

TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

SUNDAY

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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	25.0	6.4
JAMMU	33.6	17.5
LEH	10.7	6.9
KARGIL	19.0	3.9

SUNSET SUNDAY: 05:52 PM
SUNRISE MONDAY: 06:45 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
 Partly Cloudy Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 25°C & 06°C respectively.

RNI NO: JKENG/2015/62397 • PRICE RS.3/- (AIR SURCHARGE FOR DELHI, JAMMU & LADAKH 50/- PAISA)

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Kashmir shuts against braid chopping incidents

RESTRICTIONS IN OLD SRINAGAR CITY CRIPPLE LIFE

Srinagar, Oct 21: Life was paralyzed across Kashmir due to separatist leadership sponsored shutdown call against unabated mysterious braid chopping incidents.

Authorities had imposed restrictions in parts of Srinagar city to stop possible protests while shops and business establishments remained shut across Valley.

"Restrictions had been imposed in areas falling under the jurisdiction of Nowhatta, M.R. Gunj, Rainawari, Khanyar, Safa Kadal, Maisuma and Kralkhud police stations of old Srinagar city," said a police official.

Reports said that large number of government forces personnel had been deployed in restive parts of Srinagar city to maintain law and order. Concertina wires had been laid at different intersections to restrict the movement of the people.

The Joint Resistance Leadership led by Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin had called for 'civil curfew' on Saturday



against braid chopping incidents. In wake of people thrashing suspects these leaders have appealed to people to hand them to Masjid Committees and not to deal with them directly.

The separatists have blamed the police for its failure to nabbing the culprits.

Reports said that complete shutdown was observed in all the districts and town of Kashmir Valley.

All exams scheduled for Saturday had been postponed by the University of Kashmir.

There have been over 120 reports of braid chopping in the Kashmir Val-

ley in the last two months, with mobs beating up strangers, tourists and even Army men in plainclothes and militants on suspicion of being braid choppers.

Train service was suspended for "security reasons" in wake of shutdown. "We have suspended all trains in the valley for security reasons," a senior railway official said.

According to him, an advisory had been received from police to suspend all trains on Saturday.

Therefore, he said, no train can chug on Srinagar-Budgam to Baramulla and similarly no train will run on Srinagar-Anantnag-Qazigund to Banihal, he added.

Meanwhile, a fresh braid chopping incident sparked protest in North Kashmir's Bandipora district. Reports said that braid of a 35-year-old woman was chopped off in Nowpora locality of the district.

They said that some unknown person attacked the woman

▶ See **Shuts...** Pg 02

Kashmir situation is improving, says Army Chief

JAMMU: Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat on Saturday said that situation in the Kashmir valley is improving and the Army is performing its task.

"Security situation in Kashmir Valley is improving and whatever is happening now in the valley is possibly highlighting the frustration of the terrorists and those supporting them," Gen Rawat here told reporters after Standard Presentation ceremony.

He said that in Kashmir we are following the government approach and NIA raids was a part of that.

"When whole of the Government is involved then every section of the machinery gets involved," said the Army Chief and added that whatever the success NIA raids have achieved will emerge in the near future.

On braid chopping incidents, Gen Rawat said, "why you see it as challenge for the Army. It is a routine matter and happened in other parts of the country also."

"Police and administration are taking appropriate actions and media has a role to play in exposing the separatists and other agencies misleading people on braid chopping incidents," said the General.

On training camps across the Line of Control, he said, "the camps are very much intact and terrorists are active."

"Surgical strike was one of the mediums to eliminate the terrorists. There are many



other ways too and required actions are being taken," the Army Chief said.

On Uri and Nagrota attacks probe, the General said, "appropriate action is being taken. Guilty is being punished and nobody is spared."

On introducing 72 Infantry Div to prevent Dokhlam like situation in Ladakh region, he said, "72 Inf Div is a part of 17 Corps and its raising is going on as scheduled. It is being raised as force of deterrent."

The Army Chief however, on radicalisation said that it is a worldwide phenomenon and being taken seriously.

▶ See **Chief...** Pg 02

MASSIVE BLAZE CONVERTS GUREZ'S HALF VILLAGE INTO ASHES

Dozens of families rendered homeless

Srinagar, Oct 21: The massive blaze that engulfed in Kilshey village of Gurez area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district converted nearly half of the village into ashes after almost 68 structures were caught in fire in the wee hours of Saturday morning.

From school to the Masjid including residential houses as well as the cowsheds were converted into the ashes today after the structures were caught in a devastating fire in the village.

The reasons behind the fire incident is being ascertained, officials informed KNS.

The blaze as per the officials gutted sixty-eight

▶ See **Massive...** Pg 02

PDP BJP government has failed on all fronts: NC

Protests against government's failure in containing braid chopping incidents

Srinagar, Oct 21: National Conference on Saturday took out a massive protest rally against the PDP BJP government's continuous failures in catching the culprits behind braid chopping incidents.

The protest rally led by party general Secretary Haji Ali Mohammad Sagar marched out from party headquarters Nawa-e-Subah today. The



rally was intercepted by police near SK Park and was not al-

lowed to move towards city center Lal Chowk.

Addressing the workers the General Secretary said, "The government is in complete knowhow of who the real culprits are but still they continue to maintain silence on this conspiracy. Its they who have to ensure protection of our mothers, sisters and daughters but they have

▶ See **NC...** Pg 02

MISTAKEN AS BRAID CHOPPERS HAIR VIGILANTES THRASH HIZB MILITANTS

Pulwama, Oct 21: At a time when hair vigilantes are manhandling braid chopping suspects in different parts of Valley, the locals in South Kashmir's Pulwama village reportedly thrashed a group of Hizbul Mujahadeen militants on Friday night.

Locals from Thokarpura village, barely 7 kilometers away from Pulwama district told news agency CNS that a group of three Hizb militants were passing through the village, when hair vigilantes stopped and questioned them.

"As the vigilantes equipped with sticks, iron rods and spades found the trio armed, they thrashed them mercilessly even though one of them was repeatedly telling them that he is Hizb militant Sameer Tiger," said an eyewitness.

▶ See **Mistaken...** Pg 02

People shouldn't take law and order into their hands: G A Mir

Says some agency behind braid chopping incidents

Srinagar, Oct 21: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief, G A Mir on Saturday appealed people to don't take law and order into your hands. "Thrashing and beating of innocents is giving bad impression to the people," he said.

He also rued the Police claims wherein they had said that the victims and their families are not cooperating properly.

"The people shouldn't take law and order into their hands. Any suspicious person should be handed over to Police so that they can investigate his involvement properly," he said, adding that it gives a bad impression to the



public when the people take law and order into their hands.

▶ See **Mir...** Pg 02

Braid Chopping: RADICAL ELEMENTS WANT TO CREATE ANIMOSITY BETWEEN POLICE AND PEOPLE: SSP

Srinagar, Oct 21: Even though police have declared a reward of Rs 6 lakhs for providing credible information about braid choppers, the North Kashmir's Baramulla district police chief Mir Imtiyaz Hussain has been categorically linking braid chopping incidents to mass hysteria.

The police officer is very active on social media and has been asking people to stop looking for any braid chopper as there according to him is none.

In one of this facebook posts that he has written in bold letters to give thrust on his message to people,

▶ See **SSP...** Pg 02

Groups comprising of ministers fail to come up with suggestions

'During 18 months, they did not hold deliberations'

Srinagar, Oct 21: Several groups comprising of ministers have failed to come up with suggestion since their formation.

Since April 2016, when the PDP-BJP formed government headed by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, several groups comprising of ministers have been constituted. These groups were framed on directions of the cabinet.

However, most of the groups have failed to come up with suggestions for which they were constituted.

The state cabinet in April 2016 issued directives for constitution of groups of ministers on Infrastructure Development, Economic



Government of Jammu & Kashmir Affairs and on Human Resource and Skill Development for which the General

▶ See **Groups...** Pg 02

FOUR INJURED IN CLASHES DURING CASO IN PULWAMA VILLAGE

Pulwama, Oct 21: At least four persons were injured after protesters clashed with government forces in Monghama village of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Reports said that government forces comprising Army from 55 Rashtriya Rifles, 182 and 183 Battalions of CRPF and SOG of Jammu Kashmir

▶ See **CASO...** Pg 02

Braid Chopping: 18 arrested on charges of assault on Army men: Police

Baramulla, Oct 21: On October 18, 2017 Police Station Sheeri received information that a violent unruly mob has caught hold of three Territorial Army men assaulting them mercilessly with an intention to kill them.

Thereafter Police Party from Police Station Sheeri rushed to the spot and after strenuous efforts rescued the Army men in injured condition who were given immediate medical treatment.

A case FIR No. 48 of 2017



under sections of 307, 148, 149 RPC was registered in Police Station Sheeri. During investigation, it

▶ See **Police...** Pg 02

Adopt compassionate, people friendly approach: Veeri to JKP

Srinagar, Oct 21: Minister for Revenue, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Abdul Rehman Veeri today asked the Jammu and Kashmir police to adopt a with humanitarian approach while dealing with people.

The Minister was the chief guest on the Police Commemoration Day Parade function at J&K Armed Police Complex Zewan here.

The function was attended by Minister of State for Forest, Ecology, Environment,



Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Cooperative and Fisheries, Mir Zahoor, Minister of State for Hajj & Auqaf (Independent charge), Syed Farooq An-

drabi, Deputy Speaker Nazir Ahmed Khan (Gurezi), former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Chief Secretary B B Vyas, Director General Police Dr S P Vaid, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Baseer Ahmed Khan and other senior officers of police and civil administration.

The Minister urged the police to become role models by demonstrating a humane approach towards the people.

He lauded the role of

▶ See **Veeri...** Pg 02

ARMY PORTER KILLED IN CROSS BORDER FIRING

Baramulla, Oct 21: An army porter was killed as the armies of India and Pakistan on Saturday traded fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Uri area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Reports said that the firing took place in Kamalkote area of Uri.

A porter working with the army was injured in the firing. His identity was not immediately known.

He was shifted to a

▶ See **Porter...** Pg 02

DIPR, CTD ORGANIZE SPECIAL GST WORKSHOP FOR NEWSPAPER MANagements

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Department of Information and Public Relations in collaboration with the Commercial Taxes Department (CTD) Kashmir today organized a special familiarization session on Goods and Services Tax (GST) for newspaper managements at the Media Complex here.

Director Information, Muneer-ul-Islam, Joint Director (HQ), Abdul Majid Zargar, Joint Director Information Kashmir, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, officers of CTD and representatives of various media organizations were present on the occasion.

Team of officers from the Commercial Taxes Department comprising Dr Bashir Ahmad and Sarib Seh-



ran, Commercial Taxes Officers gave a detailed presentation on various dimensions of Goods and Services Tax and held an interactive session with the representatives from the newspapers regarding settlement of advertisement bills and import of newsprint under GST regime.

The session was held to generate

awareness about various aspects of GST including registration, tax structure, filing of monthly, quarterly returns and penalties in case of default by the newspapers.

The session was designed to address the queries and doubts of newspaper owners and Drawing and Disbursing Officers of the department

with regard to different provisions of GST Act.

The newspaper managements hailed DIPR and CTD for organizing the exhaustive session regarding GST.

Pertinently, last month a similar interactive session was organized by DIPR for the newspaper managements in Jammu.

NATIONAL POLICE DAY COMMEMORATED IN KARGIL

KARGIL, OCTOBER 10: Like other parts of the country, National Police Day was today commemorated by District Police Kargil to pay tributes to their fallen comrades.

Executive Councillor LA-HDC Mohammad Ameer, Principal District and Session Judge RK Bhagat, Deputy Commissioner Kargil Gulzar Hussain, CO 22 Jatt, JS Gill, retired DIG and former MP G.H.Khan, Dy.SP HQ Kargil, Dy.SP DAR besides district police and army officers along with prominent citizens and retired police personnel were also present on the occasion.

Additional SSP Kargil, Arun Gupta in his address



, an impressive roll of honour was presented by the District Police Contingent which was followed by wreath laying ceremony by the visiting dignitaries and police officers. The staff and students of Police Public School Kar-

spoke about the history of valour and sacrifice of the Police forces especially J&K Police and also read out the names of the martyrs of all the State Police forces along with paramilitary forces who laid their lives in the line of duty.

gill also laid wreath at the martyrs' memorial.

Mother of martyr Constable Zulfkar Ali was also present during the occasion, who was presented a gift as a token of honour by District Police Kargil in presence of the dignitaries.

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SHUTS

(name withheld) near main gate of her house, making her unconscious and left after chopping her hair.

"She was going to unlock the main gate of the house around 6:30 am when she was attacked by an unknown person. After chopping her hair, the person fled. He also stole her golden earring," they said.

At Ahmednagar locality in the outskirts of Srinagar city, the braid of a woman was chopped off by miscreants, triggering protests. The protesting locals demanded the immediate arrest of braid choppers.

Cooperating with police the locals in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district handed over at least six suspects who were roaming in suspicious manner to police.

The incident occurred in Repora village of Ganderbal district.

"It is quite appreciable that locals handed over these men to us without taking law into their own hands. During investigation it revealed that accused hail from Sadarkote Bala of Bandipora district. One among these six friends had arrived in the area to meet on the local friend," he said adding that they were not braid choppers.

