilities in Greece, where tens of thousands have arrived after making the hazardous sea crossing from Turkey.

Deeply divided European Union ministers agreed Tuesday to relocate 120,000 asylum-seekers to ease the strain on Greece and Italy, which are on the front line of the migrant flood. But a senior European leader conceded the move was only a small step toward resolving one of the worst crises ever faced by the 28-nation bloc. Four eastern European countries — the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary — voted against the plan, and it’s unclear if they will even implement it. Those nations have resisted accepting the forced resettlement of refugees on their territory. Slovakia would rather breach the measure “than accept such a dictate,” said Prime Minster Robert Fico. His Czech counterpart, Bohuslav Sobotka, added: “It’s a bad decision, and the Czech Republic did all it could to block it.” EU leaders will gather Wednesday evening in Brussels to try to adopt a unified approach to the crisis that has seen 477,906 people stream into Europe from the Middle East, Africa and Asia, according to estimates by the U.N. refugee agency. Some European countries have reinstated border controls to stem the flood, and Hungary has built a fence topped with razor wire on its frontier with Serbia.

EU Commission First Vice President Frans Timmermans insisted that all member states “respect the outcome” of the relocation plan, which he said showed the bloc is “capable of taking decisions even if, for some member states, these are very difficult decisions.”

But even Timmermans conceded it was only a small step, and plenty more remains to be done.

“In and by itself, the decision we took today is not going to solve the refugee crisis,” he said. “The refugee crisis can be brought under control, but make no mistake it will take a tremendous amount of effort, it will take a long time, and it will take many steps in many areas.”

The office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees urged the EU to quickly set up facilities in Greece, where tens of thousands have arrived after making the hazardous sea crossing from Turkey.

This may be “the last opportunity for a coherent European response,” said Melissa Fleming, a spokeswoman for the UNHCR.

Tuesday’s deal did not set mandatory quotas for each nation — one of the most contentious aspects of the proposed plan. It said that 66,000 asylum-seekers will be relocated from Greece and Italy, and 54,000 more in a year’s time.

Amnesty International’s Europe Director, John Dalhuisen, cautioned that agreed-upon numbers “are still too low, given the immensity of the current crisis.”

“At long last, this is a step in the right direction, but EU leaders need to be looking 10 steps ahead, not one,” he said.

Timmermans said the EU has to do a better job of protecting its borders, registering arriving migrants, quickly returning those ineligible for asylum, and “providing hope and perspective” for those in conflict-torn countries.

“Maybe something will change,” said Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta, who hoped that his country won’t be obliged to take in more than the 1,785 refugees it has offered to absorb. The Romanian news agency reported the country would have to take an extra 2,475 refugees.

German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere, whose country is absorbing most of those pouring into Europe, said Germany would take more than 30,000 of the 120,000 asylum seekers.

“We are doing this out of solidarity and responsibility, but also in our own interest,” he said. “At the moment, something like 50 percent of those who are arriving in Greece are coming to Germany. With a quota of 26 percent, fewer of this group would come.”

De Maiziere said the deal also aims to cut “secondary migration,” in which those seeking asylum move from one European country to another. “If people are distributed in Europe, then they can’t choose what country they go to. They have to stay in the country they were distributed to,” he said.

Along the migrant trail through the Balkans in southeastern Europe, the crisis continued and drew old foes into a new dispute. Serbia gave Croatia an ultimatum to reopen its border, threatening unspecified countermeasures. Croatia shut all but one of its crossings with Serbia last week to block the migrant influx, which has reached 34,900 in just a few days. But the action has crippled the economy in Serbia, a conduit for cargo across Croatia to Europe.

Croatia started letting trucks carrying food from Serbia across the border on Tuesday afternoon, but Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said that was not enough, adding that all cargo traffic must be restored Vucic had called an emergency session of all security services, including the military, to discuss the crisis. The two nations have a tense history after fighting each other in the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

“This is a scandal of international proportions,” Vucic said. “Croatia has breached all European agreements and directives.” Croatia was angry by Serbia busing migrants to its border.

“Mix it up a little,” Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic said. “Send them a bit to Hungary and Romania.” Bad weather in Greece compounded the migrants’ misery, as thunderstorms drenched hundreds camped out in Athens’ Victoria Square. “We have nothing. No water, no food, no shelter. We are living in tents, we need help,” said Mohamed Saber Nazari, a 20-year-old Afghan. “You see all the families living in the rain, with small children? Something must be organized for us.”

A 45-year-old taxi driver sympathized with their plight. More than 20 years ago, Adrian Mustafa had walked from Albania to Greece, where he has been living ever since. “If you go through what these people are going through, only then will you understand,” he said. “They don’t want to stay here, but they live under bad conditions.”

**SAUDI EMPLOYER CHOPS OFF VELLORE DOMESTIC HELP'S ARM**

By J Shanmugha Sundaram | ENS Published: 06th October 2015

VELLORE: Saudi Arabia continues to be in the news for all the wrong reasons with yet another case of an Indian worker being harshly mistreated. Kasthuri (56), of Mungileri village near Katpadi, had gone to the Kingdom two months ago to take up work as a domestic housemaid only to have her right arm allegedly chopped off by her employer for lodging a complaint against them for ill-treating her. She is currently battling for her life in Kingdom Hospital in Riyadh.

The Saudi government machinery, according to rules prevailing there, periodically conducts inquiries and ascertains the welfare of housemaids of foreign origin. When the government agency inquired of Kasthuri, she complained that she was being ill-treated.

“My mother had told the officials a week ago that her employer was not providing her food properly and also ill-treating her. Following this, the government agency warned the employers not to ill-treat Kasthuri. The employers would have (chopped off her arm) after she complained about them,” claimed Mohan, son of Kasthuri. Mohan adds that she was admitted to the hospital by the police and with the help of an Indian, working there as a driver.

