

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

TUESDAY

● OCTOBER, 24, 2017
● 03 SAFFAR 1439 AH
● ISSUE: 247
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● PAGES: 08

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 TUESDAY: 05:49 PM
SUNRISE WEDNESDAY: 06:48 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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ASIA NAQASH REVIEWS DEV WORKS IN HAZRATBAL CONSTITUENCY

SHOULD CITIZENS PRAY TO EC CHIDAMBARAM ASKS MODI OVER GUJARAT

US'S INDIA OUTREACH POLICY FOR ASIA PACIFIC SHOULD BE LEVERAGED IACC

INDIAN CRICKET TEAM'S MIDDLE ORDER WOES A CONCERN: MSK PRASAD

Political process on Kashmir necessary: Mehbooba

'Stakeholders in Kashmir shall take opportunity to enter into dialogue'



Srinagar, Oct 23: Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti Monday said that the political process on Kashmir was necessary at this time and hoped that the stakeholders in Kashmir shall take opportunity and enter into dialogue process.

According to the KNS correspondent, while talking to reporters here, Mehbooba said that she was happy that the centre has started the dialogue which is necessity of the time.

"The situation Kashmir is not well and people are fed up with the violence. So it is

the right time to announce the dialogue process. If the centre has take a step, we including other stakeholders should also move a step ahead in cashing upon the opportunity and enter into the dialogue process," Mehbooba said.

She said that political process is necessary beside the security measures.

"The representative announced by the centre is good human being and a man of credibility. He was involved in the dialogue

▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

'GOI DELAYED ANNOUNCEMENT OF STARTING DIALOGUE PROCESS ON KASHMIR'

Tarigami, G H Mir, Yasin welcome dialogue

Srinagar, Oct 23: CPI (M) State general secretary M Y Tarigami said that the announcement by the centre is though delayed, but appropriate.

"Government of India delayed the announcement of starting dialogue process on Kashmir, but finally realised that Kashmir is a political issue which needs political resolution," Tarigami told KNS.

Tarigami, who is the MLA from Kulgam, said that CPI (M) as a responsible political party has been time and again insisting on resolution of the Kashmir issue through dialogue and sustained political process.

"Any political initiative aimed at resolving the political issue of Kashmir is appropriate," he said.

PDF Chairman and Independent MLA from Khanshib Hakim Yaseen said that any dialogue aimed at result-oriented and meaningful outcome and with sincerity is welcome.

"Any political conflict is resolved through result-oriented dialogue aimed at resolving issues are good. But

▶ See **GoI**...Pg 02

India picks former spy chief Dineshwar Sharma to lead Kashmir talks

New Delhi: A former head of the country's domestic spy agency will lead talks to end the nearly three-decade-long, bloody insurgency in Kashmir, the government announced on Monday.

Home minister Rajnath Singh said Dineshwar Sharma, 63, who retired as the Intelligence Bureau director in December, will speak to "all stakeholders", as well as decide whether to talk to the hardline separatist group.

The talks offer stems from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's last Independence Day outreach to troubled Kashmir. Modi had said the region's problems could be solved by embracing its people rather than resorting to abuse or bullets.

Modi's comments were seen as a possible shift in his policy towards Kashmir, where the government has been pursuing a tough line against a surge in street violence that has killed about 100 people over the past year.

"The Prime Minister's statement had clearly underlined our government's policy and intention towards Jammu and Kashmir," Singh told a press conference to announce the launch of a "sustained dialogue".

"Carrying forward the conviction and consistency in its policy, we have decided that



a sustained dialogue process should begin in Jammu and Kashmir."

Monday's announcement is the latest in a series of efforts to end an insurgency that has killed more than 40,000 people since violence broke out against Indian rule in the region in 1989.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government was the first to hold talks with Kashmiri separatists in 2004 but the effort fizzled out after his government was voted out of power.

In 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reached out to Kashmir with a two-day ▶ See **India**...Pg 02

INDIAN ARMY AMONG THE STRONGEST IN THE WORLD: GENERAL RAWAT

PITHORAGARH (Uttarakhand): Indian Army is one of the strongest armies in the world, thanks to its committed regiments and personnel like those in the 3 Kumaon Rifles, Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said today.

The Army chief was here to honour soldiers, retired personnel and veer naris (wives of soldiers killed on the line of duty) of the 3 Kumaon Rifles, which is celebrating its centenary year.

He also released a postage stamp on this occasion. In his 45-minute speech, General Rawat spoke highly about the valour and glorious history of the 3 Kumaon Rifles.

"The valour displayed by Kumaonis of 3 Kumaon ▶ See **Rawat**...Pg 02

Senior citizens valuable assets for society: Dy CM

JAMMU, OCTOBER 23

— Recognizing the contribution of senior citizens towards creating a progressive and prosperous society, Deputy Chief Minister Dr. Nirmal Singh appealed the youth to learn from their experiences and expertise for taking the nation to greater heights.

The Deputy CM said this during a function organized by Senior Citizens' Rejuvenation Centre (SCRC) to celebrate its 4th foundation day.

MLC Vikram Randhawa,



Chief Engineer PDD Ashwani Gupta, Joint Commissioner

JMC Rajesh Sharma besides prominent citizens including TR Gupta, Harinder Gupta and Mamta Singh were also present on the occasion.

President SCRC Bal Krishan Gupta, General Secretary SCRC A. K. Kalsotra and other members of the Centre participated in the function.

The Deputy CM said the government provides several benefits through various schemes and policies for older persons which are ▶ See **Dy CM**...Pg 02

DAK ADVISES NOT TO CONSUME FISH WASHED ASHORE IN JHELMUM RIVER

Srinagar, Oct 23: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Monday advised people not to consume fish that had surfaced on the banks of Jhelum River in Srinagar.

President DAK Dr Nisar ul Hassan in a statement said consumption of these fish could result in serious health hazard.

"In an unusual phenomenon, yesterday thousands of fish washed up on the shore of Jhelum river in Chattabal area of Srinagar city," he said.

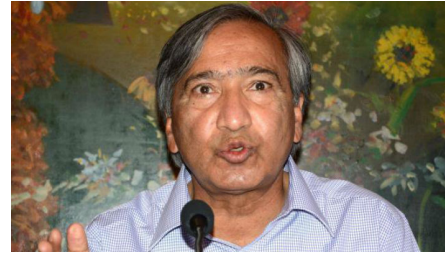
"Though most of the fish were alive, there were many which were on the verge of death," he added.

Dr Nisar said we were disturbed by the number of people that showed up to collect the fish and take ▶ See **DAK**...Pg 02

Vandalizing houses of families of policemen, militants, political workers unacceptable: Tarigami

Srinagar Oct 23: Legislator and senior CPI (M) leader Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami Monday said that the continuing violence in Kashmir Valley, recent spurt in killings of innocent and unarmed persons is a matter of grave concern which a no sane person can ignore. In the recent weeks disturbing reports of the killings and attacks of uninvolved kin's of one group by the other and vice-versa are pouring in from different parts of Kashmir, especially southern districts of Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama and Anantnag.

The killing of a woman and injury to another in Seer village of Tral on Sunday is a glaring example of how unsafe the life in Kashmir has become. It has added a shocking dimension to the deteriorating situation in



Valley. Deaths are always painful as it worsens the already deteriorating situation in Kashmir which is craving for settlement since last many decades. Kashmiris are at crossroads where anyone for their nefarious designs uses them as cannon fodder.

"Where does this all lead us to? Are ▶ See **Tarigami**...Pg 02

POLICE ARRESTS DUO WITH 400 LIVE ROUNDS

Srinagar, Oct 23: Police on Monday claimed to have arrested two persons along with live rounds of AK-47 assault rifle in Bemina area of Srinagar.

A police official said that at around 6 pm Sunday evening police laid a Naka checking on the highway near N.R Colony Bemina.

Police Station Batamalo apprehended two persons namely Shakoar Ahmad Ksokhar S/o Sanyee Khee and Tanveer Ahmad Raja S/o Abdul Rashid Raja, residents of Teetwal Karnah Kupwara and recovered 400 live rounds of AK-47 from their possession, he said.

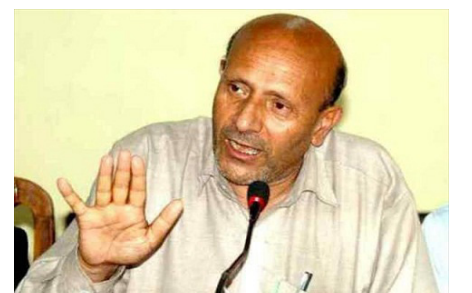
▶ See **Police**...Pg 02

Political workers and families of militants, all have a right to live with honour and dignity: Er Rasheed

Anantnag, Oct 23: Reiterating that resolution to Kashmir dispute is the only way forward for restoring peace in the entire sub-continent, AIP Supremo and MLA Langate Er. Rasheed has asked New Delhi not to treat Kashmiris as its enemies.

He was speaking at a function in Degree College Bijbehara organized to pay tributes to renowned poet, scholar and teacher Late Prof. Ghulam Mohammad Shaaad, which was attended by a galaxy of poets, writers, scholars and students.

Speaking on the occasion, Rasheed said that the unity among various political parties and thoughts is a must and need of the hour, in order to persuade New Delhi and Islamabad for a permanent settlement to the dispute.



He said "Unless all those calling themselves as stake holders do not mend their behavior and try to find out a common minimum ground, not much is going to change. It is easy for anyone to avoid the resolution if Kashmiris ▶ See **Rasheed**...Pg 02

TRAL AREAS SHUT AGAINST THRASHING OF HIZB MILITANT'S FAMILY

Locals accuse Forces of damaging property worth lakhs

Pulwama, Oct 23: Life was disrupted in South Kashmir's Tral town due to shutdown against an army raid on a militant's house and the subsequent thrashing of family members.

From past couple of days, army has allegedly been raiding the houses of active militants in different parts of South Kashmir and allegedly thrashing the family members of these militants and ransacking the houses.

These raids sparked protest in different hamlets of South Kashmir's Shopian district while on Sunday night ▶ See **Tral**...Pg 02

SKUAST-K's 32nd University Council Meeting held

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23

Governor N.N.Vohra, Chancellor of the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), chaired the 32nd Council meeting of SKUAST-K, here at the Raj Bhavan today. Chief Minister Ms. Mehbooba Mufti, Pro Chancellor of the University, Sh. Lal Singh, Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment; Sh. Syed Basharat Ah-



mad Bukhari, Minister for Horticulture and Sh. Abdul Ghani Kohli, Minister for Animal, Sheep Husbandry & Fisheries participated in the meeting. Chancellor released two research based publications

brought out by the University: High altitude water conservation technology in ▶ See **SKUAST**...Pg 02

STOP HARASSING MILITANT FAMILIES, NC TO GOVERNMENT

'Politicians in South Kashmir feeling insecure: Larmi

Kulgam, Oct 23: Appealing government to stop raiding the houses of militants, National Conference Monday said that these actions have not only created fear psychosis among political leaders and workers in South Kashmir but also local policemen are feeling scared to visit their houses.

"If I have committed a crime, why are you targeting my family? The raids on the houses of militants should stop as they have started reacting and are targeting the local police men and political workers. Ransacking ▶ See **NC**...Pg 02

PHD delegation calls upon JK Bank Chairman J&K BANKS' GROWTH DIRECTLY LINKED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE: PARVEZ AHMED

Srinagar, Oct 23 (KNS): A delegation of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) Kashmir Chapter today called upon the Chairman and CEO J&K Bank Parvez Ahmed at Corporate Headquarters.

The Chairman held an elaborate meeting with the members led by Chambers' Chairman PHDCCI Mushtaq Ahmed Chaya during which a number of issues pertaining to trade and industry were discussed.

Listening to the various queries put forward by participating members, Chairman and CEO Parvez Ahmed assured the Chamber full support of the bank towards upliftment of state economy as a whole.

"People of the state have lot of expectations from J&K Bank, which is pride for any brand in itself; that is to play

significantly positive role in their lives. The banks' growth is directly linked with development of the J&K state. It is the economic lifeline of J&K people and remains sensitive to the expectations from almost every quarter of the society," said Parvez Ahmed.

Reflecting upon the performance of J&K Bank in comparison to other private banks operating in the state, he said, "Unlike other private banks, J&K bank offers a comprehensive range of diverse services tailored according to the needs of each and every group of the society."

The various issues raised by the members included request for extension in moratorium period and interest subvention, constitution of Joint Consultative Committee of J&K Bank and PHDCCI, nomination of PHDCCI in State Level and Sub Commit-



tees of JKSLBC, financial support under CGTMSE, Rehabilitation of Sick SMEs, Cluster financing, Sports Partnership and marketing of J&K Tourism by J&K Bank.

A number of other suggestions were also put forward by the members besides impressing upon need for speedy resolution of their issues.