Hair of over 100 women and young girls has been mysteriously chopped off across the Valley during past month.

These girls and women have told their families and police that unknown persons cut their hair after knocking them unconscious with some spray.

The police have formed Special Investigation Teams to probe the incidents. However, so far the police and the authorities have been clueless.

The police have announced a reward of Rs six lakh for credible information leading to arrest of any person behind braid chopping incidents. So far, no arrests have been made.

At several places, vigilante mobs have thrashed innocents mistaking them for braid choppers.

The growing incidents have forced people to form local committees in every locality who remain awake throughout the night to ensure no braid cutting incident occurs.

These incidents have already created fear psychosis across Kashmir with fear gripping the women folk who find it very difficult to venture out of their homes.

CHIEF

On Pak Army Chief's recent statement that Pakistan wants good relations with India, the General said, "military has a task and we will continue to perform our task. Decision on any talks has to be decided politically."

Meanwhile, on Operation Sadbhavana, Gen Rawat said, "winning hearts and minds is a part of any counter insurgency strategy. Success has been achieved under Op Sadbhavana. Many people are supporting the Army."

"As far as terrorism is concerned, it has ups and downs. Some wayward, radicalised youths are joining but many are coming over ground and surrendering," he asserted.

Earlier the General showered all praise on 47 Armoured Regiment on Standard Presentation ceremony and patted them for their valour and courage they showed in every field.

MASSIVE

structures including 35 residential houses, 10 non residential houses, 10 cowsheds, one Masjid, Government School and ICDS Office building.

The massive fire has rendered dozens of families homeless. "Fire broke out in the wee hours today from a residential house in the village. Within no time, the fire engulfed whole Kilshey village," officials said, adding that the intensity of the blaze was such that it gutted 68 structures in a short span.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Sajad Hussain said that the fire was brought under control and no injury or loss of life was reported during the incident.

He said that the fire tenders from district Headquarter rushed to the spot immediately to douse off the fire in the wee hours.

Hussain informed KNS that the reason of fire is being ascertained while the administration has reached the spot in early morning today.

NC

failed miserably to ensure their protection. They are only interested in clinging to their chairs which has been their primary goal ever since they came into power."

Reminding CM Mehbooba Mufti of the explosive situation Kashmir is in the general secretary said, "It's not only our party which is on roads all over the valley but others too have joined the movement of reminding this government of its primary responsibility which is to protect the lives and dignity of its people. Every right thinking individual whether it's the civil society, mainstream opposition leaders or the religious leaders all have spoken against governments inability to tackle such the continuous spree of braid chopping incidents," adding, "Still nothing concrete has been achieved by the government so far even after 100 incidents of braid chopping. We have been on the forefront of reminding this government but they seem to be on a mute mode."

Senior party functionaries including Vice President Chow-

dhary Mohammad Ramzan, Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani, Treasurer Shammi Oberoi, North Zone President Adv Mohammad Akbar Lone, MLA Iddgah Mubarak Gul, MLC Ali Mohammad Dar, MLA Homshalibugh Ab Majeed Bhat (Larmi), MLC Showkat Ganaie, Provincial Secretary Showkat Ah Mir, District President Srinagar Peer Afaq Ahmad, Provincial Vice President Mohammad Syed Akhooon, Sardar Jagdish Singh Azad, Tanvir Sadiq, Irfan Shah, GR Naz, Dr M Shafi, Haji G M Dar, G N Bhat, YNC Provincial President Salman Ali Sagar, Provincial President Women's Wing Shameema Firdous, Younus Gul, Ahsan Pardesi, Mushtaq Guroo, Mudassar Shahmiri, Sameer Iqbal Bhat, Sabiya Qadri and others.

"Being the mother of two daughters, it's really shocking how Mehbooba Mufti continues to ignore the pains and agony of our women folk. She has completely given in to the elements who have wrecked havoc in our society and has so far failed to take necessary measures to contain this explosive situation which has reached to such crescendo that male members are not leaving their homes anymore fearing for the safety of their family members who have been left at the mercy of god in this government," the leaders said.

Carrying play-cards, NC workers demanded that the government intervene into incidences of braid chopping and immediately bring culprits to book. "This government has proven to be a complete failure on every front and has no right to remain in power."

The protesters also shouted slogans against what they called "glaring confusion within the different ranks of the government machinery where on one hand police is calling the incidents as mass hysteria while the women's commissions is saying something else. "It's time for them to sort out the confusion and do real work on ground rather than confining themselves to issuing rhetoric statements," the statement adds.

MISTAKEN

them. Some of the vigilantes even tried to snatch weapons from them, which they resisted. The agitated locals were labeling them as braid choppers," said the villagers witness to the account.

According to them, the trio managed to escape from the spot after their two more associates appeared there and fired at least 8 rounds in air. "The aerial firing created panic forcing the vigilantes to disperse from the spot," they said.

Locals said that government forces rushed to the village after the incident and cordoned off the hamlet, however, no arrests were made as the militants had managed to leave the village.

A police official while confirming the incident said that five Hizbul Mujahadeen militants were passing through the village in two groups. "Three militants were thrashed by locals of Thokarpora village who mistook them as braid choppers while another group comprising two militants came to their rescue after resorting to aerial firing," he said.

MIR

Ruing the Police claims about the lack of cooperation by the victims and their families, Mir as per the KNS correspondent said, "Police is following the instructions of their bosses. They are doing what they are being instructed to do. How can we expect that a victim who is under shock can go to the Police Station to record her statement? Why don't the Police team meet the victim to record her statement at their homes?"

"I personally met a victim who is class 8th student. Three persons including two women as per the eye-witnesses have entered into her house in a broad daylight. The victim who is excellent in studies has struggled for at least 15 minutes but she has failed to save herself and the braid choppers chopped off her braid. Did they meet the victim," he questioned.

"Police is asking the womenfolk to cooperate with them. Is Police machinery very poor that they can't even meet the victims to record their statements, he questioned.

He also thanked media for playing their role in highlighting the braid chopping incidents. "I am thankful to media who visualized several cases through their cameras. The victim statements that came in media so far indicated that some agency is behind the braid chopping incidents," he said.

SSP

Mir writes: "There are no braid choppers that you are looking for. It's a mental health issue. Please don't kill anybody."

As the word about alleged braid choppers using spray to knock down victims unconscious spread across Valley, the District Police Chief took to facebook seeking help from scientist and doctors requesting them to name the strange spray being used by these braid choppers. He wrote: We want to know the name of spray or chemical that makes a person unconscious instantly and helps to regain the consciousness within two minutes-the time that's taken by the criminal to chop the braid and afterward the victim raises the alarm. This spray/chemical has no smell, odour and is colourless and invisible. Doctors haven't been able so far to find any trace of it on any victim's face or body. Will anyone please help to ascertain the nature of this chemical? Any doctors or scientists here to help please?"

To make his point and to relate braid chopping incidents to mass hysteria, Mir Imtiyaz Hussain again wrote: "Three decades of armed violence have taken a severe psychological toll on Kashmir. According to a 2015 report by Medicin Sans Frontiers, 93% of Kashmir's population has experienced or witnessed conflict-related trauma and 1.8 million, or 45%, of adults show significant symptoms of mental distress."

"Well, the madness will continue till we understand that Braid Chopping has something to do with our collective psyche. Many such victims of madness were rescued by police from the clutches of mad lynching mobs and then this sickening propaganda that they are saved for being linked to police or so called agencies.

Two shopkeepers of Gojwara who were rescued from mad crowd in Ishber Nishat are being labelled on Facebook as Army men from 55RR. Do we have any grain of shame left?"

In order to educate people, Mir writes: "Guys there are no Braid Choppers, you won't find any. Please educate your family, society, community and stop this madness now, stop attacking innocent people.

Pertinently, police not only declared a cash reward but also issued help line numbers to stop braid chopping incidents. Police have also constituted Special Investigation Teams to unfold the mystery. Even administration at district levels formed committees with the help of villagers to overcome this menace. While some claim it is mass hysteria, the Chairperson State Womens Commission Nayeema Ahmed Mehjoor says that the Commission can't give sweeping judgment that it is a mass hysteria.

When news agency CNS contacted SSP Barmulla Mir Imtiyaz Hussain, he was candid in his reaction and admitted that police announced a cash reward at an initial stage when it was clueless. "Sincerely speaking, that time when cash reward was declared, we were clueless. As the incidents started taking place on large scale and we started investigating them, we had only reason to believe that it is mass hysteria."

He said at least 12 braid chopping incidents occurred in his jurisdiction. Some occurred within the four walls of victims houses while one of the victims was already consulting a Psychiatrist. "We are looking at these incidents through various angles. So far we can say that those involved in such mayhem may have three objectives, number one, their motive is to disturb the peace in valley, number two, they want to create animosity between police and people and the last motive is to create fear-psychosis among women folk. There are some radical elements present in our society who don't want women should be given a free hand. They want to stop women from pursuing education and government and private jobs and this is right now happening. Women are scared to come out from their houses. Even our beloved mothers who used to fetch bread for us from bakers during wee hours have shunned this practice. One question that baffles us is the pro-Zakir Musa slogans that hair vigilantes raise after apprehending any suspect. Zakir represents radical elements and it gives credence to our investigation that braid chopping is the handiwork of those who want to suppress the women-folk," SSP Baramulla said.

Responding to a question, Mir said that J&K is the best police in crime detection across the world. "I am not talking about country but about world. Is it possible that there may be a braid chopper and we will not be able to apprehend him? Our investigations reveal that the victims have been doing it to seek attention. Some are suppressed while others have family problems," he said.

When asked what is the way out and how can these incident stop, SSP Barmulla said: "People must behave responsibly and should not give importance to these incidents. In Jammu, these incidents stopped as the media behaved sensibly there and stopped highlighting these incidents. The media in Kashmir too should stop giving weightage to these incidents. When there will be no publicity, there will no braid cutting incidents," he said.

GROUPS

Administration Department issued orders, accordingly. A six-member group headed by Minister Power Development Department was assigned the task of holding deliberations on the issue of infrastructural development. Minister for Public Works, Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment, Minister for Public Health Engineering and Irrigation and Flood Control and Minister of State for Transport are part of this group.

"During the last 18 months, the group did not hold deliberations on the issue of infrastructure development in the state," an official insisted not to be named told KNS.

The official said that there has been change in portfolios of some of the ministers' part of the group.

A six-member group headed by Minister for Health and Medical Education was framed of holding deliberations on human resource and skill development.

The Minister for Education, Minister for Finance, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Minister for Information Technology are members of the group.

Another group headed by Minister for Finance, while comprising of Minister of Industries and Commerce, Minister for Agriculture Production, Minister for Rural Development

Department and Minister for Tourism was assigned to look after the economic affairs.

"These groups met few times but did not do much for which they were constituted," the official said.

In May this year, a group headed by Deputy Chief Minister was constituted on the issue of illegal settlement of immigrants.

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Minister for Rural Development and Minister for Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Department are part of this group.

So far, this group did not come up with suggestions despite the government is considering of deporting Rohingyas outside India.

The state government has also constituted a group of seven ministers to examine the proposal regarding accord of administrative approval for execution of work for dredging and strengthening embankments of the Wular Lake.

Deputy Chief Minister is also heading a group constituted to examine and make recommendations in a time bound manner on the proposal for funding the pension of employees of J&K Industries Limited and J&K Handicrafts (S&E) Corporation in terms of the judgments of the Supreme Court and High Court.

A group was also constituted for ensuring effective implementation of BJP-PDP coalition 'Agenda of Alliance' in the state.

A minister, who is part of several groups, said that members of the groups do meet and would come up suggestions.

"It is not easy to come up suggestions immediately. It does take some time. But the members of groups are taking it the assignments seriously. All groups will complete their task for which they were constituted," he said.

CASO

Police cordoned off Monghama village after a tip off about the presence of militants in the village.

As the government forces conducted house to house search operation, locals in large number hit to roads and pelted stones on Forces.

The government forces retaliated with tear-smoke shells and pellets leaving at least 4 persons injured.

POLICE

to withdraw money from ATM in Sheeri market and get the search lights repaired.

They had boarded the passenger vehicle at Kitchama and from the same spot a notorious stone pelted Qaiser Bilal Bhat son of Bilal Ahmad Bhat resident of Zoogiyar also boarded the same passenger bus.

The said person hatched a conspiracy to get Army men killed by falsely accusing them as braid choppers.

He raised hue and cry near Sheeri Market, and got a violent mob assembled who attacked the Army men.

Police has so far arrested 18 accused including the main conspirators in the case and recovered looted cash, ATM cards and mobile phones from them.

Police has also learnt during investigation of these so called braid chopping cases that some elements are raising false alarms to achieve three objectives-disturb peace and order of the Valley-to create animosity between people and security forces especially J&K Police-to create an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty for force women folk to get confined in their homes, so that radical religious agenda of these elements is realized. They raise Zakir Moosa slogans to make their intentions public.

People are requested not to pay heed to any rumours and help Police to create conducive and peaceful atmosphere and give confidence to our women to overcome the fear psychosis.

