

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

SUNDAY

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

SUNSET SUNDAY: 05:44 PM
SUNRISE MONDAY: 06:53 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)

STATE | 3

NATIONAL | 5

BUSINESS | 7

SPORTS | 8

GOVT DETERMINED TO PROVIDE BETTER HEALTHCARE FACILITIES: BALI BHAGAT

MODI MEETS FRENCH MINISTER PARLY, PITCHES FOR GREATER COOPERATION

APPAREL EXPORTERS SIGNAL DECLINE IN SHIPMENTS FROM INDIA, JOB LOSSES POST-

FAHEEM ASHRAF BECOMES PAKISTAN'S FIRST BOWLER TO TAKE TWENTY20 HAT-TRICK

Dineshwar Sharma will talk with all groups, leaders in JK: Ram Madhav

Hurriyat should be asked whether they are ready or not to talk

Srinagar, Oct 28: BJP Saturday said that the interlocutor announced by Government of India has the mandate to talk to all the groups and leaders who want to talk.

According to the KNS correspondent, talking to reporters here, BJP national General Secretary Ram Madhav said that the interlocutor, Dineshwar Sharma, will talk to all those groups who want to talk and appointing him is the "continuity of the dialogue" which was carried out by the Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

"Home Minister Rajnath Singh during his visits had said that dialogue will be held with all those who want to talk. And the announcement of Dineshwar Sharma is continuity of that process as the Home Minister cannot himself visit again and again," Madhav said here according to KNS correspondent.

Madhav arrived today afternoon here to preside over the State level



Working Committee Meeting which will be held on Sunday at SKICC where delegates from the state and party legislators will be participating.

Madhav said that the interlocutor appointed by the GoI will talk with all groups and leaders of Jammu

See Madhav...Pg 02

US waiting to see Pak act on terror in next weeks: official

WASHINGTON: The US is waiting to see the practical steps taken by Pakistan over the next weeks and months in its war against terrorism, a top American diplomat has said asserting that the Trump Administration is moving quickly on its own strategy to fight against terror groups.

The Acting Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs and Acting Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Alice G Wells, who was part of the US

delegation Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's trip to the region told reporters in a briefing that it is all about Pakistan's strategic choice.

"This is about Pakistan's sovereign choice. This is not about America giving dictation. We've described our strategy, we've described a very important role for Pakistan, who we see as a very important country in the region, but it's up to them whether or not they want to work with us on this strategy. And if they

See Official...Pg 02

Appointment of interlocutor diversionary tactic, 'azadi' demand is for autonomy: Chidambaram

New Delhi: Former Union Home Minister and senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday said the appointment of an interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir was a "diversionary" tactic and felt the "azadi" demand meant people want autonomy which should be seriously examined.

He said the appointment of former Intelligence Bureau chief Dineshwar Sharma to hold talks in Kashmir doesn't indicate a change of heart or approach by the Centre in its policy but that it will continue to hold on to its "muscular policy and military solution".

Chidambaram said he was worried about what was happening in the valley as there was a deep ferment there.

"The appointment of the interlocutor should not lead us to think that there is a change of heart of the government. I don't believe that there is a change of heart or change of approach. I still believe that they will continue to hold on to the muscular policy and military solution," the Congress leader told The Wire news portal.

Chidambaram said the appointment of Sharma to open talks with all stakeholders in Jammu and Kashmir was a "diversionary move" to appease a section that was asking why the government was not holding talks in the troubled state.

He said Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Jitendra Singh had clarified



that Sharma was not an interlocutor and Army chief General Bipin Rawat had stressed that the move won't have any impact on military operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I think those two voices reflect the real view of the government," he said.

Speaking at an event in Mumbai, Chidambaram said when people in Kashmir ask for "azadi" most of them want autonomy.

"Therefore, I think we should seriously examine the autonomy demand. It is very

See Chidambaram...Pg 02

QUARRY HOLDERS STAGE PROTEST IN SRINAGAR 'Resolve our issue amicably'

Srinagar, Oct 28: The ban of quarrying operations at Athwajan, Alfatah and Panthachowk Srinagar a protest while quarry holders blocked the road asking government to resolve their issue without any delay.

The protest was organized by United Quarry Association and Himalayan Quarry and Tipper Association.

The protesters said that they should be allowed to work in their respective quarries at Athwajan and Panthachowk while ban imposed by the government should be revoked.

"Government had initiated a process to shift us to Zewan and Shaleguph but there people raise objections and don't allow us to work. We don't know what has been happening. The government has snatched our livelihood,"

See Quarry...Pg 02

Niti Ayug Vice Chairman calls on Chief Minister

Mehbooba pitches for State specific allocation parameters, in time fund releases, push to skill development initiatives

Srinagar, October 28: Vice Chairman, Niti Ayug, Dr. Rajiv Kumar called on the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti here today and discussed several issues regarding the developmental paradigm of the State.

The Chief Minister brought to the notice of Dr. Rajiv Kumar the need for making the allocation agenda State spe-



cific in view of the peculiar nature of Jammu & Kashmir.