On the occasion, the Chairman also announced that the bank will enter into a memorandum of understanding with the chamber regarding vari-

ous demands and suggestions put forward by the chamber as a whole.

"In order to facilitate the resolution of various issues faced by traders, a memorandum should be entered into to resolve the problems faced by local businessmen and traders of state," said Parvez Ahmed.

"We are working on establishing high net worth business units which will specially cater to the needs of businessmen according to

their fields of work," he added.

On the occasion, Chairman PHDCCI Kashmir, Mushtaq Ahmed Chaya expressed his gratitude to the Chairman Parvez Ahmed for his patient audience and positive assurance.

He expressed hope that all the issues raised in the meeting shall be taken care of in a time bound manner.

Among those present in the meeting were Vice Chairman PHDCCI, Zahoor Ahmed Trambo, Chairman (Education and Food Processing Wing PHDCCI) Showkat Ahmed Chowdhary, Chairman (FMCG and Taxes Committee PHDCCI) Jan Mohammad Koul, Chairman (Tourism, Culture and Sports Committee PHDCCI) Vicky Shaw, Co-Chairman (Sports Committee) Shahana Fatima, Chairman (Handicrafts and MSME Committee) Bilal Kawoosa and others.

CENTRE'S DIALOGUE ANNOUNCEMENT WASTE OF TIME: FAROOQ ABDULLAH

'All reports on Kashmir should be debated in Parliament'

Srinagar, Oct 23: Former chief minister and NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah Monday said that the centre failed in all its measures about dealing with Kashmir and now has announced dialogue on Kashmir which is "waste of time".

According to the KNS correspondent, the MP said that centre should present the report of all interlocutors, N N Vohra late Dileep Padgoankar on Kashmir in Parliament.

"All these reports are lying with Home Minister which should be debated in the parliament," he said.

"What is the need to appoint another person as interlocutor? Did not Padgoankar held sustained dialogue for two years. What is its basis? (Ajit) Doval's doctrine of suppressing Kashmiris has failed. Kashmiris showed that the more they are suppressed the more they rise," he said while talking to reporters here.

"They thought demonetisation will end this here, but it did not. So their policies failed and now they came up with this announcement to start dialogue process here," he said.

He said that BJP came up with many stands and all these stands proved futile.

"This announcement of dialogue is an-



other ploy on Kashmir and waste of time," he said, adding that the NC has reiterated that Kashmir is a political issue which needs political solution.

While announcing the centre's sustained dialogue on Kashmir, Singh said that former Director of IB, Dineshwar Sharma will initiate a sustained interaction and dialogue to understand legitimate aspirations of people in Jammu and Kashmir.

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MEHBOOBA

process in North-east for a long time," she said. While announcing the centre's sustained dialogue on Kashmir, Singh said that former Director of IB, Dineshwar Sharma will initiate a sustained interaction and dialogue to understand legitimate aspirations of people in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mehbooba thanked the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Rajnath Singh and government of India for the announcement.

"It is a welcome step.... Something has started..It is a Confidence Building Measure and necessity of the time," she said.

According to KNS, asked whether NIA action on separatists and some businessman will make the dialogue announcement credible, she said that security measures and political process are separate issues.

"Stakeholders should have concern as people are suffering and fed up with the violence," she said, adding that the dialogue is open to all with no conditions on any side.

GOI

the process of dialogue should be held through honest and with sincere intentions. Many dialogue processes through interlocutors were announced by the centre, but their reports were ignored by the successive government and political process are separate issues.

"The current announcement of dialogue should be time-bound and meaningful," he said.

Former PCC president Prof Saif-u-Din Soz said that the he welcomes the dialogue announcement by the centre and insisted that all stakeholders including Hurriyat Conference should be included into the dialogue process for meaningful outcome.

While announcing the centre's sustained dialogue on Kashmir, Singh said that former Director of IB, Dineshwar Sharma will initiate a sustained interaction and dialogue to understand legitimate aspirations of people in Jammu and Kashmir.

President Democratic Party Nationalist (DPN) Ghulam Hassan Mir told KNS that appointment of Dhaneshwar Sharma for holding talks a positive step from Government of India. "I wish it to have a good impact on the Kashmiri political scenario", he said.

INDIA

visit, and subsequently also set up a panel of eminent Indians to talk to the Hurriyat leaders and suggest a peace roadmap.

Kashmir has remained largely paralysed since July last year when government forces shot dead a young militant leader, Burhan Wani, touching off months of deadly street protests. The government responded with force, leaving more than 100 people dead.

The home minister said Sharma, a 1979 batch IPS officer, will submit a report to the Centre but did not clarify when.

Reacting to the news, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah tweeted: "...Will keep an open mind & wait to see results of the dialogue process."

RAWAT

Rifles and Kumaon Regiment in battles right from the first World War to those fought in the post-independence era bears testimony to their exemplary contribution in securing the country's borders," he said.

The jawans of 3 Kumaon Rifles also held a parade to mark the event.

General Rawat also asked officers to dispose off matters related to pension and other benefits of ex-soldiers on priority basis.

"No delay in these matters will be tolerated," he added. The 3 Kumaon Rifles organised several programmes on the occasion including an attractive parade, band display, dog show and exhibition of handicrafts by local artisans.

DYCM

meant to promote the health and well-being of senior citizens around the country. He said the traditional Indian society and the age-old joint family system have been instrumental in safeguarding the socio-economic security of the elderly people. However, with rapid changes in society and the emergence of nuclear families in recent years, the el-

derly are likely to be exposed to emotional, physical and financial insecurity in the years to come, he maintained. He expressed hope in the strength of cultural ties and social fabrics of the state and the country to provide direction to turbulent relations in the families of modern times.

The Deputy Chief Minister, while referring to the major initiatives being taken up by the present government for developing Jammu city, said that work on prestigious projects including multi-level parking at B.C Road, Tawi River Front Development Project, Maharaja Hari Singh Park, establishment of IIT, IIM, IIMC and others is in full swing.

Dr Singh urged the senior citizens to exhibit participatory role in the developmental activities maintaining that it would ensure that the schemes are fast-paced and completed within the stipulated timeline.

Acknowledging the fact that senior citizens can contribute extensively in the progress and development of nation, the Deputy CM said that their experience and wisdom are worth following with which we can learn and achieve our goals.

Earlier, President SCRC said the aim of this Centre is to create an engagement platform for senior citizens to interact socially, build a support network, boost their self esteem and lead an active life.

The Centre is open to all senior citizens and hosts a plethora of activities such as yoga, laughter club, spiritual lectures, aerobics, quizzes and games, birthday celebrations, panel discussions, hobbies and craft classes, festival celebrations.

DAK

them home. He warned people not to eat these fish as it is not yet clear what has caused this strange occurrence.

"We should not take them till the reports of fish and water samples come," he said.

DAK President said while the concerned authorities have "speculated" lack of oxygen in water, there could be variety of other factors responsible for this rare happening. Infections, toxins and environmental contaminants could give this unexpected sight.

He said consumption of such fish can cause severe infections and life-threatening diseases in humans. People can get these infections not only by eating fish but by handling them too.

"Marine toxins are heat stable and largely unaffected by cooking, said Dr Nisar adding that these toxins can cause immediate grave health consequences and can have serious long term health risks."

TARIGAMI

we drifting towards anarchy? The confidence in public institutions and the democratic process appears to be taking a back turn and sense of insecurity increasing day-by-day. I wonder whether history will forgive us if we remain silent spectators to the prevailing situation. We should raise our voice and build public opinion against the fratricidal war that has started between Kashmiri groups with different ideologies, victims in many cases being unarmed and uninvolved civilians. The line between humanity and inhumanity is fast diminishing and element of dehumanization is slowly creeping in Kashmir society which is an alarming situation. Vandalizing the houses of families of policemen, militants and political workers is another glaring example of how fast situation in Kashmir is deteriorating. Whosoever is responsible, such acts are unacceptable and condemnable."

He said that unfortunately, in Kashmir political leaders condemn or justify killings and other incidents based on their requirement and stand. But the ultimate sufferer is the common Kashmiri. It is high time that all the political parties, irrespective of their ideologies, come forward and suggest effective measures to stop killings of unarmed, uninvolved and innocent people in the Valley.

POLICE

The official said that a case has been registered and investigation taken up to ascertain the facts.

RASHEED

are a divided house. While people are suffering at all fronts because of the political uncertainty, politicians should refrain from getting dividends of circumstances".

Er. Rasheed appealed for respecting the honour and dignity of every Kashmiri including political workers and that of the militant families. He said "Harassing anyone is a

matter of grave concern. Though both militants and security forces need to show restraint but the state has to understand the fact that it's responsibilities are much more bigger while dealing with the situation". He appealed militants also not to forget that their every action is being minutely discussed and interpreted by their opponents, as such they against all odds need to take high moral ground. It makes no sense to abuse, humiliate and torture anyone who is unarmed, irrespective of the fact if he belongs to family of a militant or that of a police cop.

TRAL

according to locals, the army men from 42 Rashtriya Rifles raided the house of a Hizbul Mujahideen militant at Wagad village of Aripal tehsil of Tral town in Pulwama district, ransacking the house and beat inmates to pulp.

Locals told news agency CNS that troopers barged into the house of Hizb militant Mushtaq Ahmed Chopan and thrashed his old aged father, Ghulam Ahmed Chopan. "The troopers not only thrashed him but also injured dozens of villagers," Chopan's family members alleged.

The incident sparked a shutdown in the town while people blocked the roads amid pro-freedom slogans. According to locals, after finding these roads blocked, the government forces went on a rampage and ransacked the houses and damaged the windowpanes of a local mosque in Wagad.

"Government Forces broke window panes, smashed goods, accessories and damaged property worth lakhs," the locals alleged.

Meanwhile, shops and other business establishments remained closed in the town while skeletal movement of transport was observed on the roads.

SKUAST

cold arid desert of Ladakh and Fishery sector in J&K (Analysis of structural changes, public investment & institutional support).

Chancellor and Pro Chancellor urged Minister for Horticulture the importance of time bound action being taken to develop Controlled Atmosphere Stores and Cold Storage units within and outside the State to enable fruit growers and farmers to get better returns on their produce. Pro Chancellor informed that the Railways Ministry has assured help in providing better transport facilities for timely movement of the apple crop produced in the Valley.

Governor emphasized the vital need for the State Government to establish a marketing strategy for all items produced in the State, to incentivize higher production. He also stressed the need for strengthening the fisheries, animal husbandry, poultry farming, silk worm rearing, saffron and other sectors through effective marketing interventions.

Chancellor also stressed the need for early formulation of a well considered Horticulture Policy, effective pesticide control measures, and adoption of best managerial practices for agriculture and its allied fields. In this context he pointed to the need for strengthening the Faculty of Horticulture of SKUAST-K and advised against any hurried decision to set up a University of Horticulture.

Chancellor advised the Principal Secretary Planning to urgently constitute a Committee for identifying the reasons for the poor level of lifting of the seed produced by the University consequent to the indent laced on it by the Agriculture Production Department. He also cautioned that the farmers must be provided seeds timely.

Referring to the rapid pace at which good agricultural land was being converted to other uses, Chancellor advised the urgent formulation of a law for regulating the conversion of agricultural land for any other use.

Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment suggested introduction of procurement of produce by the State Government for safeguarding interests of the farmers and suggested that the Universities should bring out new varieties which enhance quality of the farm products besides merely increasing their production.

Earlier, Vice Chancellor Dr. Nazeer Ahmed made a detailed presentation on the various activities of his University and informed that a case study had been done on the impact of climatic change on land use and land cover of Pir Panchal region covering district Budgam and part of district Srinagar, and said that the findings were cause for serious concern for agriculture. Vice Chancellor informed the Council that the University has developed the following: (i) technological interventions in the Tribal Sub Plan programmes carried out at Leh, Nyoma, Zanskar, Kargil and Gurez and its resultant impact on socio economic condition of tribal people; (ii) in-

roduction of new crops and varieties viz. pigeon pea, olive, nectarine fodder and high value exotic vegetables in Kashmir valley and Ladakh region; (iii) new Fodder oat-5 variety developed for national release having better nutritional quality, high seed yield and resistant to leaf blight and powdery mildew; (iv) Drought tolerant Maize and Rajmash genotypes identified showing superior performance; (v) single cross hybrids in maize and potato identified having superior yield and quality; (vi) High Density Apple Plantation - a success story recording fruit yield ranging from 37-62 t/ha; (vii) improved cattle (Jersey, H.F), goat (Bakerwal, Pashmina Boer), sheep (corriedale, polled Dorset) breeds and supplied to Livestock Development Board and progressive farmers.