VEERI

Police in reaching out to people in any eventuality. He reminded the role of Police Personnel in Disaster Management and said that rescue operations carried out by JKP during 2014 floods were appreciated by one and all.

Veer said the synergy between Police and Civil Administration has been exemplary in smooth functioning of administration for betterment of public.

He also said that the Police has multi dimensional role and should be prepared and trained for the varied challenges.

Revenue Minister also said the Government is taking all the measures for the welfare of the police personal.

DGP Dr Vaid in his speech congratulated the pass-outs while thanking the Minister for attending the event as the 'Chief Guest'. He said J&K Police is always ready to meet any challenge and has trained its Personnel keeping in view present and future needs.

He thanked the Government for its sensitiveness to the needs of Police Personal and thanked the Government for hike in enhancement of ex-gratia relief from 7 lakh to 20 lakh in favour of Martyred police personal, creation of Jammu and Kashmir Police Service Cadre and also the increase in Selection Grade Constable quota from 25% to 50%.

PORTER

hospital for treatment. "He succumbed to his injuries," said an official.

Zulfkar reviews implementation of Kupwara DDB decisions

'Ensure completion of dev projects within stipulated timeframe'

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 20: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, and Information, Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today chaired a meeting here at SKICC to review progress on various decisions taken during last District Development Board Kupwara meeting.

The meeting resolved to pursue timely funding for various projects for infrastructural up-gradation, capacity building and beautification works in the district for their time bound completion.

The meeting was informed that out of total approved Rs 21924.79 lakh outlay for current fiscal as many as Rs 6158.32 lakh have been spent so far on various developmental projects. Giving the break up about the expenditures incurred under various sectors, it was revealed that under rural developmental sector by September this year 3741.91 lakh were spent against total of Rs 7078 lakh under MGN-REGA (SGRY) scheme, while under IAY (PMAY) out of approved Rs 1419.81 lakh as many as Rs 705.50 lakh have been spent, so far. Likewise, under Irrigation and PHE under minor irrigation Rs 222.15 lakh have been spent out of approved Rs 1309.86 lakh.

The meeting informed that out of



36 decisions taken in the previous meeting held in March this year, 21 were implemented and the rest are nearing their completion.

Expressing his contentment over the work carried out so far, Zulfkar Ali said most of the decisions taken in last Board meeting have been implemented. He said the present dispensation is committed to its resolve of addressing the issues pertaining to people living in remote areas.

The Minister said that decisions taken by the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti during her recent visit to the area assured complete support from her office to ensure that work on all the developmental projects goes on unabated and gets completed in time bound manner. He impressed upon the concerned officers to ensure that the commitments made by the CM should be fulfilled without any

ado. Member of Parliament, Mir Fayaz Ahmad, Legislators Engineer Sheikh Abdul Rashid, Raja Manzoor Ahmad, Bashir Ahmad Dar, and Qaiser Jamsheed Lone, besides District Development Commissioner Khalid Jahangir, District and Sectoral officers were also present in the meeting.

During the meeting, Zulfkar Ali impressed upon the officers to redouble their efforts for development of the district. He said good governance should be the benchmark of any government, and implementation and completion of projects within given time frame depicts it.

He directed the officers to personally monitor the progress of all ongoing projects and developmental activities. He said the personally monitoring by officers will not only help in maintaining the quality of work,

but would also help in ensuring that all the projects get completed within stipulated time.

Reiterating the Government's resolve of ensuring accountability, Zulfkar Ali said accountability holds key for the efficient public delivery system. The Minister stressed on timely completion of all developmental projects so that their benefit percolates to the grass root level.

Highlighting the importance of the board meeting, Zulfkar Ali said that Board is a very sacred institution and it is important to maintain its sanctity by ensuring all the decisions taken here are implemented in letter and spirit.

On the occasion, the legislators projected various demands and issues concerning their respective constituencies and sought their early redressal.

Ganga calls for timely completion of projects

Reviews physical, financial achievements under various schemes

JAMMU, OCTOBER 21: Minister for Industries and Commerce Chander Prakash Ganga today reviewed the physical and financial progress of centrally sponsored schemes and works being executed by J&K SICOP under Prime Minister's Development Package.

Commissioner/Secretary Industries and Commerce Department Shailendra Kumar, officers of Directorate of Handicrafts, Handlooms, Geology and Mining, JKEDI, SIDCO, SICOP, JK Minerals, JK Cements Pvt Ltd, Khadi and Village Industries Board, Handloom Development Corporation, Handicrafts Development Corporation and other concerned departments were present in the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the progress of works including reconstruction/repairs of damages to DIC building at Anantnag CFC Sether and Leather Centre at Exhibition Ground, upgrading of Industrial Estates in Anantnag, Anchidora, Bijbehara, Pulwama and Zakura. The Minister was informed that the works on IID Centre Udhampur Phase-I and Phase-II including IID Centre Govindsar Kathua stands completed.

It was also informed in the meeting that the upgrading works of Kashmir Government Arts Emporium, restoration of damaged infrastructural works of Guest house at Kashmir Hatt in Srinagar, Crafts Community Centre at Ikhrapora and Crafts Community Centre at Saidakadal have been completed.



The Minister also took stock of restoration of road network, side and cross drainage, water supply, fire-fighting and electric system at E/C, Rangreth, I/E Khunmoh, I/E Shalteng, IGC Lassipora, Head Office Rambagh, I/C Bari Brahmana, IGC Samba, I/E Ghatti in Kathua and I/E Govindsar in Kathua. The Minister directed the officers to work day in and day out for completion of these projects within the fixed timelines and called for maintaining strict quality standards.

Minister conducted thorough review of development of I/E Ghatti, upgrading of infrastructure facilities at IID centre Battal Ballian in Udhampur, I/E Bari Brahmana, I/E Khunmoh Phase I and II, Electronics Complex Rangreth and construction of Mega Leather Cluster, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Modern Carpet Looms, National Mission on Food Processing and progress under Integrated Skill Development Scheme.

Asiea for scientific approach in conservation of Dal, Nageen Lakes

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Minister of State for Housing & Urban Development, Asiea Naqash, today stressed on adopting scientific approach in conservation of Dal, Nageen Lake here.

During the meeting, the Minister discussed ways of adopting scientific methods in preserving the lakes.

While discussing action plan on the decisions of Scientific Advisory Committee, the Minister said that steps should be properly implemented to preserve the water body.

She said that artificial water bodies and retention ponds, which is an important component of the project, should be created and upgraded to entrap the nutrients in lake only.

The Minister also said that



the modern techniques should be employed for vegetation mapping in lake, besides employing the mechanical devices and enough manpower for cleaning of lake.

Naqash said the plan for conservation of lake should be upgraded and augmented from time to time following the guidelines of Scientific Advisory Committee.

She also said that biological solutions should be looked into to make these lakes flourishing again.

The Minister also reviewed the progress of Brarinambal lagoon and asked the officials to carry out the dredging of lagoons and feeding channel.

The Minister also reviewed the progress of expansion of Western Foreshore and the four laning of Boulevard besides rehabilitation of people living in flood prone areas.

The officials apprised the Minister about various components and progress of action plan and was informed that

Rs 49 crore Western Foreshore project has been submitted to the concerned quarters.

The officials said that this project is a need of the hour and will help in decongestion of the traffic in the city.

The meeting was attended by Vice-Chairman LAWDA, Dr.A.H Shah, Director Finance, Housing and Urban Development, Shaheen Mohammad Ashraf, Secretary LAWDA, Collector LAWDA, S.E.LAWDA, Executive Engineers and Scientists.

Altaf Bukhari inaugurates sports festival 'Khizaan-e-Gulmarg 2017'

Announces auditorium, reconstruction of Youth Hostel in Gulmarg

GULMARG, OCTOBER 21: With an aim to promote golf among the students, the Gulmarg Development Authority in collaboration with Directorate of School Education (Kashmir) today organized an education-sports festival "Khizaan-e-Gulmarg 2017" in Gulmarg.

The festival witnessed participation of around 150 students from government schools and professional golfers from across Kashmir and was inaugurated by Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, who was the chief guest on the occasion.

The day-long festival included various sports activities such as golf, cycling, marathon, painting competition, debate and motivational talks. Gandola ride for students was also organized on the occasion.

MLA Gulmarg, Mohamad



mad Abbas Wani, MLA Raifabad, Yawar Dilawar Mir, Former Minister Mohammad Dilawar Mir, Secretary School Education Farooq Ahmad Shah, DC Baramulla Dr Nasir Ahmad Naqash, Director School Education Kashmir, Dr G N Ito, Special Project Director RMSA, Tufail Mattoo, CEO Gulmarg, Syed Hanief Balkhi, Chairman Private Schools Association, GN Var, Chairman Mushtaq Group of Hotels, Mushtaq

Chaya, prominent businessman, Mohammad Shafi Trambo, professional golfers of Kashmir and officials from various departments were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Altaf Bukhari said that the festival is part of ongoing extracurricular activities being organized by Directorate of School Education aimed at overall development of students. He said various initiatives are underway to strengthen

the extracurricular activities in J&K.

The Minister said that the Department will organize a skiing training camp for the students this winter, adding that Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has approved 1.5 percent from CDF from each constituency to be utilized on educational tours.

Bukhari said the golf-coaching camp currently underway at Royal Springs Golf Course has been witnessing large participation of students from various schools. He said the best three students which will be adjudged during the camp will get free registration at the golf course, adding that students interested in golf will be provided free training by the Directorate of School Education. Bukhari said the dismantled Youth Hostel at Gulmarg will be reconstructed and announced.

NAI assures assistance to JK for archiving of rare records

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: National Archives of India has assured to extend financial assistance and expertise to Jammu and Kashmir for archiving of records including rare scriptures. The assurance was given by Deputy Director National Archives of India, Dr Tassaduq Hussain, during his visit to State Archives Repository.

On the request of Director Archives Archaeology and Museums J&K Government, Mohammad Shafi Zahid, the expert from NAI delivered a lecture wherein all the officers/officials were present. The speaker threw light on new techniques introduced in National Archives of India in the field of Archival Management, Appraisal of Records, Weeding out of Records, Digitization of Records (Preserving of Records through microfilming) etc.

Dr Tassaduq Hussain assured that National Museum, New Delhi will provide all possible financial assistance to the Department for development of Archives Repositories in J&K. He said now the financial aid has been raised from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 50 lakh and the department should take benefit from these schemes. Meanwhile, Dr Tassaduq was apprised by the concerned officer about the important records preserved in State Archives Repositories of Jammu and Kashmir. The expert suggested that all the important records from different department of J&K State should be transferred to Archives Department, so that they can be well preserved for posterity.

The interaction with the expert of National Archives helped to remove the doubts about Public and private records that can be provided to the Scholars by this department. He appreciated the efforts of the department for holding Archival Exhibition, Heritage Walks, Workshops and making Museum as a hub of knowledge by holding International Museums Days. He also speaks about the making online records of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose that clarifies all the doubts among scholars and historians. In his address, Director, Archives Archaeology and Museums J&K, Mohammad Shafi Zahid, presented details about some important records that are preserved in the repositories of the department, which reflects the rich Administration and Techniques used from early time in J&K State. The Director said that such events are helpful in developing the work culture of the department.

53 KM road length upgraded in Tral area: PWD

230 KM road length in Pulwama under upgradation at a cost of Rs 200 cr; 4-lanining of Pampore-Pulwama road to be taken up under World Bank funding

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: A road length of 53 KMs has been macadamized in Tral constituency of district Pulwama under the connectivity upgradation programme launched by the Government.

Rebutting the news report published in a section of the press today, a spokesman of the Public Works Department said it is factually incorrect as the situation on the ground is contrary to what has been reported by the newspaper.

He said it is for the first time during the past two decades that a road upgradation programme has been undertaken in Tral area on such a massive scale, despite frequent disturbances in the area.

Quoting figures the spokesman said that out of the 11.50 KM road length from Awantipora to Tral via Dadasara, 10 KMs already stand widened and macadamized. "Similarly, out of the 9 KM road length from Awantipora to Tral via Nowdal, 6 KMs stand widened and macadamized," he said and added that Pinglish, Arigam and Bathnoor roads also stand macadamized while the roads to Kuchmullah, Lurgam and Nader have been sanctioned for upgradation under CRF at a cost of Rs 18 crore as a part of Tral-Aripal-Wagad road project.

Giving details of other road communication projects taken up for upgradation in Tral area, the spokesman said that these include Tral-Mandoora road, Pinglish-Rathsuna road, Tral-Kahil-Nabal road, interior roads at Tral, Hurdmir-Buchoo road including Bahoo, Rajpora, Mandoora Junction to Bathnoor, Dobiwan-Kahil road, Charsoo-Amlar

road including Noorpora links.

He said a vital bridge near Chandrigam on Awantipora-Dadasara-Tral road costing Rs 3 crore was also opened for traffic recently.

The spokesman said under the renewed road upgradation programme, 230 KM road length is being upgraded in district Pulwama at an estimated cost of around Rs 200 crore. He said a project costing Rs 40 crore has been sanctioned under World Bank funding for 4-lanining of Pampore-Pulwama road.

"Around 30 important roads and bridges have been taken up for upgradation and reconstruction in district Pulwama under various centrally and state-funded schemes," said the spokesman.