The victim’s family has pleaded with the government to bring her back and is demanding justice. Kasthuri’s husband, Munirathinam, son Mohan, daughters Vanaja, Selvi and Lakshmi and their relatives approached the district administration on Monday, seeking help to bring her back to India. An agricultural labourer by trade, Kasthuri was approached by an agent from Tiruvannamalai with a promise of a monthly salary of `23,000 for working as a housemaid in Riyadh a few months ago. Though her 37 year-old son Mohan, a mason, dissuaded her from going abroad as a housemaid, she took it as an opportunity to bail out the family from their mounting debt and left for Saudi Arabia on July 28 this year. She started facing harassment from the very beginning and she alleged she was saddled with work without proper food, said Mohan fighting tears, after having talked to his mother in Kingdom hospital on Saturday.

**CHILD LABOUR**

SOUTH KOREA-BACKED APP PUTS CHILDREN AT RISK

AP | Sep 21, 2015, 11.50 AM IST

SEOUL: Security researchers say they found critical weaknesses in a South Korean government-mandated child surveillance app; vulnerabilities that left the private lives of the country's youngest citizens open to hackers.

In separate reports released Sunday, Internet watchdog group Citizen Lab and German software auditing company Cure53 said they found a catalog of worrying problems with ``Smart Sheriff,'' the most popular of more than a dozen child monitoring programs that South Korea requires for new smart phones sold to minors.

"There was literally no security at all,'' Cure53 director Mario Heiderich said.”We've never seen anything that fundamentally broken.''

Smart Sheriff's maker, an association of South Korean mobile operators called MOIBA, acknowledged making mistakes but said it had plugged the holes flagged by researchers and was now making daily security checks.

"We were overconfident as there was no security or hacking issues for more than three years,'' said Noh Yong-lae, the MOIBA manager in charge of the app.

Smart Sheriff and its fellow surveillance apps are meant to serve as electronic baby sitters, letting parents know how much time their children are spending with their phones, keeping kids off objectionable websites and even alerting parents if their children send or receive messages with words like "bully'' or "pregnancy.''

In April, Seoul required new smart phones sold to those 18 and under to be equipped with such software, a first-of-its-kind move, according to Korea University law professor Park Kyung-sin. The Korean Communications Commission has promoted Smart Sheriff and schools have sent out letters to parents encouraging them to download the app, which is free.

Sometime afterward, Citizen Lab, based at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs, and Cure53, acting on a request from the Washington-based Open Technology Fund, began sifting through Smart Sheriff's code.

What they found was ``really, really bad,'' Heiderich said.

Children's phone numbers, birth dates, web browsing history and other personal data were being sent across the Internet unencrypted, making them easy to intercept. Authentication weaknesses meant Smart Sheriff could easily be hijacked, turned off or tricked into sending bogus alerts to parents. Even worse, they found that many weaknesses could be exploited at scale, meaning that thousands or even all of the app's 380,000 users could be compromised at once.

"Smart Sheriff is the kind of baby sitter that leaves the doors unlocked and throws a party where everyone is invited,'' said Collin Anderson, an independent researcher who collaborated with Citizen Lab on its report.

MOIBA says it quickly fixed the app, but every security professional the AP spoke to was skeptical.

"We suspect that very little of these measures taken actually remedy issues that we've flagged in the report,'' Anderson said, adding that he believed at least one of MOIBA's fixes had opened a new weakness in the program. Independent experts also weren't impressed with Smart Sheriff or its fixes.

Ryu Jong-myeong, chief executive of security firm So TIS, said the app did now appear to be encrypting its transmissions. But he was scathing about some of the other failures uncovered by Citizen Lab, giving Smart Sheriff's server infrastructure a security rating of zero out of 10.

"People who made Smart Sheriff cared nothing about protecting private data,'' he said.

Kwon Seok-chul, chief executive of computer security firm Cuvepia Inc., said the lingering weaknesses meant children's data was still at risk.

"From a hacker's point of view, (the door) stays open,'' he said. Many Smartphone applications are unsafe, leaking private data or sending or storing it in risky ways.

But Citizen Lab Director Ronald Delbert said Smart Sheriff, a government-mandated program intended to monitor the intimate moments of so many children's lives, merited special scrutiny.

"This is not just a fitness tracker,'' Delbert said. ``It's an application meant to satiate parents' concerns about their children's use of mobile or social media, which is in fact putting them at more risk.''

Park, the law professor, said the security flaws should push the government ``to revisit the whole idea of requiring a personal communication device to be equipped with software that allows another person to monitor and control that device.''

Some South Korean parents may soldier on with Smart Sheriff regardless. Lee Kyung-hwa, a mother of two who leads a parents' group that endorses child surveillance, says all the app needs is an upgrade.

"If mothers feel happy thanks to the app, it is still helpful,'' she said.

But Kim Kha Yeun, a general counsel at libertarian-minded Open Net Korea, predicted that the revelations would turn parents against the technology. "If they knew that the apps infect and endanger their children, I don't think any South Korean parents would want their children to have this monitoring app,'' she said. The research has already prompted one mother to say she's uninstalling Smart Sheriff.

Yoon Jiwon told The Associated Press that she had previously been put off by the way in which the battery-hungry app kept sending her misleading alerts about her sons being bullied. That prompted her to cross-examine them about each chat and text message, breeding frustration and mistrust. She plans to uninstall the app after learning about the security weaknesses uncovered by Citizen Lab and now says Smart Sheriff was not a good way of interacting with her children. "It's just not right for a mom to snoop on everything,'' she said.

**CHILD LABOUR ACT: READING BETWEEN THE LINES**

The proposed amendments that were cleared by the Union Cabinet in May this year seek to completely bar children less than 14 years from working in any sector, barring entertainment industry.

The government is unlikely to review proposed amendments to the Child Labour Act (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 despite an ongoing controversy over some of its key provisions. The proposed amendments that were cleared by the Union Cabinet in May this year seek to completely bar children less than 14 years from working in any sector, barring entertainment industry. It also includes a provision that would allow children between 5 and 14 years of age to help in family enterprises after school hours or during vacation. “The objective is only to allow children to help in family enterprises and not work. It will be strictly monitored and there is no re-thinking on this provision,” said Shankar Agarwal, secretary, ministry of labour and employment. The labour ministry believes that the provision is in keeping with the country’s social fabric and socioeconomic conditions where in a large number of families, children help their parents in their occupations like agriculture and artisanship. “While helping the parents, children also learn the basics of occupations,” it said. The Bill, waiting to be introduced in Parliament, has led to continued concerns on how working of children in family enterprises would be regulated and monitored. However, arguing against the proposal, civil society and NGOs have said it could derail efforts to eradicate child labour. Data from Census 2011 reveals that nearly half a crore children less than 14 years of age are estimated to be working in India, despite legislation barring their employment.