Vice Chancellor informed that under new initiatives taken by the University, a Regional cum Facilitation Centre has been sanctioned by Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India which is among the 5 Centers sanctioned across the country to standardize the cultivation practices of medicinal plants. Further the University has implemented student READY (Rural and Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) programme; initiated Masters in Horti Business Management (MHBM); Partnered in National Aroma Mission with IIM, Jammu, for promotion of aromatic plants in Kashmir and Ladakh region; undertaken Collaborative Research Programme with LAWDA on Dal & Nigeen lake Conservation.

Informing the meeting about the academic accomplishments of the University, Vice Chancellor said that the Faculty of Forestry, Beniham, has been accredited by ICFRE, Dehradun, admissions to UG and PG courses through University Entrance Test successfully completed and 808 students got admitted; 201 SKUAST-K students were placed with different organizations.

The Council approved various agenda items of the University including: (i) Two tier Career Advancement Scheme for Non-teaching employees of the University; (ii) adoption of upper age limit i.e. 48 years in respect of ex-servicemen for direct recruitment for the posts of Security Officer and Security Guard of the University as prescribed by the State Government; (iii) change of nomenclature of Teaching Veterinary Clinical Complex to Division of Veterinary Clinical Complex, as per VCI Guidelines of 2016; (iv) adoption of UGC/ICAR notification regarding exemption of NET essentiality for direct recruitment by selection to the post of Assistant Professor and equivalent for the candidates registered for Ph.D prior to 11th July, 2009; (v) adoption of 5th Deans Committee Recommendations regarding Creation of 5 Divisions in Temperate Sericulture Research Institute and Restructuring of Division of Agricultural Engineering as College of Agricultural Engineering & Technology & formation of six new divisions.

Among those who attended the meeting were Prof. C.D. Mayee, President South Asia Biotechnology Centre, New Delhi; Mr. Umang Narula, Principal Secretary to the Governor; Mr. Navin Kumar Choudhary, Principal Secretary Finance; Mr. Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary Planning; Dr. Pradeep Kumar Sharma, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu; Sh. Bas-eer Ahmad Khan, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Sh. Showket Ahmad Beigh, Secretary Agriculture; and Prof. M.H. Wani, Registrar, SKUAST- Kashmir.

NC

of militant houses should stop immediately," NC legislator from South Kashmir Abdul Majid Larmi told news agency CNS adding that to every action and there is an equal and opposite reaction.

"It's better to start counseling the families of militants than to harass them. Love begets love and any force will invite the wrath of militants. We are all scared and feel insecure in our houses. From past couple of days the houses of political workers are being attacked and raided. This has been happening due to wrong policies of the government," Larmi said.

He expressed anguish over the ransacking of houses of militants and said that these raids and attacks should stop immediately. "Leave aside political workers, even policemen in South Kashmir are feeling insecure and are reluctant to visit their houses. If such situation persists, it will only lead to chaos and confusion," the NC legislator said.

Pertinently, videos have gone viral on social networking sites showing Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants warning PDP workers of dire consequences if forces "don't stop ransacking our houses and harassing our families."

Larmi alleged that instead of resolving the Kashmir issue, government of India has been playing games to instill fear among people of Kashmir. "Kashmir is a political issue that needs to be resolved," he said.

India's First Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra for Skilling in Smart Cities

New Delhi, October 23: To bring momentum in skilling through collaborative efforts, the Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh along with Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan here today inaugurated India's first Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK) for Skilling in Smart Cities, in collaboration with New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). The ministers also laid the foundation for a Skill Development Centre at Moti Bagh and a Centre of Excellence at Dharam Marg, New Delhi.

Affirming synergies with the Government of India's flagship programs, the new skill development centres underscore the commitment of the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Housing (MUHA) and the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) to support skilling in smart cities. National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), an executive arm of MSDE, has collaborated with New Delhi Municipal Council Smart City Limited (NDMCSCL) to extend

cooperation for setting up of PMKK Centres for Smart Cities, to provide skill training for unemployed youth through its short-term training (STT) module and contribute to the capacity building of municipal employees through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program.

The event also had graceful presence of dignitaries such as Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, New Delhi; Shri Naresh Kumar, Chairman, NDMC; Shri Karan Singh Tanwar, Vice - Chairman, NDMC; Shri Surender Singh, MLA & Member, NDMC and other senior officials from MUHA, MSDE, NSDC and NDMC.

Inaugurating the skill development centres, Shri Rajnath Singh said, "India which has the privilege of being a young nation, would gain from this demographic dividend to become a superpower and be amongst the top three countries in the world by 2030. The key to reach this milestone is by investing in our youth and making them skilled." Shri Rajnath Singh added, "A skilled person gets respect,

recognition and honor due to his hard work. I strongly believe that these skill development centres would aspire youth to take up vocational training to make themselves self-reliant."

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said, "Collaboration is the need of the hour to support inclusive and sustainable development in the country. Today's event signifies integration and convergence approach towards Respected Prime Minister's two most ambitious projects - the Skill India Mission and the Smart City Mission. Skilled workforce is required for effective development of any big or small project. We aim for recognition and respect to this workforce through skill training."

Special Guest at the event Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, MP Lok Sabha said, "I would like to applaud the efforts of both the ministries and its nodal agencies NSDC and NDMC for pioneering steps to bring in equitable growth and development. I am confident that such centres would deliver quality by extending access to trained youth, which would catalyse the creation of smart

cities in the country."

President, NDMC Shri Naresh Kumar said, "National Skill Mission will prove to be a milestone for the developed India. NDMC supports inclusive development by introducing best practices in skilling and is determined to leave no stone unturned to achieve the mission".

The newly inaugurated Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra leverages NDMC infrastructure for skilling initiatives. Located at Mandir Marg, New Delhi, the NDMC-PMKK Centre for Skilling in Smart Cities is an exemplary heritage building of approx. 30,000 sq.ft., with a capacity of skilling 4,000 youth annually. Catering to healthcare and solar energy sectors, the centre will be managed by one of NSDC's affiliated training partners - Orion Edutech, which has an impeccable record of training nearly 3 lakh candidates through its network of over 275 skill development centres across the country. On this occasion, a solar-power lab powered by Schneider Electric was also inaugurated.

Comments sought on draft guidelines for ground water extraction

New Delhi, October 23: The Central Groundwater Authority (CGWA) has sent Draft guidelines for "issuance of NOC" for ground water withdrawal and draft "Public Notice" to the Chief Secretaries of all the State and Administrators of Union Territories for their comments within 60 days.

Due to the increasing number of litigations in the National Green Tribunal, various branches of Tribunal are directing CGWA to ensure that the ground water withdrawal in the country should be in accordance with law. These guidelines will ensure a uniform regulatory framework across the country so that the discriminatory practices in regulation are either mitigated or minimized.

The major revisions in the guidelines are pan India coverage, decentralization of the No Objection Certificate (NOC) issuing authorities, based on the quantum of ground water extraction viz. revenue heads of the

district, State Nodal Agency / State Ground Water Authority and CGWA, dispensing with the provisions relating to submission of artificial recharge proposals and construction of artificial recharge structures by project proponents, introduction of a water conservation fee in lieu of recharge mechanism; funds raised through the water conservation fee to be used by States for effective ground water management etc. The CGWA constituted by Government of India under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986 has been regulating ground water development and management in the country. The authority has been granting NOC for withdrawal of ground water by industries/infrastructure/mining projects. The entire draft guidelines are available on the website of CGWA and in the NOCAP (www.cgwb.gov.in, www.cgwanoc.gov.in) for the information of the public/stakeholders state governments.

PM CONGRATULATES HIS JAPANESE COUNTERPART SHINZO ABE ON RE-ELECTION

New Delhi, October 23: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has congratulated his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, on victory in the snap polls held on Sunday. "Heartiest greetings to my dear friend Shinzo Abe on his big election win. Look forward to further strengthen India-Japan relations with him", the Prime Minister said.

Zulfkar reviews functioning of FCS&CA, LMD, Info Deptt in Kargil

Adequate stock of essentials dumped in distt for winters

KARGIL OCTOBER 23:- Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) and Information Department Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali reviewed the functioning of FCS&CA, Legal Metrology Department, Information and Public Relations in a meeting here at a Conference Hall in Baroo.

Chairman Legislative Council Haji Anayat Ali, Chief Executive Councillor Kargil Kacho Ahmad Ali Khan, Executive Councillor FCS & CA Tenzin Sonam, Executive Councillor Education and Power Advocate Muhammad Amir, Deputy Commissioner Kargil Haji Gulzar Hussain, Director FCS & CA Nissar Ahmad Wani besides officers of the administration were present in the meeting.

The Minister was apprised with the stock situation in the district. He was informed that adequate stock of essentials including rice, wheat and key construction material has been dumped in various stores for the forthcoming winter season.

The meeting was informed that against the total requirement of 71000 quintals of rice 60000 quintals have been stored on various locations while as against the total requirement of 36000 quintals



full quantity of flour has already been dumped in the district. It was also revealed that sufficient LPG gas, Kerosene oil stock has also been ensured. The meeting further informed that around 90% of essential commodities and other key materials have been dumped in the district for coming winter.

Responding to the demand projected for provision of sugar quota to the district, the Minister assured that requisite steps in this regard would be taken soon.

Meanwhile the Minister announced opening up of a full-size FCS & CA store at Kargil with a capacity of 5000 metric ton storage. He said the store once opened shall cater to the ration requirements of people in the district throughout the year. The

concerned were also directed for regularization of 149 internal adjustment stores in the district.

The Minister hailed the efforts of the officers of the department for ensuring 100% ration distribution in the district.

Responding to the demand for inclusion of 6000 identified souls under PHH, the Minister announced to include 2000 souls under PHH and said that possibilities shall be explored to include yet another 3000 souls under this category.

The Minister also directed the oil companies to dump oil for winter stocking in next three days. Underlining the need for rationalization in the provision of gas connections to consumers the Minister directed the oil companies to

furnish details of single and multiple connections and also directed the DC Kargil to verify connection details and ensure that every household gets due share in the provision of gas connection.

He also directed the officers of Forest Department to ensure the dumping of firewood within a week's time.

During the visit of the district, the Minister also inspected the Food Corporation of India godown at Kur-bathang, along with several ration stores.

Several public delegations met the Minister and apprised him about their issues and grievances. The Minister assured the delegations that all their genuine demands would be considered on priority and steps for fulfillment would be taken in due course of time.

Asiea Naqash reviews dev works in Hazratbal Constituency

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: Minister of State for Health & Medical Education and Urban Development, and Social Welfare, Asiea Naqash today held a meeting to review various ongoing developmental works in Hazratbal constituency.

Director Health Services, Dr Saleem-ur-Rehman, Director Tourism, Mahmood Shah, Director NHM, Dr Mohan Singh and officials from R&BM PDD, LAWDA, Flood Control & Irrigation, and other concerned officers were present in the meeting.

Seeking status of ongoing work, the Minister directed the concerned to expedite the ongoing works so that all the



undertaken developmental projects are completed within stipulated time frame.

Naqash urged the PDD officials to complete the work of illumination in the interiors of Hazratbal constituency by installing the street lights. The Minister also directed the officials to ensure the installation and repair work of all the transformers is completed at an earliest so

that people during winter days do not face any difficulty.

She asked the R&B department to complete the Tailbal Bridge to improve the connectivity in the area. Besides, the Minister also impressed to start work on Hazratbal-Buchpora road so that it gets completed before onset of winters.

Naqash impressed upon the officials of Flood Control

and Irrigation for early completion of desiltation work in the Padshahi Kol and Tailbal Nallah. She urged the town planners to acquire space for the construction of Community Hall in Rainawari.

Director Tourism was asked to beautify the Nigeen club for making it more appealing to the public. She also suggested for creation of cycle tracks on the NFR road.

Altaf Bukhari visits Kashmir Cloth Mill Inspects manufacturing of school uniform for public schools

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23: Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, today visited the Kashmir Cloth Mill at Zainakote Industrial Estate to inspect the manufacturing of schools uniforms for public schools here.

The Minister was accompanied by Secretary School Education, Farooq Ahmad Shah, Director School Education Kashmir, Dr G.N Itoo, Special Project Director of Sarwa Siksha Abhiyan, Dr Abdul Rashid War and Project Director RMSA, Tufail Mattoo, MD SICOP, R L Tickoo and other concerned officials.



During the inspection, Bukhari directed the SICOP not to take any commission for processing of school uniforms and asked them that it should be taken

as CSR component.

The Minister also directed for establishing a colour cord mechanism where a district will be allocated with a particular colour. The minister explained the colour coding will help in distinguishing students from different areas.

On the occasion, the Minister also enquired about the status of the order for furniture for public schools given to SICOP and instructed for early completion of the order.