She said the State has its own set of peculiar hardship indi-

cators like climate,

See Niti...Pg 02

CIVIL SOCIETY MEMBERS AKS GOVERNMENT TO STOP HARASSING SALAHUDDIN'S FAMILY

Budgam, Oct 28: Civil Society members from Central Kashmir's Budgam district threatened to stir an agitation in case National Investigating Agency continues to harass the family members of Hizbul Mujahadeen Chief Syed Salahuddin.

Reliable sources told news agency CNS that people from cross section of society including the members from civil society Budgam met Deputy Commissioner and SSP Budgam on Saturday. The civil society members included Advocate Hafizullah Mir, Retired Chief Audit Officer Abdul Rahim Malik, Retired bureaucrat Gulam Rasool Malik, renowned columnist M J Lone and former General Manager JK Bank Syed Abdul Hamid.

Sources said that during the meeting the civil society members alleged that NIA has been harassing family

See Civil...Pg 02

'A day after Darbar Move, PDD issues darkness schedule for Kashmir' 21-hr power cut in metered areas in a week; 42-hr in non-metered areas: PDD Chief

Srinagar, Oct 28: Ahead of chilly winter months, Kashmir will be facing twenty one-hour power cut in metered areas in a week and forty two-hour cut in non-metered areas, as per the curtailment schedule of Power Development Department.

Chief Engineer Power Development Department (PDD), Kashmir, Shahnaz Goni on Saturday told KNS over phone that the new power curtailment has been put in place.

Interestingly the slash of power supply in both metered and non-metered areas comes after the civil secretariat; highest seat of power has shifted to Jammu for next six months.

The Chief engineer Shahnaz Goni, said



that power demand has increased and

See Power...Pg 02

SECURITY AGENCIES CALL FOR COMPLETE SYNERGY TO ACHIEVE PEACE

Jammu: A Military Liaison Conference attended by Army officials, security agencies and civil administration officers called for complete synergy to achieve peace, harmony and development of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The conference, chaired by the General Officer Commanding, Delta Force, was held at Dharmund Army Garrison yesterday, a defence spokesperson said.

"The aim of organising the conference was to increase synergy, interaction and coordination between the military and other agencies," he said.

The spokesperson said, "Such interactions provide

See Security...Pg 02

SC refusal to reopen cases of killings of Kashmir Pandits disappointing: Amnesty

Srinagar: Reacting to Supreme Court's rejection of a review petition seeking to reopen 215 cases involving the killings of Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu and Kashmir in 1989-90, Amnesty International Indian chapter on Saturday said the decision of the apex court is a "setback for justice and accountability" in the state.

"The Supreme Court's decisions are a setback for justice and accountability in Jammu and Kashmir. All allegations of unlawful killings must be investigated by independent civilian authorities and those responsible brought to justice," said Asmita Basu, Programmes Director at Amnesty International India, in a statement issued today.



"In July this year, the Supreme Court had directed an independent investigation into over 80 cases of alleged extra-judicial

See Amnesty...Pg 02

JRL RIDICULES 'OUTRAGEOUS AND DICTATORIAL' ORDINANCE PASSED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT

Srinagar, Oct 28: Joint Resistance Leadership of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik has condemned and ridiculed the outrageous and dictatorial ordinance passed by the State Government which calls for imprisonment for those who call and observe shutdown as a form of protest. Joint Resistance Leadership stated that observing shutdown is a universally accepted democratic and peaceful right of protest and resistance and fixing a punishment for it reflects the totalitarian and repressive mindset of the anti-people ruling regime.

The leadership said that tall claims of "healing touch" and "battle of ideas" by Mehbooba Mufti and her party before coming to power, have all come to naught and instead

See JRL...Pg 02

Altaf Bukhari stresses on smooth conduct of upcoming board exams

Srinagar, Oct 28: The Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today convened a meeting to discuss the modalities for hassle-free conduct of upcoming board examinations for the students of Kashmir and winter zone of Jammu Division.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmed Khan, Secretary School Education, Farooq Ahmad Shah, DC Srinagar Syed Abid Rasheed



Shah, Director School Educa-

Chairperson JK Board of School Education (BOSE),

Veena Pandita, police officials

See Altaf...Pg 02

ALLEGED BRAID CHOPPING CASE IN CHANAPORA AREA SOLVED: POLICE

Srinagar, Oct 28: Yesterday police station Sadder received an information that a braid chopping incident has occurred in Chanapora area and one Wasim Yousuf Bhat resident of Roselane Colony alleged that braid of his wife namely Aasia has been chopped by some unknown person after spraying some substance on her face when she was near the bathroom in their compound.

Police said that the "victim" was immediately shifted to hospital and police also rushed to the hospital and upon questioning following surfaced.

"That "victim" went to use the bathroom which is situated outside when there was no family member

See Police...Pg 02

CITU HOLDS DAY-LONG STATE CONFERENCE

Pledges to intensify struggles to fight anti working class policies of the government

Srinagar, Oct 28: The 5th State Conference of J&K, Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) was held today in Srinagar. The conference deliberated upon various issues and problems confronting working class, with the determination to intensify struggles to fight anti-working class and anti-people policies of the government.