**OPERATION MUSKAAN: DAY AFTER PROTESTS, 32 CHILDREN REUNITED WITH PARENTS**

By: Express News Service | Chandigarh | Published:July 26, 2015

After completing legal formalities with the Child Welfare committee officials, parents were allowed to take their children with them.

Operation Muskaan, Snehalaya, Snehalaya children home, Maloya children home, Snehalaya officials, Chandigarh latest news

A day after a large number of parents staged protests outside Snehalaya, a children’s home in Maloya, demanding release of their children, the social welfare department reunited 32 children with their parents.

On Friday, parents across the city had gathered outside Snehalaya alleging that the social welfare department officials and Chandigarh Police had mistakenly taken their children to the child welfare home instead of taking missing children as part of Operation Muskaan and appealed that their children be released.

Amid heavy police presence, social welfare department officials asked parents to furnish school identity cards, birth certificates, Unique Identification Number cards or any documents that proved that the children had not been orphaned or abandoned.

After completing legal formalities with the Child Welfare committee officials, parents were allowed to take their children with them. Parents claim the officials told them that their children were indulging in begging and child labour and were thus taken to the child home. However, parents refuted the claim and said the children had been taken away when they had either left for school or gone outside to play. Abdul Latif, a resident of Dhanas, said his daughter Sheikh-bul Rehman (11) and son Wasim (8) go to a government school near their residence. On Wednesday, when they did not return home as per their usual schedule, he went outside looking for them and was informed by eyewitnesses that his children had been taken away by social welfare department officials. Moments after reuniting with his children, Latif said, “You can see my children are still wearing their uniforms. How can anyone assume they were orphaned or abandoned without verifying the matter with at least school authorities or people nearby?” “I don’t know the reason why they were taken. My family is financially secure, so there is no reason my kids would be involved in begging or any form of labour,” Latif added. Ravi Kant, a resident of Industrial Area, Phase 1, said his son Sachin (6) and Anjali (4) were on their way to school in Sector 20 on Thursday. He was informed by his neighbour that social welfare officials were seen taking a group of children to Snehalaya and his children were among them. After reuniting with his children, Kant said, “The authorities can give me numerous reasons as justification. But my children have never begged or worked anywhere. They had only gone to school.” Over the past three days, over 60 children had allegedly been taken by social welfare department officials and Chandigarh Police as part of Operation Muskaan. The remaining parents were asked by social welfare department officials to bring their kids proof of identity before being reunited with them. However, Neil Robert, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, denied that these children had been taken away without thorough investigation. Roberts said, “The police brought the children to us, we sheltered them at Snehalaya. Most of these children were indulging in begging or some form of labour. We are now in the process of reuniting them with their parents or guardians.” Similarly, SSP Chandigarh Police, Sukhchain Singh Gill, said “The police are taking only those children who have been misplaced or lost. We hand over the children to CWC officials and help them in the process of tracing their families.”

**OVER 35,000 CHILDREN IN GUJARAT OF THE AGE GROUP 10-14 ARE MARRIED: CENSUS**

Marriage in this age bracket is in violation of the Prohibition of the Child Marriage Act which lays down the minimum age for marriage for all Indian citizens, as 21 for men and 18 for women.

According to the 2011 Census data on Marital Status of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes released on Monday, there were over 35,000 children who were married when they were between 10 years and 14 years of age. The instances of child marriages, as per this data, is higher among Scheduled Tribes where 25,508 persons in the 10-14 year age group are married (9,878 Males and 15,630 females). Among them 1009 are widowed, 526 are separated and 285 are divorced.

While the problem seems to be more widespread in the rural areas of Gujarat, the 2011 Census figures show that the issue is more serious in some of the local tribes like Bhils, Dhodia, Halpati, Gamit, Kokna, Nayaka, Rathawa and Varli. For instance, among Bhils — who constitute 40 percent of the total tribal population of the state who largely reside on “poorvi paati” or the eastern belt, stretching from Banaskantha in the North to Dangs in the South — the number of married persons in this age group is over 11,500. The presence of many married persons in this age bracket is in violation of the Prohibition of the Child Marriage Act, 2006, which lays down the minimum age for marriage for all Indian citizens, as 21 years for men and 18 years for women. “It is surprising to know that there are so many married tribals in this age bracket in Gujarat. Normally, some of the tribals of the state, especially in the southern parts, tend to get married when they are between 16-18 years,” said Satyakam Joshi, senior sociologist and director of Centre for Social Studies, a Surat-based autonomous social science research institute supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the government of Gujarat. Meanwhile, the Census figures also reveal that among the Scheduled Castes in Gujarat, there are 9,930 married persons (3,945 males and 5,985 females) in the age group of 10-14 years. Of these, 469 are widowed, 197 are separated and 104 divorced. Surprisingly, there are more number of married SC teenagers (5,523) in the urban areas compared to the rural (4,407), while child marriages seem to be more prevalent among SCs like Bhambi, Valmiki and Vankar. The figures of child marriages in Gujarat are much higher if the next age bracket of 15-19 years is taken into consideration, especially for males, whose marriageable age is 21 years. There are over 37,000 married males among the ST population; while there are over 10,000 SC married males in the age group of 15-19 years. “The Census figures show that the state government and the society at large has not been able to root out the problem of child marriages among STs and SCs. Though the tribals — who constitute 15 percent of the state’s total population — are used extensively as labour in development activities of the state, education and modern intervention still elude them,” says Dr Gaurang Jani, sociologist and senior lecturer at Department of Sociology, Gujarat University. Talking about the trend where child marriages are seen among SCs living in urban areas, Jani says,”In the last couple of decades, a number of SCs groups have migrated to urban centres. However, they still remain strongly rooted to their caste equations. Most of them still strictly marry within their sub-caste and face a lot of social pressures to get married early.”