JKYDF observes "Black Day" to mark Tribal Invasion

In the fall of 1947, the people of Jammu and Kashmir witnessed many events, the "tribal invasion" was one of the most tragic. It was an earth shattering event. This single event turned the course of history in the Indian sub-continent. It was a deep wound which is still bleeding. It becomes fresh and painful when some an intellectual in Kashmir tries to deny or distort this event. There could have been two reasons for the denial or distortion of these events one, lack of knowledge of these historical events, and two, intellectual dishonesty. These events, not only effected our past, but they also effect our present and going to effect our future as well. These events gave birth to the Kashmir issue a constant threat for peace in the Indian Sub-continent.

Srinagar, October 22: Like previous years, Jammu and Kashmir Youth Development Forum (JKYDF) this time also organized a one day seminar on "Disturbance by Tribal Invasion in Kashmir" at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar. The seminar was organized on 71th anniversary of tribal invasion on Jammu and Kashmir by tribals backed and supported by Pakistan.

People from all walks of life attended the seminar and the speakers reminded the people of the state that it was tribal invasion which created all problems for Kashmir and the people of both sides of J&K are paying for it till date. This is the Blackest Day of J&K history and there is every reason for the people of the state to observe it as black day. Tribal Invasion not only divided the state but laid foundation of sufferings and miseries for the people of both sides. Though separatists using to force people of Kashmir to ob-

serve Black Day the Oct 27, which coincides with the arrival of Indian Army in Jammu and Kashmir, which is an attempt to make people believe that their problem started after 27th October. A huge funding is being provided to pro-Pak elements by Pakistan agencies to cover up the misdeeds of Pakistan through such propagandas.

The speakers highlighted the encouragement of fundamentalism and open support by Pakistan to terrorism in Kashmir from last 28 years and how Tribal militia unleashed reign of terror and unprovoked aggression against people of Jammu and Kashmir violated state's sovereignty. Jammu and Kashmir state is the crown of India and a mosaic of plural identities living in a spirit of peace and brotherhood, 22nd October is a call to all peace loving citizens to rise and defeat the communal fundamentalism of Pakistan, said Peer Mohammad Yousf chairman JK Peace Forum.

Bilal Ahmad Parray, Chairman



Bulbul Shah Society for Technical Education said tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir on 22nd October 1947 actively supported by the Pakistan Army brought in its wake, horrifying stories of mass Plunder, Vandalism & Rape. Thou-

sands of men women and children were mercilessly butchered in the name of Jihad. Their sufferings of those dark days of 1947 have no parallel in the world History. The day is the Blackest Day because this invasion broke up the state

and rendered thousands and lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs as refugees in their own state. Thousands were killed and abducted during the invasion. We have to remember all those who perished during the invasion. We have also to remem-

ber that Pakistan broke up the state and captured almost half of it. The people in the Occupied Jammu and Kashmir are denied all rights of freedom and during these years we have only seen a worst picture of democracy on that side and also the colonization by the Pakistani citizens. This day reminds us of the challenges to the peace, harmony unity and integrity of the state. 22nd Oct 1947 was also the beginning of asymmetric war against India. This asymmetric war is continuing till now and devising a befitting response to put an end to this war is a challenge before India and particularly the people of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Er Gh Hassan, Chairman HK-MCC voted for taking an initiative which is the need of the hour in these tiring circumstances in the state. He said that by observing BLACK DAY on Oct 22nd, we will pay homage to lakhs of people killed, maimed and looted in 1947 by the invaders. Innocent women who were robbed, raped, kidnapped,

and killed by the raiders in Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

He said during the past, Pakistan agencies used force and money for Kashmiris through separatists to observe Black Day on October 27th which coincides with the arrival of Indian army in Srinagar.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Prominent social activists, religious leaders, students, trade leaders, Lawyers and doctors who spoke on the occasion included Dr Safdar Ali Hussain, General Secretary J&K DPN, Farooq Ganderbali Chief patron JKYDF, Bilkees Mir Social activist, Dr Manzoor Ahmad Asstt. Professor National Institute of Technology, Srinagar and Social Activist Bashmir Ahmad Sofi.

DAILY
Time and Us
SRINAGAR J&K
Editorial

MAKING FRIENDS

In theory, the two factions of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam have every reason to merge. The original cause of the split, the dominance of the Sasikala family in the party, is now seemingly irrelevant: Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, who was elected as the leader of the AIADMK legislature party at a meeting presided over by V.K. Sasikala, is more assertive now, shepherding a resolution to rescind the appointment of her nephew, T.T.V. Dhinakaran, as deputy general secretary of the party. Also, both factions need to retrieve the party election symbol, Two Leaves, that has been frozen by the Election Commission. This is unlikely without a formal merger. However, things are not exactly what they seem. Despite the distancing from Mr. Dhinakaran, the ruling faction of the AIADMK, the AIADMK (Amm), is hesitant to speak harshly of Ms. Sasikala, other than to say the party's cadres would not like anyone else to occupy the post of "permanent general secretary" held by Jayalithaa. O. Panneerselvam, the leader of the breakaway faction, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "convey the sentiments of the AIADMK cadres", a shorthand for opposition to the merger proposal. With elections to the Lok Sabha two years away, and to the State Assembly four years away, there is no pressure to hurry through with the merger process. But issues that stand in the way, the competing ambitions of Mr. Palaniswami and Mr. Panneerselvam, and the acute differences over sharing ministerial berths and party posts, are unlikely to disappear. The demand for constituting a probe into Jayalithaa's death is a cover for other unstated claims to power and pelf. After months of deep distrust, the two factions are not going to magically come together all of a sudden without working out a practical power-sharing arrangement.

As things stand, a merger can only be mediated by the Bharatiya Janata Party, which seems to wield considerable influence with both factions on account of being in power at the Centre. In recent times, searches by Income Tax, Enforcement Directorate, and the Central Bureau of Investigation have made leaders of both factions cosy up to Mr. Modi. The BJP needs a united AIADMK, with its election symbol et al, but without a strong leadership, as an instrument to find a political foothold in Tamil Nadu. Over the long term, the national party would like to eat into the vote bank of the AIADMK, but in the near term an alliance with a weakened AIADMK would do. Just as the split earlier served its purpose of isolating the corruption-tainted Sasikala family, a merger now would serve the purpose of finding an important, but non-dominating ally. But the influence of the Sasikala family works also in unseen ways, and the BJP could well be overestimating its own power over the ruling faction of the AIADMK. There is no telling who is using whom.

RO-RO FERRY SERVICE & ITS IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's launch of the first of its kind, state of the art Ro-Ro Ghogha-Dahej and subsequently Hazira project (in phase-2) marks the beginning of a radical transformation of the transportation and logistics sector in India. The logistic costs in India are extremely high and tapping the full potential of waterways will provide a huge impetus to movement of people, goods, commodities and vehicles. By reducing cost and time this will have an immensely beneficial impact on India's manufacturing and exports. For example, the highly challenging infrastructure project of Ro-Ro ferry plying the Gulf of Khambhat between peninsular Saurashtra and South Gujarat will reduce the time of travel from 8 hours to a mere 1 hour and the distance would be reduced to 31 km from the current distance of 360 km.

India has nearly 14,500 Km of navigable Inland Waterways and around 7,517 Km of coastline, which on being developed effectively for transportation purpose, shall help decongest roads and rail networks and offer multiplier effect to the overall economic development of regions. Coastal shipping and inland water transport are fuel efficient, environment friendly and cost effective modes of transportation, especially for bulk goods. Emissions from container vessels range from 32-36 g CO2 per ton-km while from heavy duty road transport vehicles it ranges from 51-91g CO2 per ton-km. Also the road transportation on average costs Rs. 1.5 per ton-km, for railways it is Rs. 1.0 per ton-km, for waterways it would be 25 to 30 paise per ton-km only. One litre of fuel can move 24 ton-km cargo through road transport and 85 ton-km through rail transport, while it can move as much as 105 ton-km through water transport. These figures strengthen the assertion that waterway offers a much more economical and environmentally friendly mode of transportation vis-à-vis surface transportation. Country can save \$50 billion per year if logistics costs reduce from 14 per cent to 9 per cent of GDP. Reduced logistics costs would in return bring down prices of products.

Out of total stretch of navigable inland waterways in India, nearly 5,200 Km (36%) of major rivers and around 485 Km (3%) of canals are conducive to the movement of mechanized vessels. Inland waterways provide several advantages over rail and road transportation by virtue of their operational cost effectiveness (60-80% lower per ton-km), lower environmental impact, convenient interoperability and fewer issues in relation to land acquisition and infrastructure development. Currently only 4,500 Km of inland waterways is being commercially utilized and waterways carry less than 1% of domestic cargo in India.

Government's objective has been to develop and operate inland waterways transportation by working towards harnessing this tremendous potential under National Waterways Act 2016. For the holistic development of India's coastline, the Government has launched 'Sagarmala' program

in March 2015 and a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for the comprehensive development of India's coastline has been prepared under it.

Roll-on & Roll-off ("Ro-Ro") waterways projects comprise of Ro-Ro ships/vessels which are designed to carry wheeled cargo, such as cars, trucks, semi-trailer trucks, trailers and railroad cars that are driven on and off the ship on their wheels or using a platform vehicle. It also comprises of jetties, with related port terminal and approach connectivity infrastructure. While passenger jetties are used solely for ferry passengers, Ro-Ro jetties have built-in or have shore-based ramps that allow the cargo to be efficiently rolled on and off the vessel when in port. The Ro-Ro project in Gujarat will be able to carry up to 100 vehicles (cars, buses and trucks) and 250 passengers between the two terminals. Historically with limited alternatives available road transport in the region has always been congested

and packed. Also as the Ro-Ro ferry operator have proposed fares which are at par with prevalent bus fares, the facility shall provide the much needed respite to the passengers in the region.

In India, various Ro-Ro projects in Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala have the potential to fully open-up the vast potential of India's interior areas which have been geographically disadvantaged. Linking up with waterways will transform this disadvantage into a massive advantage.

Most of these Ro-Ro projects in India are being implemented either on EPC mode, with operation and maintenance being undertaken by the State Government or, with more recent projects like the one in Maharashtra, on Public Private Partnership (DB-

the concessionaire receives berthing charges from ferry operators, and parking revenue at terminal. A Ro-Ro project in India, due to infrastructure constraints and overall population and economic growth, generates a project IRR in excess of 10% and is thereby financially viable on a standalone level. However, these projects have huge multiplier impact and should therefore be looked at from the perspective of economic and social rate of return. The State Governments can therefore consider awarding of new Ro-Ro projects to private parties on PPP-DBFOT model, while the existing operational projects can be awarded under PPP-Reverse-BOT model. Under a suitable PPP model, the Government retains the ownership and control of critical national infrastructure, while at the same time it

reduces the financing burden on the Government and improves the operational efficiency of the asset. In green field projects the terminals need to be constructed by the government so as to make operations commercially feasible for private sector.

Ro-Ro services are also planned to be implemented by Indian Railways on rails too. Indian Railways is launching Ro-Ro service in Bihar for cargo vehicles and in Tripura for petro product. In all these Ro-Ro projects the Government is simultaneously also planning and preparing itself for provision of concrete bridge infrastructure in due course as and when the traffic volume justifies the investment.

The latest, World Bank report 2016, on Logistic Performance Index ("LPI"), now ranks India at 35th position as against 54th rank it occupied in the previous report published in early 2014. In order to improve on its LPI ranking further, provisions of integrated mobility across different modes are

RO-RO SERVICES ARE ALSO PLANNED TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY INDIAN RAILWAYS ON RAILS TOO. INDIAN RAILWAYS IS LAUNCHING RO-RO SERVICE IN BIHAR FOR CARGO VEHICLES AND IN TRIPURA FOR PETRO PRODUCT. IN ALL THESE RO-RO PROJECTS THE GOVERNMENT IS SIMULTANEOUSLY ALSO PLANNING AND PREPARING ITSELF FOR PROVISION OF CONCRETE BRIDGE INFRASTRUCTURE IN DUE COURSE AS AND WHEN THE TRAFFIC VOLUME JUSTIFIES THE INVESTMENT.

being prioritized. It is also proposed to adopt superior standard engineering consultancy services and a suitable model for project implementation in order to optimally allocate risks and rewards among the stakeholders. With this the government shall be able to increase the efficacy of transport project implementation across the nation. As the Prime Minister said this will reduce India's dependence on import of diesel and petrol and take India to a new trajectory of growth. It will create over one crore job opportunities and give a boost to tourism and transport sector.

**The Author is CEO, NITI Aayog. Views expressed in the article are author's personal.*

The Eureka moment

There is enough lore about the Mahatma (this sobriquet is so unique I don't have to use the proper name). Him shedding his upperwear upon sighting bare-bodied farmers in what is today Tamil Nadu. Him spinning yarn to weave his own fabric, etc. But never dreamed that he would himself come to help me, then a claims manager in the corporate office of a large insurer, and solve the riddle of a long-pending corporate property claim.