He said out of the 30 connectivity projects taken up for upgradation, work has been fully completed on eight projects including upgradation of 14 KM road from national highway near Sangam upto Industrial Growth Centre Lassipora at an estimated cost of Rs 7.50 crore, construction of bridge at Zahidbagh, Litter at an estimated cost of Rs 2.83 crore, upgradation of 7 KM long Lassipora-Arihal-Khamri road at an estimated cost of Rs 6.92 crore, construction of bridge near Machpuna on Pulwama-Payer road costing Rs 1.97 crore, construction of bridge near Rangmulla on Pulwama-Tahab-Lassipora road costing Rs 2.43 crore, construction of bridge near Mugalpora on Pulwama-Payer road costing Rs 1.73 crore, construction of bridge near Chatripora on Drusso-Chatripora road cost-

ing Rs 1.41 crore and construction of bridge near Chandrigam on Awantipora-Dadasara-Tral road costing Rs 3 crore.

He said work is going on in full swing on remaining connectivity projects in the district including construction of Circular Road Pulwama costing Rs 28.27 crore, upgradation of Pulwama-Tahab-Lassipora road costing Rs 18 crore, upgradation of Wakharwan-Badriwan-Renzipora and Dahwato-Gulzarpora-Beighpora roads costing Rs 3 crore, upgradation of Darul Aloom Karewa and Panzgam-Reshipora roads costing Rs 3 crore, upgradation of Bellow-Drubgam-Shadimarg road costing Rs 9.27 crore, upgradation of Drubgam-CB Nath-Achgooz road costing Rs 11.70 crore, upgradation of Alaipora-Lassipora road via Achan and Nilloora-Chakooora road costing Rs 6.87 crore, upgradation of Shadimarg-Qasbayar-CB Nath road costing Rs.2.87 crore, upgradation of Drubgam-Aglar-Pakharpora road costing Rs.3.93 crore, upgradation of Rahmoo-Bachinard road including interior roads of Kamrazpora costing Rs.2.95 crore, upgradation of Mitrigam-Akhal-Drubgam road costing Rs.2.94 crore, construction of bridge over Sasar Nallah at Rajpora on Rajpora-Haal road costing Rs.4.98 crore, construction of bridge over Sasar Nallah at Arabal on Bellow, Arabal, Nikas road costing Rs.4.98 crore, upgradation of road from National Highway near LPG bottling plant to Andrasoo via Gas Turbine Konibal costing Rs.11.89 crore and upgradation of interior roads at Kandizal and Khadermoh costing Rs.3.00 crore.

DIV COM REVIEWS STATUS OF BOULEVARD ROAD 4-LANNING PROJECT



SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 21: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan today convened a meeting to review the progress of four-lanining project of the Boulevard road. During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner was informed that additional 40 kanals of land will come under the prestigious project which starts from Lake View Park to Shalimar. It was given out that the said a total of 253 kanals would come under the project.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the R&B officials to submit fresh indent to the DC Srinagar with details of private and state land which would come under the expansion project.

He directed DC Srinagar to conduct joint verification with concerned departments on this corridor so that the work can be started soon.

Regarding the shifting of utilities, Div Com directed the engineers of PDD and PHE to take measures for shifting of electric poles and water supply pipes coming under the project immediately. He also directed General Manager BSNL to start the work of relocating mobile towers to ensure timely completion of the project.

Khan said that work on the project would be started soon so that the traffic congestion on this busy stretch is redressed. Additional Commissioner Kashmir, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, VC LAWDA, Superintendent Engineers of R&B, PDD & PHE, Chief Engineer UEED, GM JK-TDC, GM BSNL, Chief Wild Life Warden, Conservator Forest, Collector Land Acquisition, Deputy Director Planning, Assistant Commissioner Central, Concerned Tehsildar, Traffic Advisor to Government, Exen SMC and other concerned officers attended the meeting

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

ON MULTI COMMODITY EXCHANGE

With the introduction of a new financial instrument, India is a step closer to building a vibrant market for commodities. Success in the long journey, however, will require avoiding some policy mistakes of the past. The Multi Commodity Exchange has introduced gold option contracts for the first time in India. The derivative instrument allows investors to enter into contracts to either buy or sell gold some time in the future at a pre-determined price, thus allowing investors to hedge any volatility in the price of the metal, for a price. The fact that options usually also turn out to be cheaper than binding future agreements will help in the wider participation of investors in the realm of commodity speculation. As Finance Minister Arun Jaitley stated during the launch of the derivative at the MCX, gold options will also help bring into formal channels more of the gold that is traded. Notably, the introduction of gold options is in line with the government's announcement last year that it would take steps towards introducing new varieties of commodity derivatives in the market. MCX, in fact, has said it might seek permission to write options contracts on other commodities which, based on their current futures trading volumes, satisfy rules set by SEBI. To improve market efficiency, the market regulator is also mulling the entry of mutual funds and portfolio management services into the business of investing in commodity derivatives.

Naturally, some concerns have been expressed over financial speculation. The benefits of well-regulated commodity speculation, however, are likely to outweigh the potential systemic risk from asset bubbles. Options, like other financial derivatives, allow price risks to be transferred between market players in an efficient manner. The business of anticipating prices in the future is left to professional speculators while their clients benefit from the prospect of stable prices. In the process, financial derivatives can facilitate the conduct of real economic activity in higher risk segments – including in agriculture and industrial activity – that would not happen otherwise. Confusion over this has led to an unjustified hostility towards financial speculation, as well as some hasty policy measures. Almost a decade ago, a rapid increase in food prices pushed the government to impose a blanket ban on any speculation on agricultural products. While it may have been relevant for the specific circumstances, the wide-ranging nature of the move slowed the development of a healthy market for commodity speculation. The government should now resist similar temptation and focus instead on real-time monitoring systems. Apart from the standardised derivatives approved by SEBI for trading in exchanges, a framework that promotes over-the-counter products will help improve the scope for risk mitigation. The debut of gold options should be seen as a step towards greater reforms.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

► **Vikas Dhoot**

In his first week in office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi abolished all groups of ministers (GoMs). Nearly 100 such groups had been set up by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) during its 10-year tenure as a preferred route for building consensus on a variety of thorny issues or dithering on those that were important but not urgent. While the groups did serve their purpose up to a point, they also became a potent symbol of the policy paralysis that gripped the UPA in its second innings. Scrapping about two dozen such groups on issues on which a final decision was still pending was seen to be a reflection of Mr. Modi's commitment to the 'minimum government, maximum governance' promise.

THREE YEARS LATER

Ministries were to process issues pending before such groups on their own, and if they faced difficulties, seek help from the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet Secretariat, thus expediting decision-making and ushering in 'greater accountability in the system'. However, in recent months, be it the strategic sale of Air India or other public sector units, bank mergers or labour reforms, the Cabinet has preferred to create a ministerial group to sort out the nitty-gritty. The term 'alternative mechanism' has been deployed instead of GoM. The Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism (AISAM), for instance, may have a better ring to it, but clearly there has been a realisation in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government that such groups are effective for certain decisions. After all, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government also used such groups as well as the Cabinet Committee on Disinvestment to push through some of its biggest decisions. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has also formed two GoMs and several committees of officials to resolve the hurdles that have come up so far in the new indirect tax system.

Late September, Mr. Modi re-constituted the Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister (EAC), another institution suspended since May 2014, amidst a growing debate on the government's alleged mishandling of the economy. With a little over six full quarters to go before the Lok Sabha elections, the challenge for the Council is to bring something to the table that can possibly push a quick enough revival of the economy, and perhaps suggest a course correction for reforms such as the GST that seem to be inhibiting industrial activity. A lot will depend on what the Prime Minister turns to them for advice for and what he doesn't. Would he, for instance, have consulted such a body about demonetisation's pros and cons? As an independent body to counsel the government, and more specifically the Prime Minister, on economic and related issues, its formation is a major signal that the government is aware of the state of the economy and is willing to seek professional help. Mr. Modi said as much



on October 4, when he urged the people to keep their chins up rather than be swayed by a single quarter growth blip, while promising that steps would be taken to address the woes of specific sectors like exporters and small enterprises.

It is not clear why the government waited for more than three years to rejig the EAC, which was neither a body unique to the UPA (like the National Advisory Council led by Congress president Sonia Gandhi) nor a socialist era vestige (like the Planning Commission). While Manmohan Singh, as Prime Minister, did entrust the EAC with analysing critical policy dilemmas such as the food security legislation, sugar or petroleum pricing and even Jammu and Kashmir's development, the EAC's prominence was actually at its peak under the previous NDA government, with Mr. Vajpayee himself chairing it.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

Recently, over dinner and Powerpoint presentations, Mr. Modi met almost 400 young entrepreneurs and CEOs to brainstorm on a range of themes around challenges facing the country. This initiative, termed Champions of Change, would be institutionalised in the best possible way, Mr. Modi said. Few may have realised that such an 'institutional' mechanism for dialogue with industry also marks a resurrection of sorts of the erstwhile Prime Minister's Council on Trade and Industry. It used to be a forum for top corporate leaders to flag issues frankly with the top echelons of government. Towards the end of UPA's second innings, its members were quite brusque in berating Dr. Singh and his government for the sputtering reform momentum and slowing growth, and their comments routinely hit the front pages of pink papers.

It is heartening that the Prime Minister, well known for his hands-on management

style from his days as Gujarat Chief Minister, has maintained an open mind in eventually embracing administrative mechanisms that he didn't feel the need for at the beginning of his tenure. The effectiveness of these groups and councils will, of course, depend on how receptive the government is to their inputs and the systems that are put in place for their functioning – whether it be the periodicity of meetings or meaningfully navigating the noise of advice that might pour in from hundreds of CEOs, for instance.

At its first meeting this month, the EAC agreed there is a slowdown underway, but didn't reveal the reasons behind it nor gave a diagnosis of how deep-rooted the problem may be. These details, we were told, will only be shared with the Prime Minister. While this may seem like an attempt to dodge the obvious explanations offered by economists such as lingering effects of the note ban that would be embarrassing for the Centre, there is a more structural reason for the Council's silence.

While Mr. Modi has persisted with three of the four terms of reference that were assigned to the EAC by the UPA, he has dropped an important one: submitting periodic reports to the Prime Minister on macroeconomic developments and issues with implications for economic policy. So, unlike the previous EAC, there are unlikely to be any regular reports taking stock of the economy and its growth outlook, at least in the public domain. The last report from the Prime Minister's EAC, published in September 2013, had revised its growth projections for 2013-14 downward from 6.4% to 5.3% – in light of a weak first quarter growth of just 4.4%. What would the new EAC say about growth prospects for this year after a tepid first quarter? If the EAC were to prescribe a quick fix for the economy, how quickly could

the government implement it if only the PMO is privy to its ideas?

According to Coal and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal, one of the three governance mantras the Prime Minister gave him in May 2014 was to be as transparent as possible. With worries about the economy gathering pace, airing the EAC's views formally over fixed intervals of time would help flag as well as allay emerging concerns and stir a healthy debate on policy options.

ON THE LEARNING CURVE

That the government is beginning to listen to advice that goes against policy choices it has defended spiritedly is evident from its recent decision to lower excise duties on petroleum products, albeit by a token ₹ 2 per litre. While Ministers had previously reacted sharply when questioned about their persistence with high petrol taxes, in the end the government did blink just ahead of the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy review this month.

That the government is willing to correct course after denying the existence of a problem or dabble with ideas it had dismissed without trying – as seen in the matters of GoMs, GST or petrol taxation – is a critical and under-recognised positive for the economy's prospects. As for the EAC, which has decided to focus on ten priority areas (including economic governance structures) to accelerate growth and job creation over the next six months, its views are expected to help formulate the last full-year Budget for the NDA due in February. It would be instructive to know how the Council views the need for transparency and clear communication while governing the economy, as opposed to deploying hyperbole about being a has-been and will-be fastest growing economy every time an inconvenient number is thrown up. But perhaps, we will never find out.

The willing suspension of disbelief

► **V.N. Mukunda**

Soap operas, or 'serials' as we like to call them in India, seem to evoke a spectrum of emotions ranging from uncritical adulation to outright condemnation. In the popular imagination, serials are mainly meant to entertain and nothing more. According to this school of entertainment-lovers, if serials demand a "willing suspension of disbelief" (from the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge) and that too for extended times and in unintended ways, so be it.

The one thing nobody can deny is that TV serials are immensely popular. After watching a couple of them, I was forced to introspect on certain aspects of their structure and scripts.

As cinema, the small screen serials are also artistic productions even if the soap opera producers have no illusions about consciously creating art. The question is if a serial is primarily an entertainer, should it have the licence to mu-

tilate the written and unwritten canons of artistic endeavour?

A story has to have a beginning and an end, right? Our serial producers seem to think otherwise. The soaps never seem to end. The script-writers try to stretch the story by introducing sub-plots and new characters from time to time. Sometimes the TV channels are forced to take out the serials when viewers begin to flee after getting bored over the protracted and seemingly endless storyline.