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE STRIKES A CHORDS**

When 16-year-old Swarnalakshmi Ravi started reading out her speech on inclusion from a Braille script before a delegation of government and civil society members at the U.N. headquarters in New York on Monday, the audience was spellbound. Poorna Malavath, 15, from Pakala village, Telangana, and Yashasvi Kumud, 16, from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, conveyed the same message of inclusion in different ways. While Poorna spoke in her mother tongue Telugu, Yashasvi translated the same in sign language, and all three of them conveyed their message in unison.

“The fact that the three of us can speak in one voice is itself a message to the world that another world is indeed possible, another world that is based on deep listening, sharing, on teamwork — a world in which everyone is included,” Swarnalakshmi read out to rousing applause from the gathering, which included NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya, Permanent Representative of India to the U.N. Asoke Kumar Mukerji and Ambassador David Donoghue, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, among others.

Swarnalakshmi, a visually challenged girl from Chennai’s Little Flower Convent school, was among the nine other children representing the Nine is Mine campaign for child rights, here in New York, to demand inclusive policies for children and securing their rights ahead of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the 70th session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Steve Dom Rocha, who leads the Nine is Mine, campaign told The Hindu that the children were here to ask their government to allocate 6 per cent of the GDP for education and 5 per cent of GDP for health.

Sharing her experience of facing discrimination in school admissions, Swarnalakshmi said two schools in Chennai denied her admission because she was visually impaired, forcing her to travel 30 km away to a special school in Nungambakkam. With 92 per cent in her tenth board exams, the girl managed to secure admission in a government school in Puducherry after much struggle and requesting the CM, she said.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**INDIA, US, INK MOU ON ENERGY SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

India and the United States have signed a significant MoU on energy security, climate change and clean energy which Secretary of State John Kerry said reflects the commitment of the two countries to make the Paris summit later this year a success. “We have concluded a very significant Memorandum of Understanding on energy security, climate change, and clean energy,” Kerry said at a joint news conference with his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj, US Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker and Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

India’s commitment to reach 175 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2022 is the world’s most ambitious target in the area of renewables, Kerry said referring to the goal set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. American companies and research institutions are committed to help India achieve that goal, he said.

“We’re also launching a Fulbright Climate Fellowship programme to facilitate the exchange of key research information,” he said. Kerry said both India and the United States are “firmly committed” to reaching a truly meaningful, truly comprehensive and truly ambitious climate agreement in Paris later this year.

“That is absolutely critical and reflects the responsibility of world leaders to show the way on problems that profoundly affect not just our countries but all of the citizens of this planet,” he said. Energy and climate change are two of the many issues on which the two governments made progress over the last couple of days, Kerry said referring to series of meetings that took place between officials of the two countries over the past few days and in particular at the inaugural Strategic and Commercial Dialogue being held at the State Department headquarters.

“For example, our governments are leading on efforts with 21 other nations to end preventable maternal and child deaths. Our hope is that this initiative will spell the difference between life or death for millions of children and for women between now and the end of the decade,” he said.

Swaraj told reporters that India recognises climate change as one of the most pressing challenges.

“We have agreed to maintain close consultation in the run-up to the COP 21, the Paris conference of parties under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,” she said. “We are also looking at an early extension of the US-India Technology Safeguards Agreement to facilitate US satellite components on Indian commercial space-launch vehicles for another 10 years,” Swaraj said.

**JAVADEKAR TOUTS "INDIAN LIFESTYLE" AS REMEDY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE**

NEW DELHI : Only an "Indian lifestyle" free of the extravagant habits of the west can save the world from the worst of climate change, environment minister Prakash Javadekar said on Monday, as the world's third largest emitter prepared for UN talks on global warming.

Javadekar said his country would emit more greenhouse gases as it grows to beat poverty but that India would keep its peak per capita emissions below that of the US and China thanks to a more sustainable way of life. "The world ultimately should debate about lifestyle issues, because this planet will not be sufficient for sustaining the extravagant lifestyle. Indian lifestyle is a sustainable way of life. It's not born out of poverty, it's out of values we cherish," he told Reuters in an interview.

He did not elaborate on what an Indian lifestyle constituted but Javadekar has previously talked about Indians' abhorrence of wasteful consumption and said even those who have disposable incomes tend to live simpler lives than those in the developed world.

Close to 200 countries will meet in Paris in December and try to hammer out a deal to slow man-made climate change by agreeing to keep temperatures below a ceiling of 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. India, which is expected to release its pledges for Paris later this month, is one of the few large economies not to commit to a "peak year" for its carbon emissions.

DISTANT PEAK

Javadekar said India's peak would be a "distant" one because the country needed to fight poverty and give the more than 300 million Indians still living without power access to energy.

Instead, at Paris, India will commit to reducing emissions produced per unit of economic growth if the developed world can provide more technology and finance to combat global warming, Javadekar said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has previously said the world should look to traditional methods, like switching off street lights on full-moon nights.

Last year he told the United Nations India's Hindu and ascetic traditions might provide the answers to climate change. Modi's government has made much of its push into renewable energy but India is also increasing coal production. The use of cars, air conditioning and air travel is expanding rapidly.

Environmentalists fear India will follow the same path in emissions growth as other countries when they industrialised quickly. India, an influential voice in climate talks that often speaks on behalf of the developing world, is sticking to its long-held position that developed countries must do the most to tackle man-made climate change because they caused it.

India currently emits two tonnes of carbon dioxide per capita, less than the world average of five. China, committed to cut its emissions before 2030, will be producing 14 tonnes per capita within 20 years, Javadekar said. The French envoy for the Paris summit warned earlier this month that the meeting could end in failure if those countries most at risk were not reassured by the promises of developed countries.

**RAMESWARAM GETS A BIO-LAB**

To ensure proper working of bio-toilet system introduced in all coaches of trains maintained at the Coaching Depot here, Divisional Railway Manager (Madurai) Sunil Kumar Garg inaugurated a bio-lab for testing the discharge from bio-toilets on Wednesday.