It was 1995. Had just returned from an overseas posting and it was, in the words of the then general manager HR, "time to repay the company for all the good things I enjoyed abroad".

Posted in the technical department against the norm of all foreign-returned subalterns being put in charge of an operational unit. I was in charge of certain designated regions.

Pending claim
Then, a batchmate called one morning to know the status of a long-pending 'business interruption' claim from an automobile manufacturer. The region was not within my jurisdiction but for the sake of batch camaraderie I promised him I would have a look. Fortunately, the desk-in-charge who was a powerful lady was on leave and I could therefore

afford to trespass.
The claim was overdue: eight years had passed since the occurrence. Seven bulky files and two days of poring over voluminous, disconnected correspondence (most of them well-timed periodic reminders), was able to zero in on the exact show-stopper issue. Briefly, this was a flood-induced inundation event and manufacturing was interrupted for a couple of weeks before production resumed.

The crux was that they were working more shifts than normal and hence the extra production was taken as additional effort to restore volumes as previous to the incident. "Make up factor", as the jargon goes. But loss adjuster was blind to the management plea that the extra production was more to meet the increasing demand and hence the loss of production and corresponding lost profits were more than what loss adjuster was willing to admit.

I found that 17 trips were made by various regional office heads to "follow up the claim in head office" — a camouflage for visiting "those who matter in head office" to curry favours.

As a raring-to-go, "foreign-inspired service missionary", I was fuming at the level of client service, that too to a very



long large corporate customer.

Poor batchmate, as a debutant operational head he wanted to let the client know that he had the "right connections"

in head office to get things done.

Apparently sitting in front of the Director Finance, he called me on the phone and after an exchange of pleas-

antries, came to ask, "Hey, what's happening to the claim?" This was the pressure burst point! I exploded shouting, "Hey XYZ, are you not ashamed to mishandle this claim?"... and so on. Twenty years later, he broke the circumstances of his call to me and politely told me that after hearing me that day he had wanted to quit. I could empathise, but too late in the day, of course.

Now back to the rescue act by the Mahatma. Bitten by remorse, after the phone call I revisited all claim correspondence and documentation submitted by the claimant corporate.

Here comes Mahatma
Then the Mahatma dawned! The event was one which occurred at the fag end of October of the particular year, when the returning monsoon hits southern India.

And as luck would have it, as part of production records the manufacturer had submitted daily statistics as well as various notices to labour for extra shifts and so on for a period spanning three months prior and post the event. One such notice caught my attention, and it was the damn "Eureka Moment", nay "Mahatma Moment"

The management had issued notice for two extra shifts on October 2. The

birthday of the Mahatma! A national holiday!

This day was well before the claim occurrence date.

Bingo! Adrenalin pumping, I phoned the loss adjuster to rush into our office.

In the cabin of my vertical head, I confronted the adjuster with this shred of clinching evidence that the manufacturer was working extra shifts even before the loss date — solely to meet the increasing market demand for his vehicles. Hence, whatever extra shifts post-loss cannot be reckoned as "making up the losses". So, the loss amount has to be recalibrated upwards. QED!

With a vengeance, we instructed the adjuster to produce an addendum in a couple of days, which he promptly did. Loss settled in a fair manner! Eight years of lingering, now over! Thanks to the Mahatma!

My batchmate did not really appreciate my 'Sherlock Holmes'-ness, when I disclosed this to him recently, as he could not still forget the shock he had on that telephone conversation 20 years back!

Long live the Mahatma's memory!

raghavan.raja@gmail.com

In Amritsar, no kits to collect DNA samples of kin of Indians missing in Iraq

AMRITSAR : Blood samples of family members of nine of the 39 the Indians missing in Iraq could not be collected even on Monday because the designated health centre in Amritsar does not have DNA test kits.

Uncertainty still prevails over the collection as the kits would be available after three or four days, sources said. The Government Medical College which has been assigned the task by the Punjab government has sent an employee to Hyderabad to bring the kits which are not available in market, sources said. There are different cards in the kit to preserve the blood samples. During the test, these samples are used to match tissues of different body parts of two persons. These samples have been requested by the external affairs ministry on an urgent basis to restart efforts to trace the missing people.

Nine families from Amritsar district who visited the forensic department of Government Medical College, Amritsar, on Sunday were unable to give their blood samples as the college did not have proper equipment. The college collects DNA samples for nine districts of Majha and Doaba region.



The samples are sent to Hyderabad for tests. Earlier on Sunday, the medical college principal Dr Tejvir Singh said they were trying their best to arrange the kits. "We have approached kit manufacturers in Mohali and Hyderabad and they will be available in a day or two. Once we receive them, we will call the families with the help of respective sub-divisional magistrates," he had told HT.

"On an average, we collect seven DNA samples every month and kits for the same are usually available. However, to collect samples of the kin of missing Indians, we need these

kits in bulk," Dr Kuldeep, assistant professor in forensic department of the college said. He added, "As per government directions, we are supposed to collect samples of three members of each family. We have to collect two samples of each person. One sample will be preserved in the lab and the other will be sent to Iraq. Collecting the samples for preserving them in the lab is easy, but we need proper kits to send them to Iraq." Meanwhile, deputy commissioner of Amritsar, Kamaldeep Singh Sangha, assured that the administration will provide the kits to the health

officials on Monday. While in Amritsar the kin of nine of the missing Indians were left high and dry, health authorities in Gurdaspur on Saturday collected DNA samples of family members of three of missing 39.

When asked how doctors in Gurdaspur district are able to collect these samples, Dr Kuldeep said they have collected only one sample from each person which will be preserved at the local lab. "They too will require proper kit for samples to be sent to Iraq," he said.

Meanwhile, sources said the external affairs ministry had sent the letter asking for the samples long back but the local authorities were informed about it only on Friday. "Collection of samples in such short notice is difficult," said a medical college official.

The Centre, in collaboration with authorities in Iraq, has started a fresh search to trace the 39 Indians who were kidnapped by the Islamic State in Mosul, Iraq, three years back. At the suggestion of some parliamentarians and Iraqi officials,

the Centre is collecting DNA samples of the kin of the 39 missing Indians to determine their identity.

Should citizens pray to EC Chidambaram asks Modi over Gujarat poll date delay



NEW DELHI : Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Monday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's version of the Gujarat Rajya Sabha,

election in which the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost to the Congress, saying there was no recount in the poll.

"In Gujarat RS elections, Congress complained to EC before counting began. There was only one count, no recount. Ask EC," Chidambaram said in a tweet.

"If citizens cannot question the EC, please tell us who can? And what should citizens do, pray to the EC?" He was reacting to Prime Minister's statement in a public meeting in

Gujarat on Sunday when he attacked the opposition over the poll commission not announcing a schedule for the state assembly polls. The Prime Minister referred to the Rajya Sabha biennial election in August in which Congress leader Ahmed Patel defeated BJP's Balwant Singh Rajput.

"These are the same people who, when they saw the result of the counting and realized that they had lost,

ran to the Election Commission to plead for a recount. The EC considered their plea and allowed a recount.

Such people, who won an election because of the EC, have no moral right to question the EC."

Here's why 20 Indian Air Force jets will land on Lucknow-Agra Expressway

NEW DELHI: The Lucknow-Agra Expressway has been closed for commuters as the Indian Air Force plans to conduct a touch-down exercise on Tuesday involving 20 planes, including the AN-32, Mirage 2000 and Sukhoi 30 MKI.

This is for the first time that the transport aircraft AN-32 will land and then take off from the highway, an official said.

The Indian Air Force wants new public roads to be designed to serve as runways for its warplanes, providing an alternative for launching operations if key airfields are bombed out by the enemy, a top officer told Hindustan Times in 2016.

The IAF, which has 53 airfields across the country, has firmed up an ambitious plan for emergency airstrips in important sectors — identifying road locations, minimum infrastructure requirement and portable logistics support. It had earlier shared the plan for

backup runways with the ministry of road transport and highways. As part of its plan to use highways as runways, the IAF landed a Mirage 2000 fighter on the Yamuna Expressway in 2015, days after two combat planes landed on an airstrip in Saifai village in UP's Etawah. Countries known to have emergency airstrips on highways include China, Germany, Sweden and Singapore.

The IAF has cleared 12 National Highways as emergency landing airstrips that will enable rescue operation teams to reach affected areas easily, an official responsible for executing the project told IANS.

Although there was initially a proposal to develop a total of 21 NHs into airstrips, for now 12 highways have been cleared, with three of those connecting Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh — all Maoist-affected areas, which also witness vagaries of nature like floods and cyclones almost every year.

DIDN'T SEEK FAVOURS, PAID RENT FOR THE GOVT ACCOMMODATION CEC JOTI

NEW DELHI : Chief election commissioner AK Joti on Monday said he paid rent for the bungalow he retained in Ahmedabad after joining the poll panel in Delhi and didn't take favours from the Gujarat government.

Denying impropriety in occupying a government accommodation while holding a constitutional,

position, Joti said he kept the house in Ahmedabad as he was not allotted a family accommodation in the Capital on joining the poll panel in May 2015.

"I was staying in a room in Gujarat Bhavan in Delhi, but was paying the rent for the house that my wife continued to occupy in Ahmedabad," the country's top poll officer told Hindustan Times. The Gujarat government was paid rent for the May 2015 and



October 2016 period, he said. A news portal recently reported that Joti, a 1975-batch Gujarat cadre IAS officer, didn't vacate the bungalow he was given as the Gujarat state vigilance commission member. Joti was appointed to the anti-corruption watchdog after retiring from the government.

The report coincided with the election commission calling Himachal polls but leaving out Gujarat announcement, with the Congress and the other parties accusing the poll panel of withholding dates to benefit the ruling BJP. The decision, said Joti, was taken to allow the state administration

to complete the flood-relief work. His house issue cropped up after an IPS officer challenged the state government's decision asking him to vacate his premises immediately upon his transfer from Gujarat to Assam.

The official, Satish Verma who was part of the special investigation team that probed the controversial Ishrat Jahan encounter, accused the government of targeting him.

Joti, however, denied seeking favours and said he had to wait for a year before he was allocated accommodation in Delhi.

The Ahmedabad house was returned to the government in October 2016. A former secretary of industries, revenue and water supply in Gujarat, Joti was appointed the country's top election officer in July.

NO PRESSURE ON EC FROM CENTRE CEC

NEW DELHI : Achal Kumar Joti, India's Chief Election Commissioner, on Monday rejected the opposition's charge that the country's top election body is working under the pressure of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

In an exclusive interview to ANI, Joti said the Election Commission does not meddle in the poll campaign, and asserted that no special preference is being given to any political party. "We have given equal opportunities to all political parties. We have not directed any party to hold or not to hold their rallies in the state. We are not meddling in their campaigns. Yesterday, the Prime Minister went to Gujarat. Today, Rahul Gandhi will go. We are not giving any special pref-



erence to any political party," said Joti. Asked as to why the commission is silent on Prime Minister Narendra

Modi announcing schemes during his rallies in poll-bound state, Joti said political parties make poll prom-

ises during the campaigns and Election Commission is not acting till the model code of conduct comes in place.

"No I am not under any sort of pressure. The opposition can only question us if we stop them from campaigning. The opportunities are equal for all. All parties make poll promises, even the opposition parties are promising lot of things we are not stopping anybody" he said. Joti also said the Election Commission has commenced discussions with the Home Ministry with regard to security and administrative staff deployment for the polls in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat.

"We have started our dialogue with the Ministry of Home Affairs about deployment of Central police forces.

Afghan president to reach Delhi on Tuesday, talk to PM Modi on security, peace

NEW DELHI : Afghan President Ashraf Ghani will hold detailed talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday on furthering the shared objective of promoting security and stability,

in Afghanistan, and efforts to combat the menace of terrorism. The external affairs ministry said today that the Afghan president would be here on a one-day working visit at the invitation of the prime minister. The invitation,

was extended by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval during his Kabul trip on October 16. During his visit, President Ghani will meet with his Indian counterpart and have delegation level talks with the prime minister, who will also host a lunch in his honour, an official statement said. "Both sides will have the opportunity to review the entire gamut

of multifaceted bilateral strategic partnership, including the New Development Partnership; hold consultations and coordinate on furthering the shared objective of promoting peace, security, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan and efforts to combat the menace of terrorism," it said. They will also discuss regional and global issues of mutual interest.

The visit will build upon the recent high level bilateral exchanges between the two countries, including the recent visit of Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and that of Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani to India for the meeting of the bilateral Strategic Partnership Council, which was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Swaraj will call on the visiting dignitary, who will also give a public address at Vivekanand International Foundation.