The longer the lifespan of the serial, the shorter is its appeal and artistic credibility. Our notions of plausibility are made to stand on their head with the infusion of new sub-plots and characters that disappear after some time. For the viewers, the exercise of having to willingly suspend their disbelief becomes burdensome. A change of heart is common among humans. But some of the mega-serials take extreme liberties with artistic fidelity. The viewers feel that they have been taken for a ride when a character exhibits a 360-degree meta-



morphosis that defies logic and runs against the thread of the storyline. Even those without a keen aesthetic sense can quickly detect the jarring dichotomy between the possible and the probable. The soaps have taken gender em-

powerment and equality to unseen heights. It appears that the male monopolisation of villainy has upset serial producers. Welcome the new tribe of lady villains who are as scheming and ruthless as their male counterparts. They hire goons

to attack, maim and kill their perceived enemies at the drop of a hat.

Some female plotters even knife their opponents to death and boast about their ghastly deeds without any pangs of remorse.

One suspects that a streak of misogyny underpins such exaggerated and criminalised portrayals of female cruelty. Perhaps it is a realistic way to mainstream women as an integral part of a corrupt and consumerist society where cultural values such as gentleness and patience that we typically associate with ladies have lost their appeal. The innocent damsels, submissive wives, and gentle ladies who walked the black and white cinema landscape of the 1950s and 1960s have disappeared.

Serial-makers say we are not supposed to take their productions seriously. After all, they are giving what people want. Can we just shrug off this argument? Cinema is a short-form art that entertains us for about three hours and has to get past the censors' scrutiny

before being allowed to be shown to the public. Soap operas face no such restraints. They provide stimuli that bombard viewers for extended periods: these last for years.

Distorted caricatures that revel in normalising the abnormal and glorifying violent behaviour send wrong signals to impressionable minds. The casual way in which characters in the serials cry for blood, sends shivers down our spines. It trivialises human life, making it appear expendable.

There is no tension between artistic freedom and social commitment. Serial-makers, take note that art cannot exist in a vacuum. No medium touches the people without leaving behind trails of impressions and cues that get imprinted in minds. It is not impossible to mirror the darker side of life without apothecising immorality and criminality. Reality lends itself to sensitive depictions without the need to dress it up with a dash of the macabre. There is no such thing as pure entertainment.

India should make its own decisions on ties with Iran: US

India should make its own decisions on the relationship with Iran based on its interests, a top US official has said, days after President Donald Trump condemned Tehran as a "fanatical regime" and threatened to terminate the landmark nuclear deal.

At the same time, the countries should take a hard look at their business partners in Iran, the senior Trump administration official said when asked about India developing the strategically located Chabahar port in Iran, which will give it access to Afghanistan and then to Central Asia.



"India should make its own decisions based on how it sees its interests," the official told PTI.

An agreement on the Chabahar port was inked by India and Iran in May 2016 after detailed discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

As per the pact, India is to equip and operate two berths in Chabahar Port Phase-I with capital investment of USD 85.21 million and annual revenue expenditure of USD 22.95 million on a 10-year lease. Ownership of equipment will be transferred to Iranian side on completion of the 10-year period or for an extended period, based on mutual agreement.

"What we're asking is for all coun-

tries to take a very hard look at who you're doing business with in Iran and to understand who are the beneficial owners of these companies," the US official said, warning against the business deals with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-controlled companies.

The countries also need to have a look at what is the relationship of these companies with the groups which have contributed to the scourge of terrorism, the official said, referring to the IRGC.

Earlier this month, the US slapped sanctions on the IRGC for its alleged support to various terrorist organisations.

Countries doing business with

Iran also need to ensure that their economic relationships with Iran do not lead to the strengthening of the IRGC in particular and their ability to do so much harm to so many people, the official added.

Talks between India and the US in this regard if any are happening through normal channels all the time, the senior administration official said.

Trump's Ambassadorial nominee to India Ken Juster, who is awaiting the Senate confirmation process, is "going to just really be a fine representative" who understands the importance that the president places on the US-India ties.

And he "is going to do everything he can to advance that relationship

to a new level," the official said.

Officials from the national security establishment from both the country are in regular contact and discuss a wide range of issues, the official added.

This includes, maintaining the non-proliferation regime and the severe danger of weapons of mass destruction and how to "ensure a higher degree of confidence that those" most destructive weapons will never be used.

Among other things they also talk about the transnational terrorist threat and how to work together to combat and defeat these enemies of all civilised peoples, the official added.

"We also talk about geopolitics broadly and geostrategic concerns to ensure that revisionist powers don't advance their interests at the expense of other countries and that we can ensure that all countries have a free and open access to markets," the official said.

"We talk often in geostrategic terms about the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific region that allows all countries especially those that are like minded in terms of free and open markets and democratic systems... That all countries in the region enjoy the kind of security and prosperity that they deserve," the official said.

BJP rubbishes Vijayan's 'running away' allegation, says need peace for debate

The BJP in Kerala rubbished chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's allegation that the saffron party leaders were running away from a debate on development issues and said a peaceful environment was needed for such a dialogue.

In an open letter to the chief minister, BJP state president Kummanam Rajasekharan said Vijayan was an administrator who "failed to ensure" a free environment for his political rivals to function.

He claimed that the success of the BJP's recently concluded 'Jan Raksha Yatra' had "frustrated" the chief minister and his party, the CPI(M), and that was why they were spreading "half truths" and levelling "baseless charges".

Rajasekharan's remarks came a day after Vijayan had said in a Facebook post that his government was ready to take up the challenge by the BJP to organise a debate on development issues, but the saffron party leaders were running away from it.

"Your (Vijayan's) claim that BJP leaders are running away from debate on development is wrong. You also know that what is needed for such a debate is a peaceful environment," Rajasekharan said in the letter.

"It is meaningless for you to talk about development as you are an administrator who failed to ensure an environment for political rivals to function freely. Only a very cunning person can invite his rivals for peace talks while hiding a knife behind (to attack)," he alleged.



"A chief minister who could not ensure security to all under his administration is a disgrace to Keralites," the BJP leader said in the letter.

Rajasekharan also asked Vijayan to explain in which sector the state had made progress when the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF ruled the state.

He said the two fronts have been in power alternatively for the last several years.

Rajasekharan alleged that at least five BJP workers were killed in the state by the activists of the ruling CPI(M) after peace talks were initiated by the government earlier this year.

In yesterday's Facebook post Vijayan had alleged that the 15-day long 'Jan Raksha Yatra' had propagated "lies and false messages".

The chief minister had also alleged that the state government's frequent requests to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the state's development issues have been denied.

Sushma Swaraj shouldn't meet Khaleda Zia, says Awami League leader

A section of the top leadership of Bangladesh's ruling Awami League is upset about external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj's plan to meet former premier Khaleda Zia during her visit to Dhaka this weekend.

The Awami League leaders believe Swaraj could meet a delegation from Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) as recent actions of the widow of president Ziaur Rahman were not conducive to bilateral relations.

"We can't understand why the Indian foreign minister should meet Khaleda Zia," a top Awami League leader, who did not wish to be named, told Hindustan Times.

"She (Zia) cancelled her scheduled meeting with Pranab Mukherjee when he visited Bangladesh as the Indian president and snubbed him," said the leader familiar with decision-making at the highest level of the Awami League.

"She is not even the leader of opposition in Bangladesh anymore," he added, explaining the rationale within his party on why a meeting between Swaraj and Zia would be inappropriate.

Zia's BNP boycotted the



January 2014 general election.

"Swaraj can surely meet a BNP delegation but not Khaleda Zia, who has been proclaimed guilty in two criminal cases pertaining to corruption and anti-state activities," the leader said.

Swaraj is visiting Bangladesh during October 21-22 to co-chair the fourth meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee, which is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of bilateral ties.

Protocol allows any visiting foreign minister to meet top leaders of the opposition parties as well as ruling members, and Swaraj meeting the BNP chief will send a positive sign that India believes in democratic practices, said a Dhaka-based political observer.

Swaraj met Zia during her

last visit to Dhaka in June 2014 after the Narendra Modi government came to power, he said. At the time, the Modi government was making efforts to reach out to all sections of Bangladesh society.

The impact on Bangladesh of an unprecedented influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar is expected to come up in Swaraj's discussions with top Bangladeshi leaders, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina whom she will meet on October 22.

The scheduled meeting between Swaraj and Zia has come as a surprise to many in Dhaka and lend grist to rumour mills as the BNP leader had been in London since July 15 for medical treatment.

Zia, who returned to Dhaka on Wednesday, reportedly met senior Inter-Services Intelligence and Pakistan Army officials along with her son Tarique Rahman, the senior vice-chairman of the BNP, while in London.

The meetings were extensively reported in the Indian and Bangladeshi media and photos showing Zia attending Pakistan's Defence Day celebrations in the country's high commission in London as a special guest went viral on Facebook.

Zia and three others have been accused of embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars in charitable funds. Prosecutors say she and the others took 31.5 million taka (about \$400,000) from the Zia Charitable Trust, named after her late husband who was assassinated in 1981.

Zia and four others, including her son, have also been accused of embezzling 21.5 million taka, money which prosecutors say should have gone to an orphanage set up in the memory of her husband. Zia has dismissed all the charges against her.

Bitter political rivals, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia have alternated in power for most of the past two decades.

Sharad Yadav's JD-U faction announces election

The Sharad Yadav faction of the Janata Dal (United) Party announced Saturday election to party posts on March 11 and released a list of interim office-bearers, including Chhotu Bhai Vasava as working president and Ali Anwar as one of the vice-presidents.

Yadav also released a list of presidents of party units in states at a press briefing. Members of an ad hoc committee for Bihar were also announced, which will be headed by former minister Ramai Ram.

Yadav had earlier approached the Election Commission staking claim over the JD(U)'s election symbol.

He said at the press conference on Saturday that the group had produced 429 affidavits in support of its claim.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) has also submitted affidavits of its MPs and MLAs in support of Kumar's leadership.

This faction has maintained that an overwhelming number of its party leaders are with Nitish Kumar and only a handful of them support Yadav.

They have also approached Rajya Sabha Chairman M



Venkaiah Naidu and filed a plea seeking disqualification of its rebel MPs -- Sharad Yadav and Ali Anwar.

In response to a question about a notice from the Rajya Sabha asking the two MPs to appear before the chairman, Yadav told reporters that his "lawyers were examining the matter".

Yadav has come out against Kumar tying up with the BJP and joining NDA. He has joined hands with the Congress and opposition parties.

On the controversy over the Election Commission allegedly delaying announcement of schedule for Gujarat elections, Yadav told reporters that the body must maintain the role of an "honest referee".

"The decision not to announce elections to Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh simultaneously was not correct... This has happened for the first time. I want to say to those who are in EC that their predecessors were fair and un-

Congress eyes anti-BJP front in Gujarat, invites Hardik, Alpesh, Jignesh Mewani

The Gujarat Congress reached out on Saturday to Hardik Patel, Alpesh Thakore and Jignesh Mewani, activist leaders who could bring crucial support ahead of the state elections due in a few months.

Patel, Thakore and Mewani have led powerful campaigns against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government for their communities. "If Hardik Patel wants to contest elections in future, the Congress is ready to give him ticket. Jignesh Mewani is leading an agitation for the rights of Dalits and Alpesh Thakore is fighting issues like corruption and alcohol addiction. The Congress invites them to join hands with us," said Gujarat Pradesh Congress committee president Bharatsinh Solanki at a press conference.

Patel, 24, who has been at the forefront of an agitation for reservation benefits in college admission and government jobs for his otherwise politically influential Patidar community, is yet to reach the age in which he is allowed to contest election.

While Patel has said he has no intention of contesting elections, Mewani -- who emerged as a Dalit leader in the wake of the Una flogging incident -- told HT that his "movement

has a political "perspective" but he would respond to the Congress invitation after consulting community members and organisations. Thakore, who has been leading OBC, ST and ST Ekta Manch, was not available for comment. "I do not intend to contest elections. We want our right (OBC status) and we will continue to fight for the same," said Patel.

The BJP, which has announced a Non-Reserved Category Educational and Economic Development Board and Commission to placate the agitators, has been portraying Patel as a "Congress agent".

"I am against the RSS and BJP ideology, which is out to wipe out democracy from India. My movement is social as well as political. But I will respond to the Congress after consulting my community," Mewani told HT.

Solanki also said that AAP leaders like Kanu Kalsaria, a former BJP MLA from Mahuva, and others are in touch with Congress.

"Chhotu Vasava (JD-U MLA) had supported Congress in the Rajya Sabha election. We invite him to join us. Also, if the NCP, which did not support us in the RS elections, wants the Congress to come to power, we are ready to think for an alliance," Solanki added.

Bihar govt hands over probe of soil scam, involving Lalu and Tej Pratap, to vigilance bureau

The Bihar government has decided to hand over the investigation of soil scam case, allegedly involving Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad and his son Tej Pratap Yadav, to the Vigilance Investigation Bureau (VIB).

The scam relates to the alleged purchase of soil worth more than Rs 90 lakh by Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park in Patna from a firm associated with Yadav without floating any tender.

Then purchase was made during Yadav's tenure as minister of the forest and environment department, which controlled the biological park.

The decision to hand over the probe to the VIB comes a week after the Patna high court directed the Bihar government to file an action taken report in the soil scam case within six weeks.