The conference started with flag hoisting ceremony by Comrade Mohammad Subhan, senior trade union leader. The conference was inaugurated by K. Hemlata, National President CITU and Abdul Gani Bhat presented the welcome address. 200 delegates representing different affiliated unions participated in the day-long conference. Condolence resolution was presented by CITU State

President Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami in memory of former Cuba President, Fidel Castro, CPI (M) leader Samar Mukherjee, CITU leader Uma Nath, J&K CITU leader Ghulam Mohiuddin, senior Kissan leader Ghulam Rasool Sheikh and all others who were victims of violence, particularly in Kashmir.

Inaugurating the conference, K. Hemlata said that the continuation of neo-liberal economic policies of the Modi government coupled with demonetization and implementation of GST have serious ramifications on the lives and livelihood of the working class people. The onslaught of the BJP-led government on working class has to be fought unitedly and vigorously. She asserted that only

unity of the working class and democratic forces can fight back the repression of the present dispensation.

Underlining the necessity for wider unity among the working people for resisting the anti working class policies of the government, she said that there was no room for any illusion, and only united struggles of the toilers can force the government and employers to concede their genuine demands. The focus of the communal politics in the name 'Gaw Rakhsa and Love Jihad' is aimed to divide people on communal and religious lines. Working class has to be vigilant enough against this mechanisation and greater unity of Dalits, OBCs, minorities and working class people is bound to face the chal-

lenge firmly. K. Hemlata emphasised the working class people to participate wholeheartedly in 'Maha Padaw' joint call by National Trader Unions, near Parliament from November 9 to November 11, 2017.

Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami in his address said the social security benefits like pension, provident fund, health insurance etc. are hard won rights of the working class secured through decades of struggle. These gains are now being reversed through privatization of pension funds, provident funds and cuts in subsidies and welfare benefits and such measures being implemented across the world today specifically target the social security benefits in order to pass on the burden to the working

people. Stressing for implementation of the basic labour laws in the State, Tarigami demanded amendment in the Minimum Wages Act and fixation of statutory minimum wage of not less than Rs 18,000 per month.

Despair among the young generation entering the employment market is increasing rapidly. The utter collapse of public distribution system, commercialisation of education system has made life miserable for common people. The prices of essential commodities have gone up sky high hitting hard below the belt the poorer strata of the society. It is but natural that the discontent among the working class is increasing rapidly. The present situation demands that the working class must champion

the vital interests of all the toiling sections of the society, so that it can play a leading role in the struggles to oppose the policies of the government, Tarigami stressed.

He stated that the social security benefits like pension, provident fund, health insurance etc. are hard won rights of the working class secured through decades of struggle. These gains are now being reversed through privatization of pension funds, provident funds and cuts in subsidies and welfare benefits and such measures being implemented across the world today specifically target the social security benefits in order to pass on the burden to the working people. Stressing for implementation of the basic labour laws in the

State, Tarigami demanded amendment in the Minimum Wages Act and fixation of statutory minimum wage of not less than Rs 18,000 per month.

While referring to the passing of Jammu and Kashmir Public Property (Prevention of Damage) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017, Tarigami said, it will trample the legitimate democratic rights of people, especially working class. Our past experience tells us that such laws have always been misused and administration, including police, always sides with employers during the genuine protests of working class. Labor laws are not implemented and whenever working class protests against the employers, they become victims of police lathis.

Continue from Front Page.....

MADHAV

and Kashmir as a representative of Government of India. Asked whether Sharma will talk to Hurriyat, Madhav said "This question should be asked to Hurriyat whether they are ready or not to talk".

Asked whether talks will be held with Pakistan as were held during Atal Behari Vajpayee's tenure, the BJP leader divulged the question and replied: "This time, the announcement has been made that Dineshwar Sharma would talk with all groups in J&K.

According to KNS, Madhav said that BJP wants that that "whole population of Jammu and Kashmir becomes mainstream," in reply to a question.

Earlier, BJP's BJP State General Secretary (organisation) Ashok Koul said that the Working Committee will discuss strengthening the party base in the valley.

He said that ministers, legislators and all the office bearers of the party in the state will take part in the meeting.

Koul said that 300 delegates will attend the Working Committee Meeting.

OFFICIAL

don't, as the Secretary said, we'll adjust accordingly," Wells said.

During his just concluded visit to Pakistan, Tillerson stressed the importance of Pakistan "moving quickly" to demonstrate good faith and efforts to use its influence to create the conditions that will get the Taliban to the negotiating table.

"These are things that are seen and felt and measurable, and so we look forward over the next weeks and months to see the practical steps that Pakistan takes out of its own self-interest and ensuring that its own country is not destabilised by some of the actions of the groups that have been able to use its territory," she said.

"I can't give you an explicit timetable, but we're moving very quickly ourselves on our own strategy and in reinforcing on the military side our ability to demonstrate to the Taliban that they cannot win this war. We are going to make equally rapid progress on the diplomatic side or have equally-high expectations on the diplomatic side of responsiveness," she said.

Wells asserted that the Taliban leadership and the Haqqani Network still retain an ability to plan, to recuperate, and to reside with their families in Pakistan.

The Quetta and Peshawar leadership councils of the Taliban have their names for a reason, she noted.