Uttar Pradesh to promote religious tourism says CM Yogi Adityanath



NEW DELHI: Uttar Pradesh is committed to promoting religious tourism in the state, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Monday after undertaking a five-kilometre long 'parikrama' of the Kamadgiri temple at Chitrakoot. On the second day of his visit to Chitrakoot, Adityanath took many by surprise when he decided to walk the entire five kilo-

metre stretch around the temple called 'Panchkosi Parikrama'. Later, amending his scheduled programme, he went to meet holy men from the Nirmohi Akhada on the banks of Mandakini. Refusing to take a seat specially kept for him, Adityanath sat on the floor, like other holy men, and said that he being a saintly person did not require VIP treatment.

GST will remain a 'Good and Simple Tax' Naqvi

NEW DELHI : Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Monday said the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will remain as a Good and Simple Tax in the coming days to come. His comments came in the backdrop of Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia's announcement that the government is planning steps to ease the GST compliance burden on small businesses. Naqvi told ANI,

"GST is a very major reform to make the country's economy better and to make small, medium and big businesses easy. The GST is meant to provide ease of doing business. It is a very big reform of the single window taxation system.

The GST will remain as Good and Simple Tax in the coming days and will prove to be as a better medium for small traders and businessmen." Prime Minister Narendra Modi first termed the GST as a 'good and simple tax' on July 1, when it was launched at a gala event at the historic Central Hall of Parliament. Naqvi also said that when a country



introduces such major reforms, then it is natural to face minor challenges and obstacles." Based on the suggestions and improvements regarding such a major reform, the GST Council is conducting meetings time and again. The resolution of these obstacles is the priority of our government

and the GST council and the Finance Minister has himself made improvements in that regard," Naqvi said. Replying to a question about the probability of diesel, petrol and real estate coming within the ambit of the GST, Naqvi said, "As and when the suggestions come, the GST Council

takes them into consideration." The GST is an indirect tax and is applicable throughout India. It replaced multiple cascading taxes levied by both the central and state governments. Under GST, goods and services are taxed at the following rates, 0 percent, 5 percent, 12 percent, 18 percent and 28 percent.

NEW MEDICATED SKIN PATCH MAY DISSOLVE YOUR 'LOVE HANDLES'

New York: Scientists have developed a new medical patch with microneedles that can burn off pockets of unwanted fat such as "love handles" and treat metabolic disorders like obesity and diabetes. The patch turns energy-storing white fat into energy-burning brown fat locally while raising the body's overall metabolism, according to researchers at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) and the University of North Carolina in the US.

Humans have two types of fat. White fat stores excess energy in large triglyceride droplets. Brown fat has smaller droplets and a high number of mitochondria that burn fat to produce heat.

For years, researchers have been searching for therapies that can transform an adult's white fat into brown fat as a treatment for obesity and diabetes.

"There are several clinically available drugs that promote browning, but all must be given as pills or injections," said Li Qiang, assistant professor at CUMC. "This exposes



the whole body to the drugs, which can lead to side effects such as stomach upset, weight gain, and bone fractures," said Qiang. "Our skin patch appears to alleviate these complications by delivering most drugs directly to fat tissue," he said. To apply the treatment, the drugs

are first encased in nanoparticles, each roughly 250 nanometers (nm) in diameter. The nanoparticles are then loaded into a centimeter-square skin patch containing dozens of microscopic needles. When applied to the skin, the needles painlessly pierce the skin and gradually release the

drug from nanoparticles into underlying tissue. "The nanoparticles were designed to effectively hold the drug and then gradually collapse, releasing it into nearby tissue in a sustained way instead of spreading the drug throughout the body quickly," said Zhen Gu, associate profes-

sor at North Carolina State University in the US. The new treatment approach was tested in obese mice by loading the nanoparticles with one of two compounds known to promote browning in mice: rosiglitazone (Avandia) or beta-adrenergic receptor agonist (CL316243). Each mouse was given two patches - one loaded with drug-containing nanoparticles and another without drug - that were placed on either side of the lower abdomen.

New patches were applied every three days for a total of four weeks. Control mice were also given two empty patches. Mice treated with either of the two drugs had a 20 per cent reduction in fat on the treated side compared to the untreated side. They also had significantly lower fasting blood glucose levels than untreated mice.

Tests in normal, lean mice revealed that treatment with either of the two drugs increased the animals' oxygen consumption - a measure of overall metabolic activity - by about 20 per cent compared to untreated controls.

Two new cases of mosquito-borne chikungunya virus near Rome tested



Latina: Local health authorities on Friday confirmed two new cases and reported two suspected cases of the painful, mosquito-borne illness chikungunya in Italy's Lazio region. Health officials in the province of Latina, south of Rome, are informing mayors in the province to enable them to take preventative measures against the virus including disinfections. A special clinic and phone helpline has been set up at Latina's SM Goretti hospital where local doctors can refer patients they suspect of having Chikungunya, the local health authority said. At least 17 people in southeast Rome have been diagnosed with Chikungunya since the end of August,

and the local health authority on Thursday decided to suspend blood donations in affected areas of the capital to prevent accidental transmission of the disease. Rome Mayor Virginia Raggi on Wednesday signed an order for disinfections of the capital to combat the spread of chikungunya, which causes acute fever and joint pain. It rarely results in death but its effects can sometimes be disabling.

Carbohydrates may be key to better malaria vaccine Study

Melbourne: Scientists have for the first time found that carbohydrates on the surface of malaria parasites play a critical role in malaria's ability to infect mosquito and human hosts. The discovery may help improve the only vaccine approved to protect people against Plasmodium falciparum malaria - the most deadly form of the disease, researchers said. The study found that the malaria parasite 'tags' its proteins with carbohydrates in order to stabilise and transport them, and this process was crucial to completing the parasite's lifecycle.

"We found that the parasite's ability to 'tag' key proteins with carbohydrates is important for two stages of the malaria lifecycle," said Justin Boddey, from Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Australia. "It is critical for the earliest stages of human infection, when the parasite migrates through the body and invades the liver, and later when it is transmitted back to the mosquito from an infected human, enabling the parasite to be spread between people," said Boddey, who led the study published in the journal Nature Communications.

Interfering with the parasite's ability to attach these carbohydrates to its proteins hinders liver infection and transmission to the mosquito, and weakens the parasite to the point that it cannot survive in the host, researchers said. Malaria infects over 200 million people worldwide each year and kills around 650,000 people, predominantly pregnant women and children. Efforts to eradicate malaria require the development of new therapeutics, particularly an effective malaria vaccine.

The first malaria vaccine approved for human use - RTS,S/AS01 - was approved by European regulators in July 2015 but has not been as successful as hoped, with marginal efficacy that wanes over time, researchers said.

"The protein used in the RTS,S vaccine mimics one of the proteins we have been studying on the surface of the malaria parasite that is readily recognised by the immune system," said Ethan Goddard-Borger from Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. "With this study, we have shown that the parasite protein is tagged with carbohydrates, making it slightly different to the vaccine, so the antibodies produced may not be optimal for recognising target parasites," Goddard-Borger said. He said there were many documented cases where attaching carbohydrates to a protein improved its efficacy as a vaccine. "It may be that a version of RTS,S with added carbohydrates will perform better than the current vaccine," Goddard-Borger said.

PROBIOTICS MAY HELP TREAT BOWEL CANCER STUDY



Houston: Alteration of the gut microbiome with probiotics may help prevent and treat bowel cancer by reducing inflammation and suppressing colon tumours, a study in mice suggests.

Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Hospital and Columbia University in the US found that administration of histamine-generating gut microbes reduced inflammation and tumour formation in mice which lacked that ability to produce histamine on their own.

These results suggest that alteration of the gut microbiome with probiotics may become a new preventative or therapeutic strategy for patients at risk for colorectal cancer associated with inflammatory bowel disease. "We are on the cusp of harnessing advances in microbiome science - the study of the microbes living in our body - that would facilitate diagnosis and treatment of human disease," said James Versalovic, Professor at Baylor College of Medicine. "By simply applying diet-based cancer pre-

vention strategies, such as supplementing microbes that provide missing life substances, we can potentially reduce the risk of cancer," said Versalovic. Previous studies had shown that histamine, a chemical produced by the body that is well-known for its role in allergic disease, also may have a potential antitumour effect. In the new study, researchers investigated whether the probiotic L reuteri 6475, which is able to generate histamine, had the ability to reduce the frequency and severity of inflammation-associated colorectal cancer,

in mice that were not able to produce histamine on their own. The researchers conducted a series of experiments using mice that were deficient in histidine decarboxylase, the enzyme required to convert L-histidine to histamine. Experimental mice were orally administered L reuteri 6475, which has the gene for histidine decarboxylase to produce histamine; control animals received L reuteri that lacked the gene to produce histidine decarboxylase. The probiotic was ad-

ministered both before and after the mice received a single treatment to induce tumour formation. Fifteen weeks later, the mice were sacrificed and the tissues removed for study. The animals treated with L reuteri 6475 showed increased expression of bacterial histidine decarboxylase enzyme and of the amount of histamine in their colons. Positron emission tomography (PET) used to visualise the tumours showed that these mice had fewer and smaller tumours than control mice. L reuteri strains deficient in histidine decarboxylase activity did not provide protective effects; the mice showed increased numbers of "hot spots" indicative of tumour formation,

researchers said. Treatment with the histamine-generating probiotic also reduced inflammatory responses typically associated with increased risk of tumour development. "These observations are consistent with the conclusion that histamine-generating probiotic L reuteri may attenuate development of colorectal cancer in the animal model.

Mothers-to-be at increased risk of miscarriage if suffering from endometriosis!



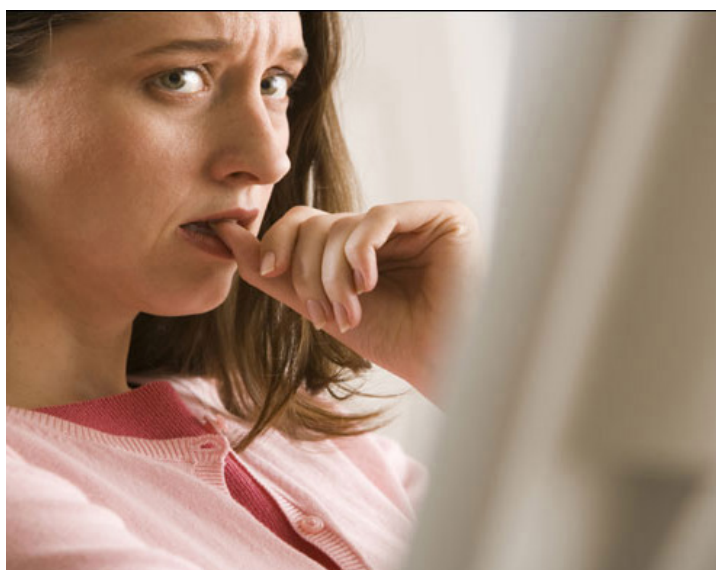
New Delhi: Endometriosis is a disorder characterised by severe lower abdominal pain, heavy menstrual bleeding, infertility, etc. It occurs when tissue that normally lines the inside of your uterus - the endometrium - grows outside your uterus. Women with endometriosis will also experience pain during or after intercourse. They may also have fatigue, diarrhea, constipation, bloating or nausea, especially during menstrual cycles. This disorder is often found in women who are struggling to conceive than in fertile women although the condition does not always cause infertility. A study has, however, put forward a warning for expecting mothers who are suffering from endometriosis, saying that they are at a greater risk of complications during pregnancy and at delivery.

The results revealed that the women with this condition were at a higher risk of preterm birth, miscarriage, cesarean delivery and placenta previa. Researchers from the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in the U.S. showed that endometriosis was associated,

with the birth of infants who were small for their gestational age. Researcher Vincenzo Berghella said that it is important that women with a history of endometriosis and obstetricians caring for them, are aware of this association between prior endometriosis and higher risks of miscarriage, preterm birth, placenta previa, cesarean delivery and a baby small for gestational age. Berghella added that these pregnancies deserve closer monitoring for these complications.

"Endometriosis is known to alter a woman's physiology in a way that could interfere with a number of stages of pregnancy," stated Berghella. From causing inflammation at the endometrium, to resisting the action of progesterone during implantation and throughout the pregnancy, there are a number of ways that endometriosis may affect the normal course of pregnancy, the researchers explained. The team analysed 24 studies, which comprised over a million women. "Studies like ours help clarify the findings by pooling the data from many studies, to give the field a more conclusive answer to a debated research question.

Brain stimulation through magnetic pulses can help overcome anxiety, phobias



New Delhi: The purpose of stimulation or sensory excitation of any sensory receptors in the human body is to evoke involuntary activity or guide intentions in action.

The various agents or forms of energy on receptors generate impulses that travel through nerves to the brain. A new study has shown that stimulating the brain with magnetic fields can help people overcome anxiety disorder and irrational phobias such as fear of heights or spiders.