A division bench of the high court had passed the order while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) petition seeking an independent inquiry, either by the CBI or a judicial commission. On October 13, the division



bench of chief justice Rajendra Menon and justice A K Upadhyay sought a status report from the government on the inquiry into the soil purchase scam.

Petitioner RS Singh Sengar, an advocate, had complained of "gross irregularities" in the purchase of soil for the beautification of the biological park. He alleged that the soil was lifted from a site near Ram Jaipal

director Nand Kishore, among others, as accused.

Vigilance sources, however, said the department was yet to receive any communication from the state government to conduct the probe.

The land for the proposed mall is under the scanner of the Income Tax department, CBI and the Enforcement Directorate as it is allegedly linked to the IRCTC hotels-for-land scam case of 2006 when Prasad was the railway minister. The construction of the mall has since been stopped by the Union environment and forest ministry.

Soon after senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi, who is now deputy chief minister, alleged irregularities in the purchase of soil on April 5, the Bihar chief secretary asked the state forest department to furnish documents related to the deal.

On April 21, however, the chief secretary said no evidence of irregularities was found in the initial investigation by the biological park. He said the firm which supplied the soil claimed that it was sourced from five different places.

Nothing crabby about it

If you are lucky, you may just catch a glimpse of 79-year-old Sooru Karkera darting in and out of the restaurant kitchen as he flashes you a warm smile. The founder of the 40-year-old Mahesh Lunch Home is simplicity personified.

An eatery synonymous with good quality Mangalorean seafood, which he has run since its inception in 1977, Sooru has now passed on the baton to his son Mahendra and rarely ever comes to the restaurant himself.

Cawasji Patel Street in Mumbai's Fort is where this restaurant is located, and is an address, every gourmand who comes to the city invariably lands up at in the quest for good quality, fresh seafood.

"My father still takes an active interest in the restaurant even though he may not be physically present here every day. He calls up to find out how the business is doing," says Mahendra. He adds, "Our regular patrons know him well and he is familiar with their favourite dishes; they still ask for him when he's not around."

Sooru came to Mumbai in the 1950s from Udupi in Mangalore in search of

a job. Soon, he plunged head-long into the family-run Jay Bharat Hindu Hotel, now Shivala, at Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (earlier Victoria Terminus). "He was working at an advertising firm as an accountant at the time. Owing to a crisis, my father had to take over the reins and managed to bring it back to its original position," says Mahendra.

Sooru was forced to learn the food business, something he knew nothing about. Having mastered it, after working hard and tirelessly, he decided to branch out and launch Mahesh Lunch Home in 1977 as he wanted an eatery that "served non-vegetarian Mangalorean food and had a bar as well."

Mangalorean food cooked home style with recipes from the family is what Mahesh Lunch Home began offering. The fresh seafood from day one, cooked with typically Konkani spices and replete with comforting flavours, was what earned this place its band of loyal customers. "My father was very particular about quality and served only the best seafood," Mahendra says.



Fish curry, rice, fish fry and gassi have been dishes on the menu since inception and are still the fastest selling items. A menu which began with a measly 20-25 items in 1977 began to expand in 1989 when Mahendra stepped into the business to learn the ropes from his father. "By then, the food scene had

evolved and people began demanding other dishes too. So we expanded our repertoire of Mangalorean dishes and also added other coastal foods, tandoori and Chinese dishes as well," informs Mahendra.

According to him, it is the quality of raw materials and ingredients here, that

set the food apart, else Mangalorean recipes are otherwise easy to find and replicate. He adds that his uncle Somnath Kuckian has worked untiringly along with his father to build the brand. "Now my cousin Adarsh helps me," he says. And now, he is glad that his son is "showing keen interest in the business and may even study at a culinary school to gain all-round knowledge."

Mahesh Lunch Home does not believe in hiring fancy chefs, but instead trains people who are interested and willing to learn. "We give every one equal opportunity. Even a waiting staff may land up in the kitchen tomorrow and become a chef," says Mahendra. Such is the loyalty of their staff that a chef who retired from Mahesh Lunch Home after 30 years, willingly joined their restaurant in Manipal when called upon to do so. "Our staff is our asset and most of them leave only when they retire," he adds.

The restaurant is also home to many regulars, who work close by and dine here every single day during lunch. From cricketers Sunil Gavaskar to Dilip Veng-

sarkar, actor Jaya Bachchan, politician Supriya Sule and several industrialists, this place has hosted several prominent personalities.

While new dishes are added each year to the menu, Mahendra ensures he does not arbitrarily increase the prices. "That would not be fair to our patrons," he says. Having opened more outlets with partners in Mumbai, Pune and Bengaluru, Mahendra is keen to expand further but is always on the lookout for people with a similar philosophy.

Periodic food promotions such as the Crab and Wine Festival or Seafood Festival, are what they do by way of marketing. "People are now aware of these festivals and look forward to them annually. The rest is purely word of mouth," Mahendra explains.

He is overwhelmed when Mahesh Lunch Home is often referred to as the "Seafood institution" in Mumbai. "That is the love people have for us," he signs off. In this weekly column, we peek into the histories of some of the most iconic restaurants

Cracked wide open



Who doesn't remember the peppy 'Meri jaan meri jaan murgi ke andey', the jingle by the National Egg Corporation Council (NECC) which was a song on every child's lips during the good old Doordarshan days. Apart from being nutritious and healthy, the egg is also the most easy go-to breakfast ingredient. Like all other foods, the egg also comes with its share of myths associated with how and when it should be consumed. Also, let's leave the what came first (chicken or egg) debate. This World Egg Day instead of discussing and debating how many eggs is a good number to consume in a day, let's look at some fun ways to relish it.

Poached egg
Oil-free, and easy to make if you know the right trick. We've grown eating this variant of egg and I absolutely love it. However, after years of practice I have finally managed to get my poached egg right.

To make things easy, choose a small non-stick

saucepan. Add water till the half mark, let it boil. Add a teaspoon of vinegar and swirl the water taking care not to spill. As the water is swirling crack an egg and drop it in the centre slowly. Let it boil for a while on low heat. Drain the excess water and serve.

Take care not to poke the egg while it is boiling, it will cause the yolk to leak. Dropping the egg in the centre of the swirling water is important to prevent the white from threading out.

Flower egg
Bored of the same old fried egg? Jazz it up with a little creativity. At least I did, thanks to the many egg cooking tricks on YouTube. Now I can fry an egg and make it resemble a flower. All you've got to do is cut bell pepper (any colour of your choice) into rings. Just ensure they're evenly cut so they sit flat in the pan.

Grease the pan and place the bell pepper in it before cracking the egg inside the ring. Season with salt and pepper. Cook

until yolk is done or leave it a little runny as per your preference.

Eggs khagina
This is a Hyderabad breakfast speciality. Similar to egg bhurji, the khagina is easy to make. Fry a medium sized onion that has been finely chopped, add a little ginger garlic paste and saute. Season this with some turmeric powder, salt and coriander powder. Mix well and add a medium sized tomato which is finely chopped and minced green chilli. Once the tomato begins to cook, add chilli powder according to your taste.

Sprinkle some water and let the mixture cook on a low flame. After about a minute, make a well in the mixture and crack two eggs in the gap.

Cover and cook this while longer and then stir the eggs lightly to break it in uneven pieces.

Garnish with coriander and serve with rotis or parathas.

A wee dram with a Duke

At 4 am in the hotel lobby, he could pass off as just another jeans-clad British tourist on his way to the airport. Not so a few hours earlier, when Torquhil Ian Campbell, the

mer residence of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

"Whisky is a good match with spicy food," begins the duke, when we sit down to chat before dinner. He should know. As a Royal Salute global ambassador, and with the giant Pernod Ricard conglomerate for 21 years now, he has attended hundreds of dinners around the

'that's what my father or grandfather drinks' and stay away. But more of them now want it to be part of their lifestyle. The idea is to get them to understand what it is about and push away the boundaries."

Among the new Royal Salute initiatives is a collaboration with a French perfumery, exploring whisky aromas and where they come from

around the world and, as the head of the family, I do have a lot of responsibility." Time spent with family - his wife and three children - is his luxury. "I give them experiences we never had when we were younger. I'm turning 50 next year and instead of a really big party, I'll have a smallish party and take my family to Borneo, Vietnam and Cambo-



13th Duke of Argyll, got a tonny gathering of 40 to bellow 'Slainte Mhath' and down their whisky in under

a second at the Taj Falaknuma's Durbar Hall. Kitted out in his finery, with silver salmon buttons on his dress kilt jacket, the chief of Clan Campbell was introducing the Royal Salute 21 Regent Banquet gift pack. The culinary affair with over a 100 dishes was inspired by the Banquet of 1817, and this direct descendant of the ancient kings of Ireland from the 7th century (which explains the salmon emblem) had a perfect setting in the glittering for-

world, spreading the word about the whisky that was created to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of England in 1953. "My role as a brand ambassador is to get that glass into someone's hand. From thereon, something like Royal Salute 21 Year Old sells itself. Many whiskies do not have that power," he shrugs. While whisky has an older association, he admits to a changing audience around the world. "Ten years ago, many young people would say,

He is also involved in creating a Royal Salute Taiwan exclusive, a 23 Year Old. "Personally, more choice for the consumer is also good for the market," continues the duke, whose personal favourite is the Royal Salute 38YO as an after dinner drink. "Powerful, rich, full-flavoured, it deserves complete attention."

A family man, he admits that the Campbell Clan is arguably the biggest. "There are 14 million of us

dia." Fly fishing and elephant polo are other passions and for the former, he recommends salmon fishing in Scotland (of course) and trout fishing in southern England's chalk streams.

Later that night, when the dinner guests depart, he hints at returning to India soon. But for now, estate duties and guests await at his ancestral seat, Inveraray Castle, in Scotland, on the shore of Loch Fyne.



A lasting impression

For die hard bakers and professionals springerle cooking moulds and rolling pins are prized possessions. Think speculaas from The Netherlands and mamul and krombe



cookies from the Middle East. They're all made using special wooden moulds. Even butter moulds hold a special place

in history. Carefully designed by artists who specialise in them, these moulds are integral in most kitchens. Made of wood, they are carved to perfection by hand. Ardent food enthusiasts vie with each other to collect them. Even here in India, moulds are essential to shape the myriad sweets that make an appearance during the festive season. The only difference? Here they are relegated to the back burner, with little thought being paid to the beautiful hand carved, embossed pieces in wood.

While recipes for Indian sweets abound, the same can not be said about the sellers and makers of these pretty moulds. To suit modern day convenience, plastic and silicone moulds have edged out the more traditional ones. But they lack the imagination and creativity of the wooden moulds that would often have designs inspired by historical monuments and events.

But the fact remains that each hand moulded sweet bears a personal touch. A design imprinted on it or an unusual shape adds to its visual appeal. A mould can work its magic on a run of the mill sweet giving it a certain pizzazz. Take for instance sandesh. A popular Bengali sweet, it gets its exotic shapes from these moulds.

Tapan Kumar Das, proprietor, Nalin Chandra Das & Sons in Kolkata, who have a 175-year-old tradition of making sandesh, speaks

highly of the talented craftsmen who make the moulds they use. He says, "We use only wooden moulds to shape our huge range of sandesh. The moulds are usually made out of seasoned wood, which makes them safe to use, hygienic and water resistant. They are easy to clean and uncontaminated. We prefer wooden moulds for their quality. We have over 50 moulds in different shapes and sizes."

Even the traditional blocks used for block printing, I hear are often used by chefs to make mithai. The blocks do make a difference when used to imprint sweets. A deviation is using it to bake cookies for a subtle yet fun imprint.

Another set of moulds that are very rarely seen are the thekua moulds of Bihar. Thekua is a fried delicacy made during

Chhath Puja. The blocks are different, much larger with traditional designs on both sides. They are carved out of solid wood. The sakarai accu is used to make sugar moulded shapes for Sankranti. Usually shaped like animals and birds, these moulds also lend themselves beautifully to revamp that peda or burfi.

Some of these moulds are passed down generations. While they make for great traditional sweets, this festive season, they can be used to revamp those khoya sweets, burfis, milk cakes, cookies and even chocolates. Simply pop in that cookie dough into a mould before lining your baking tray for fun shaped cookies or make namak paras using block printing blocks for something a bit more jazzy.

CHANDIGARH-BANGKOK DIRECT FLIGHT FROM DECEMBER 11, BOOKING BEGINS



NEW DELHI: Air India is all set to start its Chandigarh-Bangkok flight from December 11. The bookings for the same have also started. The announcement gains significance as it comes in the backdrop of the airline missing several deadlines.

Speaking to Hindustan Times, Air India's local manager RK Negi said the direct flight to Bangkok from Chandigarh will take approximately five hours. "The inaugural fare for the

return journey is Rs 21,500. However, the price may vary, depending upon the demand and supply," he said. The airline will operate this flight on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It will depart from the Chandigarh International Airport at 2 pm and reach the Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok at 8:15 pm (Bangkok local time). The local time of Bangkok is 1 hour 30 minutes ahead of that in India. The flight from Bangkok to Chandigarh will depart at 5:40 am (Bangkok local

time) and reach here at 9:20 am (Indian local time). For the Chandigarh-Bangkok flight, Air India will operate Airbus's latest variant A320 Neo. Negi said the carrier has 12 business class seats and 150 seats for the economy class. He added that the aircraft has better sitting arrangements with additional leg space in both the classes. At present, Air India operates 66 Airbus aircraft, including 22 A319, 24 A320 and 20 A321.