"What we saw in 2014 was we saw Pakistan make a strategic decision to defeat the terrorist groups that were targeting the government of Pakistan. And with great loss of life, great courage, great vision about what needed to be done, Pakistan has fought that battle and now has regained control and sovereignty over the FATA territories," she said.

"We'd like to see the same strategic commitment brought against other militant groups, whether that are operating or have used Pakistan's territory, whether they are directed against India or directed against Afghanistan," she added.

Tillerson, during his meetings with Pakistani leadership, had an extremely candid conversation with the Prime Minister and the civilian and military leadership team, she said.

The Secretary underscored that the strategy is an opportunity; since Pakistan, with the exception of Afghanistan, has the most to benefit from a stable and peaceful country next door.

He noted that at several critical junctures over the last 70 years, the US has worked very closely with Pakistan, and the Coleman hostage is an example of what they can do when together.

"But under the strategy, we've laid out some very specific expectations of how Pakistan can help create the conditions that will help bring the Taliban to the table.

And I think the longstanding relationships with the militant and terrorist organizations - our concern is that they threaten Pakistan's stability.

You see already the spillover of the sectarianism that has been building in Pakistan over the last several decades," she said.

According to Wells, over the last four years Pakistani officials and the Taliban both thought the US was withdrawing.

"They were hedging against a chaotic departure. They were hedging against an uncertain security environment," she said.

"What the South Asia strategy gives them, is certainty that we're there, we're not going to let the Taliban win, that we're prepared to invest the resources that will be, at a minimum, a stalemate but a stalemate increasingly in the government's favor," she said.

CHIDAMBARAM

much within the Constitution. Jammu and Kashmir will

remain an integral part of India with some amount of autonomy."

In his interview with The Wire, Chidambaram said he was not convinced that Sharma "has any mandate to hold meaningful talks with all sections of the society".

He said the government's Kashmir policy was "misguided" and that had deteriorated the situation in the state.

"The situation in Kashmir is worse than at any time before, and certainly worse than what it was in 2011.

"All the good work done between 2011 and say up to even the middle of 2015 after the NDA came to power... all that has been wiped out in the last two years."

QUARRY

the protesting quarry holders told news agency CNS.

They said before issuing ban order, the government didn't take quarry holders into confidence given the fact they pay taxes in the form of Royalty towards Geology and Mining Department and in return get permission for extraction of stones for sale.

"We urge upon to government to resolve our issue amicably. We have been facing hardships while the government's attitude has rendered us jobless," the quarry holders said.

NITI

mountainous terrain and limited working season which should be looked into while working on the funds allocation for it.

Mehbooba Mufti also sought in time release of funds to the State to utilize the limited working season for maximum developmental activity. She said with various initiatives launched by her Government, Jammu & Kashmir has improved its position on the Ease of Doing Business chart. She also sought intervention of Niti Ayug in promoting skill development in the State and getting youth reap the benefits of schemes in this regard.

The Vice Chairman assured the Chief Minister of a supportive and facilitational role by his organization in getting developmental bottlenecks cleared. He informed her of Atal Innovation Mission launched by the Ayug under which incubation centres are being set in educational institutes. He expressed the desire to set up such centres in schools of the State to boost enterprise among young students.

Dr. Rajiv Kumar also informed Mehbooba Mufti of the monitoring mechanism at the Ayug to oversee implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the States. He also informed of the creation of a monitoring and evaluation dashboard by the Ayug for all schemes and sectors.

Minister for Finance, Dr. Haseeb Drabu on the occasion, informed Dr. Kumar of various reformative measures like manpower auditing of the staff and labour reforms initiated in the State and geo tracking of assets being done by the Government in Rural Development Department and Power Development Departments.

Chief Secretary, B. B. Vyas; Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Rohit Kansal and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

SOCIETY

members of Syed Salahuddin who according to them are innocent. The members during the meeting with the civil administration and police officials said that the family members of Syed Salahuddin have been living in peace since 1990 when Salahuddin crossed the border and settled in Pakistan administered Kashmir.

Demanding the immediate release of Salahuddins son Shahid Yousuf and cancellation of NIA summon to grandson of Salahuddin, the civil society members said that if harassment persists, it will have serious ramifications. They threatened to launch an agitation in case NIA doesn't stop harassing the Salahuddin's family. They also demanded that NIA should handover all the cell phones and lap tops of family that it seized during a raid at Soibugh Budgam.

"We will court arrest and the responsibility of any untoward happening will lie with the state government," they said.

Pertinently, one of Salahuddin's son was arrested earlier this week by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) after he was summoned by the central probe agency to its Delhi headquarter.

A Delhi court sent Syed Shahid Yousuf to seven days NIA custody in connection with a 2011 funding case for allegedly receiving money from his father.

Yousuf, who was arrested on October 24 by National Investigation Agency (NIA), was produced before District and Sessions Judge Poonam A Bamba, who allowed the probe agency's plea for his custody.

42-year-old Shahid works in the agricultural department of the Jammu and Kashmir government.

The NIA alleged that Shahid used to receive funds through

a US-based international wire transfer company from Aijaz Ahmed Bhat, another accused in the case who is absconding and is reported to be based in Saudi Arabia.