After introducing the bio-toilet system in all the 145 coaches of trains bound for Rameswaram from different places and nominating Rameswaram depot as ‘Green Station’, the Southern Railway established the laboratory at a cost of Rs. 2 lakh to test the effluent discharged from the toilets and ensure that the toilets functioned properly.

The Indian Railway developed the environment-friendly ‘IR-DRDO’ bio-toilets, jointly with Defence Research and Development Organisation.

“We have established the laboratory, the first of its kind in the division, to ensure that the 800-odd bio-toilets in four trains maintained at the depot here function properly,” said Mr. Garg. The laboratory had facilities to test the power of hydrogen, total solids, total dissolved solids and total volatile solids, he said, adding if the test results showed they were not within the reference value, the faulty bio-toilets would be immediately rectified. Explaining the advantages of the bio-toilets, he said that regenerative type anaerobic bacteria in liquid form was poured into the six-chamber retention tanks in the toilet and the bacteria helped to disintegrate human waste into liquid and gas. The liquid would be further chlorinated and discharged without causing any harm to the environment, he noted.



***Divisional Railway Manager Sunil Kumar Garg distributing pamphlets on the advantages of bio-toilet system at Rameswaram railway station on Wednesday.***

Mr. Garg said that the railway bought the liquid bacteria from Railway Workshop in Nagpur and private suppliers in Hyderabad for pouring into toilets – 120 litres each. He requested the passengers not to throw any plastic materials, napkins, waste, water bottles and paper cups inside the toilets. Mr. Garg also inspected the facilities at the railway station, inaugurated an exhibition on bio-toilets and distributed pamphlets containing maintenance tips and explaining the advantages of bio-toilets.

**SKILL INDIA**

**UPHILL TASK FOR SKILL INDIA MISSION**

The Modi government will have its work cut out on skill development; just over one in 10 adults reported having received any vocational training, according to new official data, and the bulk of it was informal. The National Sample Survey Office on Tuesday released data from its 2011-12 rounds on education and vocational training. The numbers show that among persons in the 15-59 age groups, about 2.2 per cent reported to having received formal vocational training and 8.6 per cent non-formal vocational training. The non-formal variety mainly comprised the passing down of hereditary skills, or on-the-job training.



Among rural males who received formal vocational training, the most common field was ‘driving and motor mechanic work’ while among urban males it was ‘computer trades.’ Among rural females ‘textile-related work’ was most common, while among urban females it was ‘computer trades.’ Moreover, the rate of vocational training had barely increased between 2004-05 when the data was last collected and 2011-12. This was despite the fact that the UPA government announced an ambitious National Skill Policy in 2009 and created a National Skill Development Coordination Board earlier.

In July this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Rs. 1,500-crore Skill India campaign, which aims to train 40 crore people by 2022. Senior officials say that while there is a strong focus on skilling in the new government, there is still little clarity about how to achieve it. “If you ask me exactly how we are going to do it differently, I cannot tell you that yet,” a senior bureaucrat in the new Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship told The Hindu. “We are starting with a poorly educated youth population and little linkage with industry. There is a lot of corporate support for this mission, but it will take time,” he said.

Among people aged 15 and above, the NSSO data showed, only 2.4 per cent had technical degrees, diplomas or certificates in fields like medicine, engineering or agriculture. The proportion was 1.1 per cent in rural areas and 5.5 per cent in urban areas

Just over 60 per cent of those aged 5-29 were currently attending an educational institution. Among those not currently studying, ‘to supplement household income’ was the main reason for more than 70 per cent of males for currently not attending any educational institution, while ‘to attend domestic chores’ was the reason more than half of females. Attendance rates were highest in Uttarakhand in both rural and urban areas, and lowest in Gujarat among rural areas and Odisha among urban areas. Attendance rates rise sharply with income levels. In about 18.2 per cent of households in rural areas and 5.9 per cent in urban areas, there was not a single member in the age-group 15 years and above who could read and write a simple message with understanding.

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**INDIA, GERMANY LAUNCH TIE-UP FOR CLEAN ENERGY**

**Berlin to extend 2 billion Euros in aid for green corridor, solar projects**

Three days after India declared its pledge to expand the share of non-fossil fuel energy to 40 per cent by 2030, India and Germany formed the Climate and Renewable Energy Alliance, with the arrival of German Chancellor Angela Merkel in India on Monday.

The two countries agreed on the India Germany Climate and Renewable Energy Alliance — a comprehensive partnership to harness technology, innovation and finance in order to make affordable, clean and renewable energy accessible to all and to foster climate change mitigation efforts in both countries with a long-term vision and a comprehensive agenda of combating climate change. Germany has committed to providing an assistance of over 1 billion Euros for India’s Green Energy Corridor and a new assistance package of over 1 billion Euros for solar projects in India. The partner country also intends to deepen research cooperation in clean and renewable energy, and energy efficiency.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s address after Ms. Merkel’s arrival outlined German cooperation and assistance in areas such as smart cities, Clean Ganga and waste management. “I admire German leadership in clean energy and commitment to combating climate change. This is an area where we have convergence of views, and rapidly growing cooperation,” Mr. Modi said. “To contain temperature rise, we must also change our temperament,” he noted.

Pushkal Upadhyay, Director, National Mission for Clean Ganga, told The Hindu that India will receive technical assistance of 3 million Euros for developing the Ganga region, focussing on wastewater treatment, preparation of Detailed Project Report and technical assistance to be provided by German international development firm GIZ. Another 120 million Euros worth of bilateral aid will focus on developing the Clean Ganga project in Uttarakhand, and priority tasks are being discussed, he said.

The joint secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) signed a loan agreement for the green corridor to pass through Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh with the German development bank KfW Bankengruppe.

According to an Indo-German joint statement on climate change and energy technology cooperation, implementation of the Green Energy Corridors Partnership with an overall German commitment of 1.15 billion Euros in the last two years is progressing well.

Both countries welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding on an Indo-German Solar Energy Partnership based on concessional loans in the range of 1 billion Euros over the next 5 years.