Sources said the delay in delivery of the aircraft is the reason for the airline missing several deadlines. Air India had first announced the Chandigarh-Bangkok flight last year, this was later postponed to April this year.

The airline further postponed the flight to October 6 and then again to October 29. "The direct flight to Bangkok is a welcome move. This will help increase the air traffic from Chandigarh. The airline should try to make it regular," said Vineet Sharma, a local travel agent.

Meanwhile, Air India has ruled out starting a direct flight to Australia or New Zealand from Chandigarh for the moment. Negi said further expansion of the flight will depend upon the response the airline gets. Once started, the Chandigarh-Bangkok flight will be the third international flight operating from the Chandigarh International Airport. At present, Indigo's Chandigarh-Dubai and Air India Express' Chandigarh-Sharjah flights are the only two international flights operating from Chandigarh. They were started in September 2016.

US deficit grows to \$666 billion as lawmakers eye tax cuts



WASHINGTON: The US budget deficit grew to \$666 billion in just-ended fiscal year 2017, according to official data released Friday, after lawmakers took a step toward enacting \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts.

The deficit climbed 13.6 percent from a year ago, or by \$80 billion, with much of the nearly \$4 trillion the US government spent last year associated with caring for the country's ageing population.

The deficit now accounts for 3.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), up from 3.2 percent in 2016.

"Growth in spending outpaced growth in tax receipts for the second year in a row as a result of historically subpar economic growth," the Treasury Department said. But the deficit came in \$36 billion lower than forecast halfway through the fiscal year, which ended

September 30, officials said. "Today's budget results underscore the importance of achieving robust and sustained economic growth. Through a combination of tax reform and regulatory relief, this country can return to higher levels of GDP growth, helping to erase our fiscal deficit,"

said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. "These numbers should serve as a smoke alarm for Washington, a reminder that we need to grow our economy again and get our fiscal house in order. We can do that through smart spending restraint, tax reform, and cutting red tape,"

added Mick Mulvaney, director of the Office of Management and Budget. Spending grew 3.3 percent to \$3.98 trillion while revenue fell 0.9 percent to \$3.32 trillion, while the total federal debt rose to \$14.67 trillion.

CHINA ECONOMY ON TRACK TO HIT 2017 GROWTH TARGET, SAYS STATE PLANNER



BEIJING: China's economy is on track to meet the official growth target for 2017, the head of the state planning agency said on Saturday. "We expect to achieve the full-year growth target of about 6.5%," He Lifeng, chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC),

told a briefing on the sidelines of China's Communist Party Congress. Most economists believe China's actual growth should easily beat the target. The economy grew 6.8% in the third quarter of the year, and 6.9% in the

first half. Last year's growth rate of 6.7% was a 26-year low. China's economy has surprised global markets and investors with robust growth so far this year, driven by stronger demand from Europe and the United States and a renaissance in long-ailing "smokestack" industries such as steel. The world's second-largest economy has been undergoing a restructuring process designed to "upgrade" its heavy industrial economy, cut pollution and tackle profit-sapping capacity gluts in sectors like steel and coal.

These 3 potential risks could derail blue sky scenario for D-Street in Samvat 2074

NEW DELHI: "We approach the market for the next 12 months with caution. We see the same reasons which led to the improvement in cash flows and cost of capital to start deteriorating," said Ganeshram Jayaraman,

SPARK Capital Advisor, in an exclusive interview with Kshitij Anand of Moneycontrol. Over the past 18 months, while revenues and earnings growth has been muted, companies have had the best cash flows growth in the last 7 years. Moreover, cost of capital has fallen sharply led by a very good macro on inflation, interest rates, and currency movement.

The combined effect of both has fuelled the optimism among investors. However, we approach the market for the next 12 months with caution. We see the same reasons which led to the improvement in cash flows and cost of capital to start deteriorating. A) The combined effect of the 3 challenges below should impact the current blue sky scenario. Interest rates'

in the wholesale market should increase by 50bps, possibly 100bps. Risk of Rs. 70/USD is live and ignored: We completely reverse our contrarian INR appreciation view for the past 3 years as its fundamentals are weakening sharply. Both Current account and Capital account look dicey



due to multiple challenges; Overvalued REER and likely inflation trajectory could lead to bond FII outflows and yield spike. Inflation rebound: GST impact, especially on services, mean reversion in food inflation, high MSP increase in agricultural commodities, an uneven rainfall distribution and Pay Commission effect can lead to 6% CPI by June' 18. Q) The IPO mania has gripped D-Street with

most primary offers getting oversubscribed multiple times? Do you see the trend continuing for Samvat 2074? What is the kind of money we are talking about? A) We have'

never been fans of IPO investing. It is at best a one-month trade. We would advise investors to tread carefully on IPOs. Q) Small and midcap index fresh record highs. What is your call on the broader market.

Market Week Ahead Q2 earnings of Infy & top banks among 10 things to keep investors busy

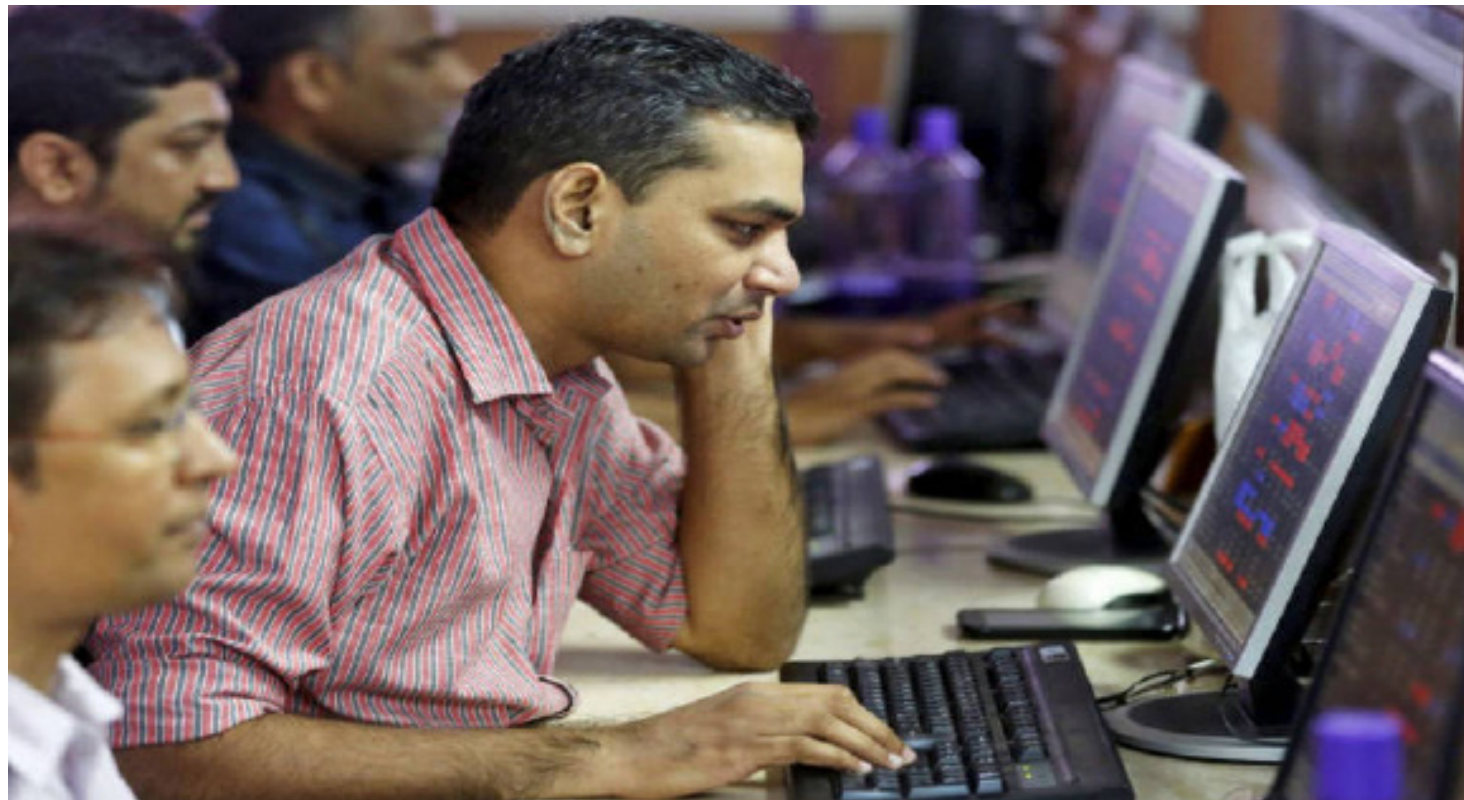
new delhi: Markets ended flat in the last week. Initial gains led by Reliance Industries and telecom stocks were wiped out by a sharp fall in banks following weak Axis Bank earnings in the later part of the truncated week. The Nifty closed down 0.21 percent at 10,146.55, after hitting a record high of 10,251.85 on October 17. The Sensex also touched an all-time high of 32,699.86 in Diwali week. Consolidation is likely to rule in the coming week (the first week of Samvat 2074), especially due to expiry of futures & options on Thursday. Any major uptrend or downtrend from hereon will largely depend on earnings (especially banks), experts feel. Major banks, and index heavyweights Infosys and ITC will announce earnings during the week.

According to experts, if banks disappoint the Street with weak quarterly earnings particularly indicating continued asset quality concerns then there could be further fall in the market. Most experts, however, do firmly believe the asset quality woes will ease during the next financial year. Banking sector has maximum weightage in the Sensex and Nifty.

This earnings season will also be closely watched for the impact of GST implemented on July 1. The full impact of new tax system will be reflected in the Q2 earnings.

"I think in the next couple of quarters if the earnings don't improve, markets will be in a spot of trouble," said Ramesh Damani, Member BSE who remains bullish on the market with a long-term perspective.

Prakarsh Gagdani, Chief Executive Officer of IIFL Group subsidiary 5 Paisa Capital, is also optimistic about the market in Samvat 2074, and sees the Nifty giving returns of 15-17 percent in the next one year. "The main reason for this surge is healthy domestic inflows and I don't see any reason why domestic inflows would reduce in coming months," he reasoned. "I expect the next year to be much better in corporate earnings than this year. I am sure the effect of demonetisation on the economy will fade out over the next year and even the positive aspects of GST will be clearly visible clearly in the earnings," Gagdani said. In the passing week, index heavyweights



came to the rescue when the major banking index came under pressure. For the coming expiry week, this trend is expected to continue, ICICI-direct feels. Declines in the Nifty should be taken as a buying opportunity, he advised. September quarter earnings season started off on a positive note but Axis Bank earnings - the major one - announced before Diwali was disappointing and hit market sentiment. The flow of results announcement was bit slow due to Diwali holiday in the week gone by but in the coming week, about 182 companies (as per BSE data) will release their earnings for the quarter ended September 2017. Major ones among them would be Infosys, HDFC Bank, Yes Bank, ICICI Bank, Maruti Suzuki, IOC, ITC, HCL Technologies, ONGC, HUL, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Asian Paints, Ambuja Cements, ABB India, Zee Entertainment, L&T

Finance, M&M Financial, Mindtree, RBL Bank, Biocon, Jubilant Foodworks, Canara Bank, Adani Transmission and Bharat Financial.

Infosys, which normally kicks off the earnings season, postponed its results announcement date. It will deliver results for July-September quarter on October 24, around 15:45 hours IST. The key thing to watch out for would be commentary from new interim'

CEO UB Pravin Rao and Co-founder Nandan Nilekani who was appointed as Non-Executive Chairman of the company on August 24, after Vishal Sikka resigned as CEO and MD. "Key issues to watch out for would be an update on internal stability of the company; commentary around contribution of newly launched services, and revenue scale and growth from products and solutions; and commentary around macro, ver-

ticals, margins and pricing," Motilal Oswal said. Motilal Oswal expects Infosys to report 2 percent growth in constant currency revenue in Q2 QoQ while ICICI-direct sees constant currency revenue growth at 2.5 percent QoQ against 2.7 percent in Q1. The country's second largest software company had been in focus due to the fight between the board members and Co-founder Narayana Murthy over corporate governance standards. Banks earnings will be in focus, especially after Axis Bank,

the country's third largest private sector lender, recorded a sharp rise in slippages that increased its non-performing assets sharply. Nifty Bank fell nearly 700 points in three consecutive sessions. Asset quality will be key to watch for. Profit of majority of banks may be higher due to a low base in the year-ago quarter

that was hit by higher provisions. ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Yes Bank, Canara Bank, IDFC Bank, RBL Bank and Vijaya Bank will announce their July-September quarter earnings in the coming week.

Most experts, before Q2 earnings, expect the asset quality to improve from the fourth quarter (FY18) onwards. Hence, the key thing to watch for would be their earnings estimates for FY19.