After his arrest, the family had issued a statement, claiming that Shahid was arrested to "pressurize Salahuddin to submission".

In the statement, the family while maintaining that Shahid was innocent, said his arrest was an "age-old tactic by the Delhi government to harass the family and to defame our father."

On Friday, Salahuddin's grandson was also summoned by the probe agency for "questioning" at their Delhi headquarters.

Muzammil Ahmad Khan, only son of Salahuddin's daughter, has done his B.Tech from Pakistan and puts up at Daharmuna, two kilometers from Salahuddin's ancestral home.

POWER

admitted that there is power curtailment. "We can effort 1200 MWs of power these days however the demand is 1600 MWs. So we have started the power curtailment from last few days and according to the schedule the metered areas are subjected to 21 hours of weekly cut and non-metered 42 hours.

She said that metered areas have one hour each morning, day and evening cut daily. The non-metered areas have two hour power cut thrice in the day.

The chief engineer said that if the consumers make judicious use of electricity, there is no need for long power curtailment in the coming months. "We have seen that power thefts and use of heaters and boilers by the consumers cause the overloading. People should use electricity judiciously," the chief engineer appealed.

She stated that the department cannot have the inspection squad in every corner of the Valley and that people must understand the judicious use of power.

The chief engineer believed that this year's curtailment schedule will have lot of respite for the Valley consumers. "Various reformatory measures have been taken by the power department in this regard," she maintained.

However people believe that the curtailment in metered areas is against the norms where the department is bound to provide round-the-clock power supply. "The Department has been violating its own schedule by resorting to unscheduled powers cuts in metered areas," said one of the residents of Bemina Srinagar.

He said that the extended power cuts surface soon after the Durbar (seat of governance) shifts to Jammu as a bi-annual practice.

It is to mention here that from last four days KNS has received many complaints from all most all the districts of the valley including Srinagar city about the power curtailment.

Meanwhile sources in the PDD told KNS that people have started resorting to theft and hooking. "Even in posh colonies people start to resort to hooking creating problem in smooth supply of electricity," said one of the officials of the PDD.

SECURITY

opportunities for deliberation on important issues of mutual interest impacting security and development of the region." All officials reviewed the security situation and stressed on the need for harmonious functioning of the various agencies, he said.

"In view of the prevailing internal security situation, an overview of security and upcoming activities in the region was undertaken to ensure complete synergy between all security agencies and civil administration for a coordinated effort towards achievement of peace, harmony and development of the area," the spokesperson said.

AMNESTY

executions in Manipur dating back to 1979, ruling that crimes cannot be overlooked only because of the passage of time. This principle should be applied in all cases of alleged human rights abuses."

On 27 October, the Supreme Court rejected a plea urging it to review its 24 July order when it had dismissed a petition seeking the re-opening of the 215 cases, ruling: "...more than 27 years have passed... No fruitful purpose would emerge, as evidence is unlikely to be available at this late juncture."

In the early 1990s, unknown armed groups carried out several attacks on members of the Kashmiri Hindus also known as Kashmiri Pandits, following which hundreds of thousands of them migrated from Kashmir.

A Jammu and Kashmir Police report in 2008 stated that 209 Kashmiri Pandits had been killed in the state since 1989, but that charges had been filed in only 24 cases.

Several cases in which Kashmiri Pandits were killed by suspected armed group members - such as the killing of 24 Kashmiri Pandits in 2003 in Nadimarg, Shopian - have not

led to convictions.

JRL

she with her partners BJP have broken all records of committing atrocities and inflicting miseries upon the people of Kashmir. They said that during her regime killing, blinding of people, arrests, imprisonment and detention of masses and leadership, arson, vandalization of peoples properties, harrasment, propoganda onslaught and other forms of repression have touched a new low. On the other hand she along with her coterie of opportunists have further eroded whatever was left of the safeguards of the people of the state by eroding the economic autonomy of the state through implementation of GST. As her tenure progresses so do her compromises with regard to the interests of the people of kashmir who are under assaults from all fronts. The situation has come to such a pass now that even the basic right to protest through shutdowns against these moves and constant assaults is now being denied and made punishable.

JRL said issuing ordinance calling for imprisonment for shutdowns is with a view to instil fear of retribution and punishment among the resistance leadership and people of Kashmir in order to discourage them from raising their voice against oppression and for demanding their right to self-determination. But like all such previous repressive measures it is bound to fail.

The JRL said that shutdown is an accepted and acknowledged way of resisting oppression and injustice across the world and that it should stand clear that resistance leadership will continue with this right no matter how much government would try to choke our voice.

ALTAf

and other concerned officials attended the meeting. Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr. Mandeep K Bhandar and District Development Commissioners from winter zone districts of Jammu division attended the meeting through video conferencing.

The Minister directed the officials to ensure the hassle free examinations in a disciplined manner and asked the police officials to deploy adequate police personnel around examination centres during the examination period.

Stressing upon the proper handling of the question papers, Bukhari directed that the senior BOSE officials should be deployed for the lifting and delivery of examination material to the concerned police stations from where they would be taken to exam centres. He said that strict action will be initiated against any official found involved in unfair means.