India and Germany have underlined that adaptation must be a central part of a balanced Paris Agreement. Both countries will Endeavour to continue their long-lasting cooperation in integrating adaptation into national and state development planning and action.

**MERKEL PLEDGES 1 BILLION EUROS FOR SOLAR ENERGY**

NEW DELHI: As many as 18 MoUs and letters of intent and a new German assistance package for over 1 billion euros for solar projects in India - taking overall commitments to more than 2 billion Euros - were sealed during inter-governmental consultations led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chancellor Angela Merkel here on Monday.

The third India-Germany inter-governmental consultations saw Modi describing Germany as a 'natural partner' for India's economic transformation and said clean energy and climate change are areas witnessing a high level of convergence and growing cooperation.

Merkel's visit also provided a leg up to EU-India ties with both leaders committing themselves to restarting talks for the stalled FTA while MoUs signed spanned education, railways, security, food safety, skill development and manufacturing reflecting the depth of the India-Germany strategic relationship and the importance Modi and the Chancellor accord to bilateral relations.

Elaborating on climate change, Modi said, "We look forward to a concrete outcome at COP21 in Paris that strengthens the commitment and the ability of the world, especially of poor and vulnerable countries, to transition to a more sustainable growth path." Foreign secretary S Jaishankar said Germany welcomed India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) submitted to the UN last week.

MoUs were signed on security, including one on aviation security, which will see the use of sky marshals. India agreed to fast-track investments by setting up a special facility for German companies with the Indian side promising a "single-point clearance" by March 2016. They also discussed cooperation in defense manufacturing using Modi's 'Make in India' initiative.

Another important takeaway came in the form of Modi and Merkel underlining their "strong commitment" to the EU-India Broad-Based Trade and Investment Agreement (FTA) and committing to bringing about a resumption of negotiations as soon as possible. The negotiations for EU-India FTA have remained stalled with India expressing concern over issues like data security and EU seeking to place restrictions on sale of over 700 Indian drugs.

While Merkel pressed for an early resumption of FTA talks, Jaishankar said that PM conveyed India's concerns to Merkel over pharmaceuticals and told her that it was important that the regulators took the right decision in that regard.

"German response to our development agenda is very encouraging. We can look forward with confidence to increased investment, trade and technology partnerships in manufacturing, infrastructure and skill development," said Modi. While the focus has always been on economic ties between the countries, they also signed a broad based MoU on security which will see the two countries actively working together to thwart terror recruitment, financing and propaganda.

The two leaders discussed the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan and West Asia, apart from maritime security in Indian Ocean. Merkel spoke about Europe's refugee crisis and also the situation in Ukraine.

Taking off from their recent G-4 meeting in New York over UNSC reforms, both leaders reaffirmed the urgent need for comprehensive reform of the Security Council, especially its expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories. "Recalling the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, the leaders committed themselves to an early reform of the Security Council. Both sides stressed the outcome of the meeting of the G4 in New York on September 26th and agreed to intensify efforts to realize concrete results in the 70th anniversary year of the United Nations," said a joint statement issued by the two countries.

While India denied Merkel had specifically taken up the issue of human rights in India, the joint statement said both leaders underlined their commitment to the ``protection of human rights and democratic values".

Germany welcomed India's intensified engagement with the various export control regimes - The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. Both sides agreed to continue to work together for India's accession to the regimes as a full member and thereby strengthen global non-proliferation efforts. They also took "positive note" of the resumption of negotiations for amending the existing Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement including the Article on Exchange of Information to enhance the elimination of double taxation and to foster financial transparency.

**LEGAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME**

Peace Trust – Young Workers programme has conducted the “Legal Awareness Programme” in Vedasandur along with Vedasandur Law Association and Panchayat Board. Field Manager Mr. Santham, has welcomed all the participants. Mr. T. Deiveegaraj, Lawyer Association’s President has headed the meeting. Peace Trust–Young Worker’s Programme Manager Mr. A. Sreenivasan, Mr. M. Jayamani, Head Master, Panchayat Union Primary School members have participated in the meeting. Mr. V. Kalidas, Ward member has delivered his felicitation address.

While Mr. T. Deiveegaraj, Lawyer Association’s President and Mr. .R. Ramadoss delivered their speech they mentioned about how to get the old age pensions, free schemes, how to register and receive the ration card and how to prepare a petition and to approach the government etc. It was useful for the young workers, teachers, and field coordinators who all participated in the programme. Mrs. Pavithra, Field Coordinator has delivered the vote of thanks.

Peace Trust – young Workers Programme has conducted “Regional Nutrition Week Programme” in Nallamannarkottai, Dindigul on 07th September, 2015 for the young adolescent girls. Integrated Child Development Officer Mrs. Muthu Meena has headed the meeting. Mrs. Paapathi and Mrs. Esther have supervised the meeting. Mr. Aadhimulam has trained about the nutrition points in the meeting. Mrs. Esther has welcomed all the participants and the young adolescent girls to the Regional Nutrition Week Programme. Mrs. Krishnaveni, CNI has greeted everyone who has organized the programme and she has explained the programme’s importance.

Mrs. Paapathi, Child Development Manager has instructed about the nutrition foods and advised the children to take green vegetables and has also explained about its importance when we take it. Mr. Aadhimulam, Nutrition Trainer has briefly explained about the nutrition foods such as millets, grains, vegetables, greeneries, fruits, milk, fish and egg etc. He explained what type of the vitamin and protein are present in the particular vegetable and fruits to the adolescent girls.

Mrs. Muthu Meena, Children Development Officer has explained in what basis food should be taken. She advised the participants that they should not skip any of the food items or vegetables etc. Mr. Srinivasan, Program Manager, Young Workers Project, has explained about the self protection, livelihood development, self employment and Skill Training have been implemented through Peace Trust. He also briefly explained about the Programme’s activity, purpose to the young adolescent girls. The Angawadi workers insisted about the Nutrition food and its benefits to the participants through cultural activities such as Bharathanaatiyam, Villupaatu etc. Mrs. Esther has delivered vote of thanks.