Anxiety disorders and fears can sometimes affect people to a point that they are unable to follow a normal daily routine. "Cognitive behavioural therapy is an excellent treatment option," said Martin J Her-

rmann, from the Wurzburg University Hospital in Germany. This form of therapy deliberately exposes anxiety patients to the situations they feel threatened by - under the individual psychological supervision of an expert. However, current studies have shown that this type of intervention does not benefit all persons in equal measure.

Researchers from University of Wurzburg have been looking for ways to improve the patients' response to cognitive behavioural therapy - by using the transcranial magnetic stimulation. In fact, a positive effect was found on the study participants treated with this method. "We knew from previous studies that a specific region in the frontal lobe of the

human brain is important for unlearning anxiety," said Herrmann. Initial studies have shown that magnetically stimulating this brain region can improve the effectiveness of unlearning anxiety responses in the laboratory. The team investigated whether the method works for treating a fear of heights.

For the study, 39 participants with a pronounced fear of heights were taken to dizzying heights during two sessions - however not in real life but using virtual reality.

The scientists stimulated the frontal lobe of some of the anxiety patients for about 20 minutes before entering the virtual,

world; the other group was only administered a pseudo stimulation.

US'S INDIA OUTREACH POLICY FOR ASIA PACIFIC SHOULD BE LEVERAGED IACC

NEW DELHI : The recent unequivocal India outreach stand of the United States to maintain balance in the geo-politics should have more economic thrust and content to ensure sustained positive policy architecture in the Asia Pacific, according to Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC).

"The bonhomie demonstrated by President Trump by celebrating Diwali in the White House, followed up by the blunt statement of U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson that India is the strongest and most reliable ally in the Asia Pacific region to purge,

terrorism and disruptive forces from the region and strong endorsement of India-US ties at the UN by the US's UN Ambassador Nikki Haley are pointers to a new and emerging partnership between India and the US. It is important to give a strong economic "heft and gravitas" to these developments to make it sustainable and enduring," said Vasant Subramanian, National President, IACC.

In a statement issued today, IACC National President underscored four areas that need immediate attention by both countries to ensure heightened economic partnership. These are investments in infrastructure and logistics, manufacturing, technology and skill development, besides steps for augmenting bilateral trade. Pitching for a more positive involvement of India initiated International North-South Trade Corridor (INSTC), which would connect India, Iran, and Russia and Central Asia, IACC felt that this ambitious projects should be backed more specifically and



strongly by the US both in terms of geo-political and economic considerations. It has several advantages over the one which is being implemented by the Chinese-One Belt One Road (OBOR), designed to strengthen its geo-political and economic foothold in the Asia Pacific region. Many China watchers feel that OBOR is lock, stock and barrel an expression of Chinese supremacy in the region and that way, it has the undertones of a unilateral imposition of policies and concepts. Unlike that,

INSTC is not driven by one country and is a multilateral initiative, where every country in the group has the same liberty to espouse their development cause conforming to the tenets of the INSTC. "Importantly, US, Japan, Indonesia and Singapore have endorsed the INSTC. What we need now is an expres-

sion of interest by the US to use this as a platform for its economic presence in the region," IACC President observed, adding that India is the best ally in realizing that economic goal of the US. Involvement of the US in connecting the region will unleash the economic potentials of the region and will help all stakeholders in the initiative. For instance, it will be a double whammy for the US. Apart from gaining strategic and geo-political advantage, it can augment its economic presence in the region.

The Chinese investments in the region are peaking and its every strategic move is crafted to realize its agenda to become the economic superpower and to tighten its hold in the regional geo-political influence. India offers a pathway for the US to make its economic presence in the region and to meet the develop-

mental imperatives of the nations in the region," the IACC president said. Significantly, in its latest response to the evolving relationship between India and the US, Chinese response seems to be calibrated and more diplomatic by terming the development of relations positive as long as they are conducive to the peaceful development of the region and enhancement of relations among the countries in the region.

The economic rationale of the statement is clear. Some of the Chinese owned or controlled corporations are investing in India in various sectors including infrastructure, energy,

particularly renewable, hybrid technologies for mobility and in installing equipment for pollution control etc. Some of these companies are operating out from the US and they stand to gain im-

mensely from augmenting economic partnership between India and the US. Against the backdrop of an ambitious target set by both countries to take the bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2022, IACC suggested,

that the US can respond to the initiative of the Indian administration to import crude oil from the US first time after 40 years as a sequel to the clarion call by the Trump Administration to buy the US products globally. Also, the US has become the top importer of defense equipment to India. The US can reciprocate this gesture in many ways. For instance,

it can set up medical devices manufacturing units in India along the medical devices parks, which are coming up in different parts of India, not only for catering to the domestic market but also for buy back and third country exports. India can considerably enhance its exports to the US items like generic medicines, formula medicines,

chemicals etc, where the US is already importing from India. Taking advantage of various policy initiatives taken by the Indian administration under Make in India, Digital India programs etc, many corporations have come forward to invest in India in sectors like hybrid mobility, web based technologies,

telecom (particularly Apple Computers), high speed rail locomotives, cyber security, renewable energy, hardware and agriculture. More and more US corporations can focus on these sectors in India, particularly from the SME sector, where the handholding and invest-

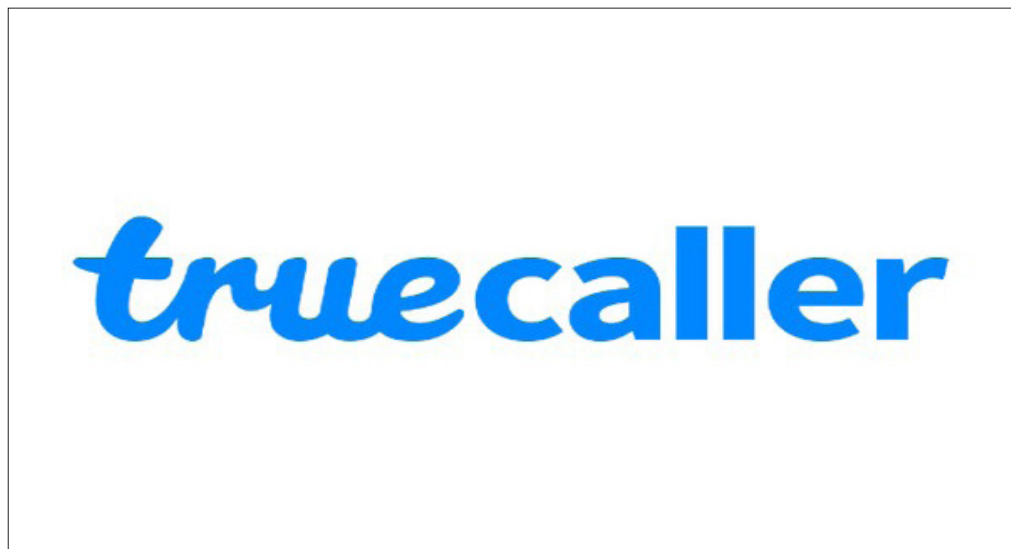
ments between the two countries have yet to pick up. India is committed to move up in the technology value chain. The focus on R&D in the country is unprecedented whether it is in the IT, biotech, genome, data mining and analytics, molecular science etc. Startups and incubators are springing up in India more than ever before.

The US is already taking advantage of the R&D facilities in the country by setting up centers in India. These are mostly confined to IT, telecom and pharmaceuticals. The US can relocate R&D centers to India in fields like artificial intelligence, sensors, robotics, design engineering, Internet of Things (IOTs), where India's highly trained technical manpower can blend with US technologies to create newer paradigms in the upward moving technology curve.

Training and skill development are another avenues that are opened to both countries to co-operate and collaborate. Innovations in artificial intelligence are increasingly disrupting technologies and the type of expertise needed to handle such technologies is changing fast. The US has a shortage of manpower to handle such jobs that need highly skilled people with a lot of imagination and perseverance.

India has proved that it has a competitive advantage in meeting such exacting professional standards. "It is important to have a bilateral arrangement for training people for the high end jobs and to create a band of technologists, who can help move up in the technology value chain," said Subramanian.

Truecaller reports 21 pct surge in user registration on '1mg'



NEW DELHI : In the wake of Truecaller SDK's integration with e-commerce healthcare start-up '1mg', the latter witnessed an impact upside of 21 percent increase in its daily user registration.

This integration with Truecaller SDK enables new 1mg users to instantly sign-up in a simple and quick manner using auto fill functionality and completely by passing the SMS based OTP process,

using their Truecaller mobile identity. With the above impact, this integration has enabled 1mg to seamlessly on-board new users and appropriately connect with them for fulfilling key use cases in their platform like doctor consultations, diagnostic tests and last mile medicine ordering and delivery. Truecaller SDK is a developer toolkit for digital startups, app developers, and other online

businesses. An efficient, secure and asset-light solution, Truecaller SDK is designed to minimize complexity in user on-boarding and verification process as well as helps businesses build more trust on their products, offer more personalisation and enables further evolution of the quality of users being served by them.

"Our partnership with 1mg epitomizes the value we bring to the burgeoning integrated digital and mobile healthcare sector in India. Truecaller's Mobile identity toolkit is enabling better personalization, more trust and seamless consumer experience, and predictable last mile service delivery. This in turn is leading businesses like 1mg to achieve better customer satisfaction and repeat engagements," said Priyam Bose, Director and Head, Global Developer and Startup Relations, Truecaller.

"Truecaller enabled us to obtain verified user identities, right at the time of signup, significantly improving sign up rates while reducing hurdles associated with OTP based registration processes. For a mobile first country like India,

Truecaller helped us bridge the chasm to giving users a seamless and automated mobile registration process thus reducing user drop offs and increasing engagement across the board," added Gaurav Agarwal, Co-founder, 1mg.

Adarsh Credit partners with Oxigen Services to provide financial inclusion to 1L villages



NEW DELHI : Adarsh Credit, India's largest credit co-operative society signed an agreement with Oxigen Services, India's leading payment solutions provider. Adarsh Credit decided to use Oxigen's existing retail network of 200,000 retail points,

who will become business correspondents of Adarsh Credit. Through this tie up, these retailers will have access to all the products of Adarsh Credit like fixed deposits (FD), recurring deposits (RD), share capital, loans and various other financial services for their

own use as well as their customer's use and will enable Adarsh Credit's vision of financial inclusion. Oxigen aims to appoint Adarsh Credit's active base of 100,000 advisors across India, who will become,

BC Agents of Oxigen to offer services like paperless bank account opening through E-KYC, banking services like AEPS cash-in/out, cashless bharat bill payment services and recharges. "This tie up will be a game changer in the financial landscape of rural India. With Oxigen's Micro ATM.

TAB Capital strengthens senior management across categories



NEW DELHI : India's fastest growing and award-winning Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) TAB Capital has announced appointment of three key leadership positions.

TAB Capital has appointed CA Rakesh Tailor as its Credit Head who has nearly a decade of experience in the field of Banking and Finance. "Timing makes all the difference for an enterprise and TAB Capital provides a loan in just two working days, which was definitely a factor attracted me to join the team. I am pleased to be part of one of the fastest growing NBFCs, TAB Capital and am looking forward to a long-term association with the company," said Rakesh Tailor, credit head, TAB Capital, on coming on-board. Tailor has the potential to give a long leap of success to the company with his areas of ex-

pertise in credit analysis and loan appraisal, amongst other aspects of banking. Prior to joining TAB Capital, he was associated with Vijaya Bank, SMEs and Corporate finance segment. Shashishekhkar Hiremath would be spearheading the product development role in TAB Capital Ltd., as the National Head responsible for product development and execution of product and market-related strategies of the company. "Making a prod-

uct is not just an activity in silo; creating a demand for your product via differentiation is paramount. We have a glorious opportunity ahead of us at TAB Capital to be part of the transformation, drive change and contribute towards making India stronger, better self-reliant," said Shashishekhkar Hiremath, National Head - Product Development, TAB Capital, on joining the team.

An MBA and LLB, Hiremath has over two decades of experience holding various senior positions in banking in leading Indian private sector banks like ICICI, IDBI,

HDFC, Kotak Mahindra, and YES Bank in areas of product development, CRM and distribution of banking products like liabilities, retail and commercial assets, wealth and trade services for various customer segments.

Credihealth to invest Rs.100 crore to augment technology, infrastructure

NEW DELHI : India's leading medical assistance company Credihealth on Monday announced its plans to invest Rs. 100 crore in the next three years to augment technology and infrastructure for expansion in new geographies pan India.

Credihealth will make use of the funds to introduce new technology and start operations in new geographies especially tier III and IV cities to make sure patients in remote areas get access to quality healthcare facilities located just three to four hours away.

"When we first started, acceptance was the biggest challenge we faced. Initially, most of the doctors were apprehensive about our product and for the first two years,

we worked with our partnered hospitals on the proof of concept. Despite the scepticism, we worked persistently to realise our vision of delivering free and credible medical information to consumers in the country," said CEO and founder Credihealth, Ravi Virmani.