He also called for setting up control rooms at all district headquarters for better coordination and taking immediate action any complaint of unfair means.

Bukhari directed the District Development Commissioners to constitute the monitoring teams for smooth conduct of examinations in their respective jurisdictions and asked them to impose section 144 around all examination centres on examination days.

He also asked BOSE authorities to allot the roll number slips to the students at an earliest and also asked them to look into the issues and queries regarding the conduct of examinations.

The meeting was informed that BOSE has setup centralized helpline centre for the redressed of grievances which can be reached at 0194-2494965, 0194-2494985, 0194-2495310 and 2491179 for examination-related information.

Chief Education Officers were directed to ensure arrangement of supervisory staff and were instructed to ensure proper heating arrangements at all the examination centres.

POLICE

present in the compound. That doctors confirmed that no spray has been used on the victim. Her father in law alleged the strangulation which was again denied by doctors. There was no injury mark on the victim", police said in a statement.

The statement further added that her mother and mother-in-law have expired recently. "She has delivered a baby girl recently. Clinical psychologists suggest that it can be a case of postpartum depression. A condition which occurs after the delivery of baby to a mother. The depression remains intense for the first 6 months post delivery. Mother finds it difficult to cope up with new additional responsibilities. She has sleepless nights, mood swings and her biological clock gets disturbed", police adds.

Police said tgat in this particular case the mother of the victim has recently expired and her mother in law has also expired both of whom are a big support to a new mother and husband due to his own engagements is unable to share the responsibilities. All this aggravated her condition which led her to resort to the said act.

"She is now getting all attention and sympathy from her family members", police adds.

Govt determined to provide better healthcare facilities: Bali Bhagat

Launches website of DHSK

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 28: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Bali Bhagat today launched website of the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (www.dhskashmir.org) at the Division of Public Health and Epidemiology, Barzulla Srinagar in presence of the Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Saleem ur Rehman.

After the launching ceremony, the Minister was apprised about the information and activities related to the Department that are being depicted on the website in a user-friendly manner. The website offers a simplified menu and an easy-to-navigate layout, so that the public can quickly and easily find information related to the services they need or seek.



Further, the website gives the visitors better idea about DHSK and its activities besides efforts in delivering healthcare facilities across the Kashmir Division. The website will allow people to access detailed achievements done by the Department under various programmes and schemes.

While going through the website, the Minister appreciated the efforts of the Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir in coming up with a comprehensive website and laid stress on bridging the Public-Government interface via all means of modern technology so that a better work culture is brought into place.

Later, Bali Bhagat also took a review of functionality of the Control Room of the Directorate Health Services Kashmir.

Deputy Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Showkat Lolu, Assistant Director DSK, Dr G A Wani, Epidemiologist Dr Rehana Kousar, State Surveillance Officer, Dr S M Kadri and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

Basharat Bukhari for adequate transport facilities for fruit transportation

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 28: Taking cognizance of issues raised by the traders regarding the shortage of trucks in Valley for transporting fruit outside the state, Minister for Horticulture, Syed Basharat Bukhari today directed for immediate redressal of the same for timely transportation of the produce.

The Minister, who is on a visit to Thailand, directed the concerned including Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Secretary Horticulture and Inspector General Traffic Police to sort out the issue immediately and ensure that there shall be check on vehicles demanding extra fare to carry horticulture produce.

Bukhari directed I G Traffic for taking measures for hassle-free movement of fruit carrying trucks to avoid inconvenience faced by the fruit growers and traders.

The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir

informed the Minister that the officers of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) have been directed to divert all the vehicles coming from outside State with food grains to different Mandis as per requirement in consultation with Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing.

Later, on the instructions of the Minister, Secretary Horticulture convened a meeting with concerned officials. He directed them to work in close coordination to ensure hassle-free and timely transportation of fruit carrying trucks outside the State.

Earlier, on September 23 the Minister had convened a meeting with concerned Departments regarding hassle free and timely transportation of horticulture industry produce so that growth, as well as traders, fetches good returns.

Dorjay takes stock of peoples' grievances, reviews dev works in Zanskar

Concludes 6-day tour of the region

KARGIL, OCTOBER 28: Minister for Cooperatives and Ladakh Affairs, Tsering Dorjay today concluded his extensive six-day tour of the Zanskar region during which he interacted with various public deputations and listened to their grievances.

During the tour, the Minister also inspected progress on various ongoing developmental works and called for their timely completion so that their benefits percolate to the grass root level.

Interacting with a series of public delegations, Dorjay said that the Government is fully conscious of the problems and issues of people living in far-flung areas of the State and all out efforts are being made to ensure satisfactory and uninterrupted delivery of services at their doorsteps.

The Minister said that to provide better road connectivity to Zanskar valley project worth Rs 4200 crore has been sanctioned by the Government under PMDP and work on the project is in full swing. The



completion of this prestigious project will usher in a new era of unprecedented progress and development in the area, he said. The Minister said that to speed up the work on the Nimo-Padum-Darcha Road additional funds to the tune of Rs 1250 crores have been sanctioned.