**LAW AWARENESS PROGRAMME**

A family welfare related Law awareness Programme for students was conducted in Peace College of Education on 25th September, 2015. This camp started at 2.30 pm on 25th September in Peace College’s multipurpose hall. The programme started with Tamilthaivalthu. Mr.D.Devadayan Principal In-charge of Peace College of Education has delivered welcome address. Mrs. R.Sathiyathara Head Judge for Round legal Tasks Group, Vedasanthur has given the presidential address about the “Well Planned Family Programme, Child Care and their Rights”. Mrs. K.R. Pathmabala, Judge, Dindigul district has spoken about Workers Problem Importance of Birth and Death Certificate.

Mr. Chandrasekhar, Secretary, Lawyers Association Vedasanthur has given the special lecture about the “Job Arrangements and the Role of Information Gathering Act” to the students. Students has listen his special lecture interestingly.

Mr. K. Jabarullakhan, Treasurer, Lawyers Association, Vedasanthur has given the special lecture about the “Property rights”. Dr. J. Paul Baskar, Chairman, Peace trust has delivered the special lecture about the “Importance of Information gathering act and its present usages” to the students. Mrs. P. Mercy Baskar, Principal of Peace Private Industrial School has delivered a wonderful greetings’ for the participants.

Mr. A .Sreenivasan Project Manager, Young Workers Program, Peace Trust has delivered the vote of thanks. The programme ended with National Anthem.

**CRAFT EXPO- 2015**

The SPSC VEEF Department of Industrial Tailoring has a total of 28 students. The students during their training that commenced on July 09, 2015 had designed a lot of crafts, jewelery, art pieces and clothes. In order to evaluate their artistic work we conducted a CRAFT EXPO 2015 on October 01, 2015 from 2.30 to 3.30 pm at SPSC VEEF Campus.

The Expo was inaugurated by Ms. Ponni, Fashion Designer who was the Chief Guest. Mr. K. M. Sivakumar, Craft Designer, Karaikal was also invited for the function. They saw and appreciated about 100 exhibits made by our learners. During their speech they spoke highly about the quality of the products and this motivated our students a lot. The guests stressed on the point that our students are indeed very talented and creative in their approach. The products they had created spoke a lot about them and with some more training they would definitely become professionally sound. They promised to support VEEF for their trainings and marketing their products.

Our volunteers from Germany and Ms.Malathy from KKID also attended the program and spoke to the learners. They appreciated the innovativeness displayed by the students thereby motivating them to do well in the training. The guests were welcomed by the Principal Mr.Pushparaja and the Vote of thanks was given by the Instructor - Department of Tailoring Ms.S. Santhozhiya.

The credit of a successful Expo goes entirely to the students and all the members of the Tailoring Team.

**KKS VISIT TO VEEF**

Ms. Jeyalakshmi Monitoring officer- KKF and Ms. Antje Kania - Project Coordinator from KKS has visited to SPSC VEEF Project on 20-09-2015 and they reviewed the Project. They were welcomed by all staff and Instructors of VEEF. After the campus tour, they had preliminary discussion with Chairman Dr. J. Paul Baskar. Then the Review Meet commenced after the setting the agenda.

She interacted with trainees, visited hotels where our trainees are engaged with HR managers and trainees who do their internship at hotels like Clinton Park Inn, Vailankanni, Chandra Royal Inn, Vailankanni.

We got a positive feedback from the Project Coordinator Ms. Antje Kania

* Very motivated team, ready to support each other
* Financial system is in place, needs minor adjustments only
* Internships for catering trainees including stipend
* Support from Peace Trust Head quarters at Dindigul.
* Good rapport within the region

**CIVIL SOCIETY LEARNERY GROUP – “THE KEY”**

A meeting was conducted in Coimbatore on 26th, September, 2015, in which Dr. J. Paul Baskar, Peace Trust, Mr. Jayaseelan, Mr. Doss, POLE, and Mr. Selva Kumar, Jeevan Trust have participated. The NGOs discussed about the Climate Change, Organic Farming and Alternate Energy as key areas of intervention for 2016. The participating organizations have formed a study group named as “The Key”. It also invited resource person who is experienced in the NGO field for many years in which their input was very valuable.

The Key core team members Dr. J. Paul Baskar and Mr. Jayaseelan met again at Dindigul on 3rd October to further improve the scope of the forum and involve academicians, Community leaders various think tanks in understanding development concerns.

**MIGRANT WORKERS RIGHTS COALITION (MRC) LAUNCHED**

**COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS DAY**

The MRC which was launched to address the issues of migrant workers collectively organized a meeting to launch the same formally, coinciding with the commemoration of the International Decent Work Day on 07.10.2015 at ICSA Centre, Egmore, Chennai, with the aim of highlighting its objectives and sought the cooperation of the stakeholders in the success of MRC endeavors.

Around 200 migrant workers including 20 women from Migrant families attended the meeting besides 75 migrant/promigrants of whom 30 were returnees from various countries including Malaysia, Iraq, Qatar, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc.,

Mr. Ponkumar in his inaugural address while welcoming the gathering including MRC partners and Guest, explained the main purpose of the MRC. He mentioned that the issue of migration is diverse and complex that requires multi-pronged and collective interventions. The main aim of the MRC is to bring together trade unions and Civil Society organization working on the issue of migration to collectively address various challenges associated with it and uphold the rights of migrant workers.

He also briefed the efforts of TKTMS /MRC in repatriating the stranded migrant workers from various countries begin with Malaysia in 2008. He conveyed special thanks to all the stakeholders who have extended their support and sought their continued cooperation in the success of MRC endeavors.

The following persons were addressed in the meeting

**Partners of MRC**

Prof. Dr. Bernad D’samy, Director, Arunodhaya Migrant Initiatives, Chennai

Dr. J. Paul Baskar, Chairman, Peace Trust, Dindigul

Sis. Valarmathi, Coordinator, National Domestic Workers Movement, Chennai & Member of MFA

Mr.S.Sivasomasundaram, President, Meetpu Trust, Madurai

**Guest Speakers**

Mr. P.Srinivasan- Under Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Chennai Branch

Mr.K.Ramesh – Assistant Commissioner, Non Residents Tamils Welfare Board

Mr. John Paul- Migrant Resource Centre, Chennai

Mr.K. Alagesan- Ex. Secretary, TNCWWB

Mr.K.Gopal Reddy, Former Project Coordinator, BWI SA/PO

Dr.J. Paul Baskar, in his address pointed out that now a day, there is no difference between bonded labour and migrant workers. Once the workers were forced to work as bonded labour but now the workers without their knowledge trapped into the modern bonded system of migration. Further he also mentioned that the mentality of the workers is also one of the reasons for their sufferings.