Futures and options contracts for October series on the National Stock Exchange will expire on Thursday in the coming week and traders will roll over their positions in November series. Maximum call open interest (OI) of 46.7 lakh contracts stands at strike price 10,200, which will act as a crucial resistance level for the index in the October series, followed by 10,300, which now holds 38.71 lakh contracts in open interest. Maximum Put OI of 75.

18 lakh contracts was seen at strike price 10,000, which will act as a crucial base for the index in October series, followed by 10,100, which now holds 45.59 lakh contracts. After its recent record high followed by a sharp fall, technical experts expect the market to consolidate in the range of 10,000-10,200 in the coming week. On the medium-to-long term perspective, they see Nifty crossing 10,500 level.

"Going forward, we expect the index to remain on a rising trajectory and extend the up-move towards 10,600 in coming months. The measuring implication of the bullish Double Bottom pattern (10,170 to 9,700 = 470 points) added to the breakout point of 10,170 projects upside towards 10,600 regions over the coming months," Dharmesh Shah - Head Technical, ICICI Direct, com Research said. Atul Suri,

Chief Investment Officer at Marathon Trends PMS, sees near-term pain for the market if Nifty Bank underperforms which could lead to some consolidation in the market.

The crucial support for the index stands at 9,700 and a breach of which could take Nifty towards 9,200 level. The Rs 1,542.24-crore initial public offer of Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management will open for subscription on October 25, with a price band of Rs 247-252 per share.

'It's a dream come true': Hasan Ali achieves childhood goal in becoming top bowler

Pakistan's Hasan Ali is officially the world's best one-day bowler, with an early career record surpassing even legendary compatriot Waqar Younis and a unique 'bomb explosion' wicket celebration which is just as eye-catching.

The 23-year-old, who is the leading wicket-taker in the ongoing series against Sri Lanka, has enjoyed a meteoric rise in just 14 months.

He became the joint third fastest bowler to claim 50 one-day wickets with the mark achieved in 23 matches, the same number as Australian icon Dennis Lillee and four games fewer than Waqar.

Since making his ODI debut against Ireland in August in 2016, Hasan is the leading wicket taker with 54 victims. He is also the best this year with 43 wickets in 17 matches.

"It's a dream come true," Hasan told AFP. "I set many goals in my childhood and to be the world number one bowler was amongst the top."

Hasan has helped Pakistan to a 4-0 lead in the current series against Sri Lanka with 12 wickets, including 5-34 in Abu Dhabi.



He also played a leading role in Pakistan's Champions Trophy win in June in England where he finished with 13 wickets and was named player of the tournament.

But what has also attracted fans around the world is his celebration every time he takes a wicket — he mimics a bomb explosion, pumping the blasting mechanism which leads to the blast.

Hasan first played cricket in his native town of Ladhay Wala Wraich near Gujranwala, an area famous for

producing wrestlers and kabaddi players. Hasan's elder brother Ataur Rehman noticed his talent at an early age and organised a gym and a pitch in the backyard of their family home.

"My elder brother was the greatest influence on my career and after a few first-class seasons I was picked by Peshawar franchise in the first edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL)," recalls Hasan.

Recruited as an emerging player, Hasan was mentored by former England coach Andy Flower and ex-Pak-

istan pacer Mohammad Akram. "I have been blessed with success and the Champions Trophy victory was the best thing. The next big goal is to win the 2019 World Cup in England," said Hasan.

Former Pakistan captain and legendary pacer Waqar praised Hasan but warned against piling too much pressure on his shoulders.

"His rise is phenomenal," Waqar told AFP. "But since a lot of events have happened in Pakistan cricket I would like to see Hasan and other talented youngsters be mentored properly so that they don't get lost."

Waqar was referring to Mohammad Amir's rise in 2009 before his career was derailed in a spot-fixing case a year later.

This year Pakistan has lost dashing opener Sharjeel Khan, banned for five years with two others suspended in a PSL spot-fixing case.

"Hasan and other youngsters are assets for our cricket and they can carry our cricket forward. We cannot afford another jolt so I advise they should be monitored and mentored," said Waqar.

Top Pakistan player reports bookie approach



SHARJAH: A Pakistani cricketer, who is part of the squad currently engaged in the ODI series against Sri Lanka in the UAE, has reported an approach by a bookie to the anti-corruption unit of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), it emerged on Friday.

The offer was made before the third ODI against Sri Lanka on Wednesday, which Pakistan won by seven wickets to clinch the five-match series 3-0, Wisden India has learnt.

"A top player was approached by a bookie and the player instantly reported the matter to the PCB anti-corruption unit. The man has been known to the players and lives in the

UAE," a source told Wisden India, confirming that the player in question had followed the procedure of informing the PCB as soon as possible, as laid down in the players' code.

Six Pakistan players were involved in a spot-fixing case in the Pakistan Super League earlier this year.

Of them, Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif have been banned for five years. Mohammad Irfan was also fined and suspended for six months, while Mohammad Nawaz was banned for two months. The verdict on two other players — Shahzaib Hasan and Nasir Jamshed — is still awaited.

Former cricketer Sarfaraz Nawaz 'threatened' by bookies

ISLAMABAD: Former cricketer Sarfaraz Nawaz registered a complaint with the police against bookies for threatening him, police said on Friday. He has sought protection and action against those who have threatened him.

The former cricketer lodged a complaint with the assistant commissioner Industrial Area who forwarded it to the Industrial Area police.

The FIR says Mr Nawaz had spoken against the bookie mafia in TV shows and on social media and that he is also pursuing court cases regarding the matter as well.

According to the FIR, Mr Nawaz said he was returning



with a friend after recording statements as witnesses in two separate cases in courts of additional sessions judges on Oct 13 when their car was intercepted in I-8.

Two men are said to have

disembarked from the vehicle and pulled out weapons. One of the men remained in front of the car while the other is said to have approached Mr Nawaz' car, threatened him and told him not to give state-

ments against the PCB, players and bookies and to stop pursuing cases in courts.

According to the complainant, the man threatened his wife and children in case he goes to the courts again.

The complainant had registered a similar complaint in 2010 when he was threatened by unidentified persons in Kachnar Park I-8.

When asked, the police said surveillance and vigilance was started in the area the former cricketer lived and that investigations have been launched. The matter of providing Mr Nawaz with protection has been referred to senior officers.

Perera to captain Sri Lanka in T20s against Pakistan

Sri Lanka on Saturday announced a 15-man squad for the upcoming T20 series against Pakistan, with Thisara Perera leading the side.

Sri Lanka's limited-overs captain Upul Tharanga will not be a part of the squad since he refused to play the third T20 of the series, which is to be held in Lahore.

Suranga Lakmal, Dinesh Chandimal and Lasith Malinga also refused to play in Lahore and, therefore, have been excluded from the squad.

Sri Lanka Cricket had also reduced Danushka Gunathilaka's punishment for disciplinary violation from six to three matches anticipating refusal



by the senior players.

Tickets for the final T20 in Lahore have gone on sale. Sri Lanka whitewashed Pakistan in the Test series while Pakistan has thrashed Sri Lanka to claim

the ODI series.

Sri Lanka squad: Thisara Perera (captain), Dilshan Munnaweera, Danushka Gunathilaka, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Ashan Priyanjan, Mahela

Udawatte, Dasun Shanaka, Sachith Pathirana, Vikum Sanjaya, Lahiru Gamage, Seekkuge Prasanna, Vishwa Fernando, Isuru Udana, Jeffrey Vandercay and Chaturanga de Silva.

Ravichandran Ashwin says he will retire if he gets 618 Test wickets for India

Ravichandran Ashwin may not be turning out for India in the one day internationals at this point in time, but the off-spinner is only too keen to better his craft in the hope of snaring 618 Test wickets

"I am a big fan of Anil Kumble and he has got 619 wickets. If I get to 618 wickets, I will be very thankful too and, if I get to 618, that will be my last Test match," said Ravichandran Ashwin to the Gulf News.

He also had a few good words to say about Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Rangana Herath.

"Rangana Herath is one of my role models. I think he is a fabulous bowler. He just overcomes limitations every single day. Age does wear the body out over a period of time.



"As far as Herath is concerned, he just keeps proving that he is a champion cricketer and he can use pressure to his good advantage. That is ex-

actly what he did on the final day of the first Test (against Pakistan)," Ashwin added.

Ravichandran Ashwin has so far

taken 292 Test scalps at an average of 25.26 and with a strike rate of 52.4. He has also bagged 150 one-day wickets at 32.91.

As far as his non-selection for India in the one-day internationals, Ashwin said, "I don't have an answer to that because resting [a player] and making decisions are definitely not something that I can comment on."

Ashwin also added that he is concentrating on improving on a daily basis. "I am definitely focused on developing every single day and becoming a better cricketer because that is the only thing that will last.

"Tomorrow, if I am given an opportunity, I should be the best I can be and probably even better than the best that I can be," he said.

State Football League-2017:

Two matches were played, both of which ended in draws

Srinagar, Oct 21: In the ongoing State Football League-2017, two matches were played at Synthetic Turf TRC on Friday (Oct 20), both of which ended in draws.

In the Premier-Division match, J&K Forest and Food & Supplies (F&S) played a 1-1 draw. Right from the start of the match, both the teams played aggressive football and attacked each other's goal posts frequently. But it was F&S team who broke the shackles in 5th minute of the play, when Imran breached the defence lines of Forest team and ensured his team takes an early lead.

After conceding the lead the Forest players stepped up their attacks on F&S goal post and in 37th minute of the play they scored an equaliser through Rizwan. The first half ended with score line reading 1-1. As the second half began, both the teams played defensive football for most of the times which resulted in no more goals being scored. The match ended in a 1-1 draw and it was a fair result for both the teams. Yasin of F&S team was declared as player of the match.

The Super Division match of the day, played at Synthetic Turf TRC, also ended in a 1-1 draw between Lone Star KFC Blue and Young Maharaja FC. In the closely contested match, both the teams missed several scoring opportunities throughout the 90-minutes of the play. In first half no team was able to score as defence lines of both the teams thwarted all the moves to score by the opposite teams.

In second half, no team could score in the first 25 minutes and it seemed that the match was heading for a goal less draw when all of a sudden Nadeem Ahmad of Lone Star team managed to send one straight into the goal post of Maharaja team. However, seeing their team trailing, the Maharaja players summed up all their energy and launched several counter attacks on the goal post of Lone Star team. For 15-minutes, Lone Star defenders didn't allow the Maharaja players to breach the defence line. However, in 85th minute of the match, Owais managed to score an all important goal for Maharaja Sports through a pen-



alty kick. In the last five minutes of the match, both teams desperately tried to score, but failed to do so. The match ended in a 1-1 draw.

The State Football League-2017 is being organised by the J&K Football Association (JKFA) in all 22 districts of the state to unearth the hidden talent. More than 500 football teams and clubs with over 12000 players and over 1500 team officials are participating in the mega event, first of its kind in the history of J&K football.

While B-Division League of State Football League is already completed with IFC Nowgam winning the title, the A-Division League has reached to the final stage with Fort View FC and Novelty FC qualifying for final. In Super and Premier Division leagues, more than 60 percent matches have been completed.

The premier division teams include J&K Bank XI, Forest XI, Police XI, Food and Supplies XI, Accountant General's XI, Maharaja FC, Iqbal FC, I-League Lone Star KFC, I-League Real Kashmir FC, Power Development Corporation and State Football Academy are participating in the event.

The DFA Srinagar, DFA Anantnag, DFA Baramulla, Sopore Zone and Pattan Zone, DFA Budgam, DFA Kulgam, DFA Shopian, DFA Pulwama, DFA Ganderbal, DFA Zone Kupwara and Handwara, DFA Bandipora Zone, Hajin Zone, DFA Kargil and DFA Leh will send their teams for Kashmir province after the culmination of district leagues.

Chamara Kapugedera suffers freak injury during 3rd Pakistan vs Sri Lanka ODI

Chamara Kapugedera, Sri Lanka cricketer, was injured badly during the third ODI against Pakistan at Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi after being accidentally hit by a ball.

During the 10th over of Pakistan's innings, Niroshan Dickwella threw the ball towards Kapugedera but he had no idea that the ball was coming towards him.

Unfortunately, he got hit under his right eye and was taken to the hospital. Kapugedera didn't return to the field for the remainder of the

game. "Chamara is under observation. There is no fracture thankfully, but there is a massive swelling on his face," Sri Lanka's Manager Asanka Gurusinha had said to Cricbuzz on Thursday (October 19).

Kapugedera missed the Sharjah ODI but is expected to play the last game of the series on Monday.



Sri Lanka are trailing the five-match series against Pakistan 4-0. Riding on Hasan Ali and

Shadab Khan's splendid spells, Pakistan thrashed Sri Lanka by seven wickets in the fourth ODI in Sharjah.

Hasan took 3-37 while spinners Shadab Khan (2-29) and Imad Wasim (2-13) also chipped in with useful wickets as Sri Lanka were skittled out for 173 in 43.4 overs.

In reply, the visitors took three quick wickets but Babar Azam and Shoaib Malik played sensibly to guide Pakistan home with 11 overs to spare.

This was Pakistan's eighth consecutive win which also included their Champions Trophy triumph in England in June while Sri Lanka succumbed to their 11th consecutive ODI defeat.