Dorjay assured deputations that he will personally monitor the headway with regard to Tamasha Nallah Hydrel Project and will take up the issue for its early ap-

proval with the concerned authorities. He said that efforts are also on to connect Zanskar valley with power grid.

Meanwhile, the Minister took stock of the pace of work going on several projects. He reviewed ongoing work on Chadhar Road, Padum-Lungnaq road and several other roads under project Vijayak and PWD and exhorted upon the officers to ensure completion of the projects within the stipulated time period in view of the fast approaching winter season.

He also inspected Pidmo Motorable Bridge being constructed at a cost of Rs 5.68 crore. He also stressed on speedy completion of Kargil-Zanskar National Highway (NH301), besides provision of better telecommunication services and other basic amenities.

He also visited Stara, Sani, Rug Rug, Ufti, Pipiting besides several other adjoining villages and listened to peoples' grievances. The Minister also visited the Dozing Photang School and interacted with the teachers and students. On the occasion, he announced Rs 10,000 in favour of the school.

High-end mended Radiation Centre inaugurated in SMHS

Drabu stresses on fiscal autonomy to hospitals for their smooth functioning; Centre to provide quality cancer treatment: Asiea Naqash

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 28: Minister for Finance, Labour and Employment, Dr Haseeb A Drabu along with Minister of State for Medical Education, Asiea Naqash today inaugurated the mended Radiation Centre with latest equipments in SMHS hospital which was damaged in 2014-floods.

On the occasion addressing the jam-packed audience at Government Medical College (GMC) auditorium, Dr Drabu laid stress on financial autonomy to hospitals like other educational institutions to avoid any hindrance in smooth functioning of hospitals.

He said, "Finance can't be a restraint and we will have to find resources to provide quality healthcare people, and in this regard we will have to



jointly design a mechanism to make hospitals financially autonomous".

Finance Minister said that the State is spending less than a percent of gross domestic product on health care which needs to be looked upon adding, "we should be spending at least 4 to 6 percent of domestic product on health care to upgrade its standards and measures are underway to revamp the system".

He assured the Head Department of Radiation Oncol-

ogy to provide them with the PET scan machinery by March next year.

On the occasion, Asiea Naqash assured the Department of every possible help so that quality treatment is provided to patients suffering from cancer and other diseases.

Principal Dean GMC, Prof. Samiya Rashid said that the latest machinery will help the Centre to better treat the patients.

Cancer treatment equip-

ments at the Centre include Rs 4.75 crore Equinox Cobalt Unit, Rs 3.7 crore CT Simulator and Rs 3.5 crore Brachy Therapy Unit.

It was said that with the availability of this facility, more cancer patients will be treated at the hospital and some patients who were referred to outside stations will also be taken care of by the sophisticated and state-of-art equipment. The installation of the equipments would be completed by May-June 2018.

Haq inaugurates bridge at Gundisanah, inspects dev projects in Loalab constituency

Participates in EDIs Mega Awareness Camp at TRC Kupwara

KUPWARA, OCTOBER 28: Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Law & Justice, Abdul Haq along with officers and engineers today conducted an extensive tour to different areas of Loalab constituency to inspect ongoing developmental projects there.

The Minister inaugurated Rs 75 lakh 1x12.0M span RCC Bridge over Nallah Hyamma at Gundisanah.

During the visit, the Minister also interacted with several public deputations who apprised him of their issues and projected various demands. The Minister assured them that their genuine demands and issues would be looked into and resolved in a phased manner.

Later, the Minister attended the EDIs mega awareness camp as chief guest in which legislators S. A. Rashid, Bashir Ahmad Dar, Raja Manzoor Ahmad and District Development Commissioner Khalid Jahangir, CEO EDI, Dr. Majid besides representatives of implementing agencies in the camp attended. The camp was organized by EDI Srinagar in collaboration with the other implementing and sponsoring agencies associated with the EDI implementing schemes in the State. Speaking on the occasion, Haq impressed upon all stakeholders to implement the schemes as per the guidelines of Union and State Governments so that unemployed youth of the district are benefitted.

He urged youth to come forward and avail the benefits of the welfare, developmental schemes launched by the present governments for overall development of the State through establishing their own income generating units.

The legislatures also asked EDI to more such awareness camps in the district for the benefit of the local youth.

The DDC assured the EDI authorities for providing the suitable accommodation in the district headquarter as their requirement. He also exhorted upon the aspirants to change their mindset so that the financial assistance to the income generated holders be utilized judiciously.

The CEO EDI highlighted the progress achieved by the Institute to impart training, monitoring and financing to young entrepreneurs under Skill Development and implementation of other schemes on the directions of Chief Minister for the eradication of poverty and unemployment from the state.

Work on KGBA hostel complexes in Khansahib to commence soon: Hakeem Yaseen

BUDGAM, OCTOBER, 28: MLA Khansahib today said the Government has released Rs. 80 lakh and Rs. 60 lakh for construction of KGBA hostel complexes at Patvow and Lanilab villages in Khansahib constituency respectively. The work on both these projects will commence shortly.