Sis. Valarmathi, while narrating the plights of migrants she emphasized the need for separate ministry for migration in the state, ratification of ILO /UN conventions, amendments to the existing emigration act and the need for PD trainings.

Mr. S.Sivasomasundaram, briefed the meeting the efforts of Meetpu Trust in repatriating the stranded migrant workers from Malaysia and other countries and the difficulties involved in the process of repatriation. He praised Mr.Ponkumar who has been extending his support by receiving the migrant at the airport and making necessary arrangements for their local travel.

He conveyed special thanks to some of the embassy officials who extended their support in the repatriation of workers.

Prof.Dr.Bernad D’samy in his address briefed the findings of survey conducted by CDS in Tamil Nadu with the support of state government. The final report will be submitted to the government during December and based on its finding the MRC may finalise its strategies.

* There is a migrant for every 10 families roughly around 1.9 crores
* Around Rs. 55 thousand corers of foreign remittance
* The Tamil migrants are affecting since they are migration mostly depending on the agents (in Kerala the migration mostly on relation basis)
* In both Kerala and Tamil Nadu the rate of migration has been decreasing but the stock is remaining
* One of the reasons for the decrease is the nuclear families (one child) who does not like to send.

In general the partners of MRC in their addresses also expressed the following issues of migrants and requested the government to come to their rescue.

1. Exploitation by the Recruitment Agents/Sub-agents
2. Documents in foreign language (Destination country)
3. Migration on Visit Visas
4. Exploitation by the employers /contractors
5. Kafala system
6. Poor response by the Embassy
7. Lack of awareness among the workers about the destination country rules and regulation

Mr.P.Srinivasan while responding to some of the queries raised by the participants/partners he explained the role of Ministry of external affairs in protecting the migrant workers in both origin and destination country. If the affected make a complaint the ministry will take action against the agents and even suspend their license. The affected may complaint both in e-mail and in person. If any files a complaint they will be acknowledged with grievance Id no to see the status of the complaint. He furnished the details of website, email Id and contact numbers.

www.passportindia.gov.in

Email: usbs.chennai@mea.gov.in

Contact numbers: 044-28251323, 28272206

Mr. K. Ramesh while explaining the role of Non- Residents Tamils Welfare Board in assisting the migrants also pointed out the difficulties of embassies in the destination countries with shortage of staffs to attend the migrant issues. The delay may be avoided if the required the strength of staff will be appointed.

Further he also mentioned that sometime the delay would be because of insufficient / false information provided by the affected.

Mr. John Paul suggested the participants to approach MRC for guidance and furnished the contact details (email and phone number).

Mr. K. Alagesan suggested the participants to disseminate the message among the migrants and encourage them to join the unions to get their assistance for safe migration.

Mr. K. Gopal Reddy while appreciating the partners for establishing the MRC at right time, explained the dos’ and don’t on the part of migrants and urged them to leave a set of documents at home while leaving and also exhorted not to go on tourist visa.

The meeting suggests the following for safe migration

1. The government should make it mandatory the registration of migrants either at the Panchayat or revenue
2. The govt. should bring the subagents also under the surveillance of law.
3. Establishment of separate ministry for migrants in the state
4. Enactment of Emigration Management Act
5. The labour attaches in all the embassies in the destination countries should be made to function effectively by appointing required experience staffs.
6. The MRC shall meet all the political parties to make a request to include the migration issues in their respective political manifesto for the coming assembly election.

All the local media relayed the event on that day widely.





**THE ENDOWMENT LECTURE ON MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS BY
PEACE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**



***Dr. Irene Fernandez***

The Peace College of Education announced an Endowment Lecture named after Dr. Irene Fernandez for Trainee Teachers of TamilNadu on Migration and Human Rights which will be organized every year on December 10, the Human Rights Day. Dr. Irene Fernandez Endowment Lecture will be held at the campus of Peace College of Education at Dindigul.

Dr. Irene Fernandez, the Champion of Migrant Workers cause for decades and instrumental in helping hundreds of Indian Indonesian and Bangladesh workers who suffered in Malaysia.

Dr. Irene Fernandez was a Malaysian campaigner for the rights of the poorest: migrant workers, farm workers, domestic workers, prostitutes and AIDS sufferers. She continued working, even when a conviction and year's prison sentence hung over her head on the trumped-up charge of "maliciously publishing false news".

Irene Fernandez was born in Malaysia in 1946 and had three children and several foster children. She began her career as a high school teacher. She also focused on the development of women leaders in the labour movement. In 1976, she joined the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) and worked on consumer education, launching the consumer clubs for secondary school children to teach them about basic needs, safety and protection of the environment. She also began a consumer programme for rural women, linked to a breast-feeding campaign and the Nestlé boycott.

In 1986, she led campaigns to stop violence against women. Various women's groups mushroomed as a result of these campaigns. She was the chair of the Pesticide Action Network, working for the elimination of pesticides and developing sustainable agriculture, which led to campaigns on health, against GMOs, and taking back control of seeds.

In 1991, Fernandez also founded the Tenaganita organization in Kuala Lumpur. The organization campaigns for the rights of foreign workers, up to three million of who are in Malaysia. Foreign workers have been lured into the country, as a deliberate policy of the Malaysian government and have played a critical role in the country's recent economic success, but many now find themselves suffering the most appalling abuses and are detained in camps as undesirables.

Despite harassment and intimidation Fernandez courageously refused to limit her work or blunt her message, even when the prison term hung over her head. She never used or advocated violence and always worked in an open and legal way.

She passed away on March 31, 2014 at the age of 67.