"The fact that we have served more than six lakh customers in the past four years and expanded to 14 cities is a great validation of our product and practices," he added.

Committed to changing the face of healthcare in India, Credihealth recently completed four successful years of building a robust healthcare ecosystem with credible and affordable solutions for all. It has also been enabling seamless access to the best healthcare experts in the country for all citizens. The company initially launched its opera-



tions in New Delhi, and later expanded to the National Capital Region and Mumbai. It is now operational in 14 cities across the country with a network comprising 630 hospitals and over 30,000 doctors. It assists,

patients throughout their medical journey, providing the best tech-enabled solutions, from searching for the right doctor to scheduling appointments, diagnostics, surgeries and post-op care, all for free.

With the largest hospital network in India, the first-of-its-kind digital platform's ground-breaking system allows users to compare and select from a comprehensive database of hospitals, doctors, and treatments. The platform also has its own team of in-house doctors providing online consultation to

users through both the web and mobile applications. Credihealth has also expanded into the medical tourism sector, providing complete assistance for medical treatment in India. Its team of medical experts supports international patients starting from airport pick-up till they are discharged from the hospital.

Having made significant headway in its mission of making quality healthcare accessible and establishing India as a key destination for medical tourism, Credihealth has its eyes,

set on taking its services to more and more consumers at a pan-India level. With its unstinted efforts at revolutionizing the way healthcare is delivered, the company is poised to assist six million more people in the future.

Indian cricket team's middle order woes a concern: MSK Prasad

Too much experimentation is eroding India's middle-order strength rather than strengthening it, prompting chairman of selectors MSK Prasad to address it as a 'concern'. The chopping and changing however isn't going to stop any time soon.

According to Prasad, they are going to look at all options before closing on a particular squad before a major event (read 2019 World Cup). "The team management, the selection committee all of us are definitely concerned about it. And that's the reason we are trying before a big event comes up or before we finalise a final squad for a major event," said Prasad on Monday after the selection committee meeting to pick squads for the T20 series against New Zealand and two home Tests against Sri Lanka.

"By then we will try out different options, and there are some of the guys who are doing (well) at India A (level). We will keep trying options before we close on a particular squad," he said.



Barring Sunday's upsetting loss to New Zealand, India haven't been challenged much in the ODIs --- 3-1 in West Indies, 5-0 in Sri Lanka and 4-1 at home against Australia --- since the Champions Trophy final loss to Pakistan. But that can't cover up the mess India's middle-order have been for some time now, courtesy the constant experimentation.

For example, against Australia,

Manish Pandey batted at No 4 for majority of the matches while Hardik Pandya did that job in the first match in Chennai. On Sunday, Kedar Jadhav came out to bat in that spot and Dinesh Karthik at No 5. Jadhav made 12 off 25 and Karthik 37 off 47 balls.

The experimentation has been mindboggling. Over the last 10 ODIs, India have fielded four batsmen at No. 4, five at No. 5 and three at No. 6.

Situations dictate batting order shuffles but surely there can be some method to the madness?

There have been inadvertent casualties as well. In Sri Lanka, Prasad had said the team would try out KL Rahul at No 4 but the experiment was shelved after just one attempt.

"The potential that KL Rahul is, it is unfortunate that we are not able to accommodate, so we tried him at the number four slot, and unfortunately that it did not work out. But basically we know that KL Rahul is an opener. So since Ajinkya Rahane has done well, it makes sense to continue with Rahane and bring in a specialist at number four spot," he said.

With 19 months to go the 2019 World Cup in England, it's high time India select a group that travels, plays and bonds together for at least a year before the showpiece event. If that should be the aim, India's selectors and the team management don't have much time to find the right players at the right places.

PRESS RELEASE



The long desire of lovers of football Game of J&K has reached the Authorities in J&K SRTC who have agreed to revive its Football team at war footing. An Exhibition Football Match was organized at Turf Football field between J&K SPDC team and present available team of SRTC which was watched by Vice-Chairman Haji Parvez Ahmad & Shri Mir Afroz Ahmad and MD SRTC and its

other Officers.

They assured the JKFA that SRTC Football team will renew its Registration and revive the team by inducting talented players who shall be spotted & selected by Association Experts very shortly. They also agreed to organize a football tournament shortly.

JKFA is thankful to SRTC Authorities for this decision.

State Football League-2017:

Maharaja FC plays draw with Real Kashmir FC in Premier Div match

Young Iqbal, J&K Bank Academy win Super Div matches

Srinagar, Oct 23: In the ongoing State Football League-2017, three matches were played at Synthetic Turf TRC on Sunday (Oct 22) in which Young Iqbal and J&K Bank Academy emerged winners while the third match between Maharaja FC and Real Kashmir FC ended in a draw.

After a day's break due to strike on Saturday, the event resumed on Sunday at Synthetic Turf TRC and a huge number of football fans had gathered at the venue to witness the matches.

In the Premier-Division match, Maharaja FC played a goal less draw with Real Kashmir FC. Right from the start of the match, Real Kashmir players tried to attack opposite goal post frequently. But on all the occasions, they failed at the finish line. Real Kashmir FC missed at least three clear chances to score.

Real Kashmir FC, the favourites for the match and the title, would rue the missed chances as it was a golden opportunity for them to further strengthen their chances to lift the event. Though the confident looking Real Kashmir players started strongly in the match, the defenders of the Maharaja team ensured that no damage was done. The Maharaja goalkeeper didn't allow the forward lines of the opposite team to succeed and saved three clear chances. Though no goal was scored in the match, it proved to be a delight for the spectators



who were chanting slogans in favour of their favourite teams and players. Umer of Maharaja FC was declared as player of the match for his performance.

In the first Super-Division match of the day, played at Synthetic Turf TRC, J&K Bank Academy thrashed State Football Academy (SFA) Junior by four goals to nil in a one sided encounter. The Bank team dominated the play right from start of the match and gave no chances to helpless defenders of the SFA team. Ateeb opened the account for the Bank team in just 3rd minute of the play. After that the Bank players stepped up attacks on SFA goal post and in 35th minute, they doubled the lead through Amir.

Ateeb scored his second and team's third goal in 67th minute of the match. When 10 minutes later Ateeb scored his third goal and team's fourth, the fate of the match was over. SFA Junior players tried their best to score, but they lacked the coordination

and ultimately had to settle for 4-0 drubbing.

In the second Super-Division match of the day, also played at Synthetic Turf TRC, Young Iqbal FC beat Young Maharaja FC by 2-1 in a closely contested affair. Naveed and Moieen were the scorers for the winning team while Asif scored the solitary goal for the losing team. Despite losing the match, Young Maharaja FC team played exceptional football and if they had converted the chances they got, the result could have been different.

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, Sopor 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.

Similarly, DFA Jammu, DFA Kathua, DFA Samba, DFA Reasi, DFA Udhampur, DFA Rajouri, DFA Poonch, DFA Doda, DFA Ramban, DFA Kishtwar will send their respective teams from Jammu province.

The participating teams have strength of 20 players each with three officials. Besides Srinagar, the matches are being played in Anantnag, Baramulla, Sopore, Bandipora, Pattan, Hajin, Handwara, Kupwara, Pulwama, Kulgam, Shopian, Ganderbal, Budgam, Leh and Kargil.

Mohammad Siraj's rags-to-riches story becomes bigger with Indian cricket team selection

Even until a few months back, Mohammed Siraj wasn't quite a familiar name, even in the cricketing circles. He had made his first-class debut in 2015 and had quite a few good spells to his name as well but even then, it wasn't quite enough to grab the selectors' attention. After grinding through the domestic circuit for quite some time, that eventually came during the 2017 Indian Premier League season.

Siraj's is a typical rags-to-riches to story. Born in an auto-rickshaw driver in Hyderabad, Siraj was swooped up for a mammoth ₹2.6 crore by Sunrisers Hyderabad despite having a base price of just ₹20 lakh. And as luck would have it, an injury to Ashish Nehra meant there was that glimmer of hope that every youngster craves for.

He didn't disappoint and ended the season with 10 wickets from the six matches in which he featured in, including a four-for in the last



league match against Gujarat Lions in Kanpur that helped his side qualify for the playoffs.

It was a justified call for the franchise to go after the seamer though for that astronomical amount of money. Last season, Siraj was the second-highest wicket taker among pacers in the Ranji

trophy and was third on the overall list behind Shahbaz Nadeem and Anupam Sanklecha. Anyone acquainted with the help Indian pitches provide to fast bowlers would vouch that it wasn't a mean achievement. He picked up 41 wickets in nine matches at an average of 18.92 besides maintaining an impressive strike

rate of around 36. Siraj was part of the India A side as well that played four matches against New Zealand A. Although he didn't play all the matches, Siraj picked four wickets in three games. He featured for India Green in the Duleep Trophy this season but played in only one game as his side lost to India Red.

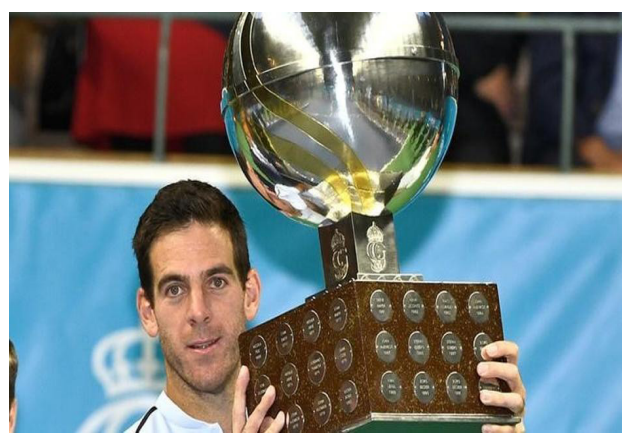
Juan Martin Del Potro overcomes Grigor Dimitrov to retain Stockholm title

Fourth seed Juan Martin del Potro put himself in contention for the ATP World Tour Finals when he successfully defended his Stockholm Open title on Sunday, defeating top seed and 2013 champion Grigor Dimitrov 6-4 6-2.

The Argentine, who secured his first title since he lifted the trophy in Sweden last year, dominated the final with his serve, notching up nine aces and saving all four break points he faced.

Fittingly enough, Del Potro ended the championship with a big serve in the deuce court down the middle, eliciting an error from his opponent. When the ball landed in the net, Del Potro's arms rose in celebration.

"I played the best match of the week against Grigor today. Unlucky for that,



sorry Grigor," Del Potro said. "It's amazing to come back and hold this big trophy and hopefully I can come next year as

2,135 points, 470 behind Pablo Carreno Busta who currently occupies the final qualifying spot.

Cristiano Ronaldo likely to win Best FIFA Men's Player over Lionel Messi, Neymar

Cristiano Ronaldo's stunning exploits with Real Madrid CF make him the strong favourite to win the 2017 Best FIFA Men's Player Award at Monday's ceremony in London.

The Portuguese superstar, who won last year's inaugural award, fired Madrid to glory in La Liga and scored 12 goals as they won the Champions League for the third time in four seasons.

He is nominated alongside his eternal rival Lionel Messi and Messi's former Barcelona teammate Neymar, now of Paris Saint-

Germain.

"In the end, Ronaldo is ahead of the others," Roma icon Francesco Totti told the FIFA website ahead of the ceremony at the London Palladium.

"He had an amazing season and also accomplished all of his goals with the most prestigious of teams."

Should Ronaldo prevail, it will pave the way for him to match Messi's record of five Ballons d'Or when France Football magazine announce the winner of that award early next year.

Ronaldo, 32, won the inaugural Best FIFA Men's Player Award last year after a six-year merger between the FIFA honour and the Ballon d'Or.

Ronaldo previously won the FIFPro World Player of the Year award, the precursor to the Best FIFA award, in 2008.

Messi, 30, scored 54 goals last season as Barcelona won the Copa del Rey.

The Argentina great has made a superb start to the current campaign, scoring 15 goals for Barcelona and earning his country a



place at next year's World Cup with a magical hat-trick against Ecuador.

"We all know who is the best player in the world," says Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde.

"The truth is, the handing out of a trophy isn't something that worries me too much."

Zidane eyes coach crown

Brazil star Neymar, 25, won the Copa del Rey with Barcelona last season before joining PSG in a blockbuster 222 million euros (\$262 million) deal that obliterated the world transfer record.

The voting for the award, equally weighted between national team captains, national team coaches, media and fans, closed last month.

Real Madrid coach Zinedine

Zidane is expected to be named Best FIFA Men's Coach after becoming the first man to mastermind a successful defence of the European Cup in the Champions League era.

The former France playmaker is up against Chelsea's Antonio Conte and Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"To be sincere, if they give me it, I'll take it with pleasure," Zidane said.

"But if the question is, 'Am I the best coach in the world?' No, and I'm sure of it."