This was stated at a meeting of officers of education department held here to review the action plan for construction of new school buildings and up gradation of various Middle, high and higher secondary schools in Khansahib constituency. The MLA Khansahib, Hakeem Yaseen chaired the meeting which was attended by Director School Education, Kashmir, Director RMSA, Director SSA and Chief Education Officer, Budgam. The meeting also discussed measures to improve teaching-learning facilities in various educational institutions in Budgam particularly in Khansahib con-

stituency.

Speaking on the occasion, Hakeem Yaseen expressed his gratitude to the Education Minister, Syed Altaf Bukhari and concerned education officers for fulfilling commitments, regarding construction and up gradation of educational institutions in the area, made during their tour to Khansahib constituency last month. He asked the education officers to give focused attention for improving education system in Khansahib, which, he said is educationally backward as compared to other areas of the valley.

While chairing another meeting to review power supply scenario in Khansahib constituency, Hakeem Yaseen said that the PDD has released Rs. 25 lakh for acquisition of Land for construction of a modern Grid station at Khansahib. The Grid station will come up at a cost of Rs. 76 cr. He asked the concerned

engineers of PDD to identify the site for the Grid station immediately so that work is executed on this ambitious project at the earliest. He said this Grid station on completion envisages to fulfill about 50 percent power requirements of the Budgam district comprising Khansahib, Chadoora, Budgam and Charer-i-Shareif.

Hakeem Yasin also urged the concerned engineers of PDD to immediately complete work on receiving stations at Arizal and Waterhail so that these are commissioned by the end of November month as per the commitments.

He said commissioning of these two Receiving stations will go as long way to overcome electricity crises in these areas especially during the ensuing winter season. He asked the PDD engineers to gear up men and machinery to redress the grievances of the people with respect to availability of electricity.

Farooq Andrabi inaugurates 2 WSS in Anantnag

ANANTNAG, OCTOBER 28: The Minister of State for Haj & Auqaf (Independent charge), PHE and Irrigation & Flood Control, PDD and I&C, Syed Farooq Ahmad Andrabi today during his extensive visit to Dooru and Qazigund areas inaugurated two Water Supply Schemes namely WSS Kulamchinar and WSS Tanjloo besides laying the foundation stone for upgradation of WSS Agnoo.

The minister was accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, Mohammad Younis Malik, Chief Engineer PHE and I&FC, SDM Dooru, ACD, Exens of R&B, PHE, I&FC, Tehsildars and



other officers.

The lift water supply scheme Kulamchinar will be benefiting 3000 souls of two villages - Kulamchinar and Shankerpora. The WSS is having the capacity of 35000 gallons per day which has been completed at an estimated cost of Rs 218.39 lacs. The

scheme has been funded by National Rural Drinking Water Programme.

Later, the Minister laid the foundation stone for augmentation of WSS Agnoo whose capacity shall be enhanced from 20000 gallons per day to 40000 gallons per day at an estimated cost of

Rs 139 lakh. The scheme shall benefit 1800 souls and will cater a population of 2922 by 2028. On the occasion, the minister interacted with the locals who presented their demands. On spot, the minister issued directions for the upgradation of transformer from 63 KV to 100 KV. He said that other demands pertaining to roads, water and ration will also be considered and shall be prioritized.

While addressing the public gathering at Tanjloo on the inaugural ceremony of WSS Tanjloo, he said that government is committed to prosperity and development of the people.

SIC organizes seminar on Implementation of J&K RTI Act 2009

SRINAGAR OCTOBER 28: State Information Commission (SIC) today organized a one-day seminar on Implementation of Jammu and Kashmir Right to Information Act 2009 at Directorate of Information & Public Information Headquarter here.

Chief Secretary, B. B. Vyasa was chief guest on the occasion. Besides, Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) J&K, Khurshid A Ganai, Ex-Chief Information Commissioner J&K, G R Sufi, State Information Commissioner Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Director Information, Muneer-Ul-Islam, Director Vigilance SJM Gillani, heads of various departments, First Appellate Authorities (FAAs), Public Information Officers (PIOs) from the districts of Kashmir division, prominent RTI activists and other officers from the J&K State Information Commission.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary said that free access to information and participation of people in policy making is essential for transparent and accountable governance. Right to information provides an opportunity for attaining informed consent from the citizens for establishing democratic order.

He said that RTI is the bedrock of good governance as it promotes transparency and enforces accountability thereby strengthening corruption free governance.

CIC, Khurshid A Ganai said the aim of the seminar was to review the implementation of J&K RTI Act 2009 with reference to the achievements registered so far and problems being faced in its implementation, to sensitize the PIOs and FAAs about their critical role and responsibility in the implementation of RTI Act, to provide more clarity to the PIOs and FAAs on important sections of the RTI Act.

Former CIC, G R Sufi said there is a need to create awareness among the people of the state about Right to Information (RTI) Act as it plays a vital role to strengthen corruption free governance.

Speaking on the Occasion, Director Information & Public Relation Muneer-Ul-Islam urged all the departments should digitize the records to bring transparency in the system, besides proper utilization of RTI Act.

The seminar culminated with certain essential suggestions being made for the consideration of J&K Government for further strengthening of the framework.

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THE GUJARAT STAKES

It is in no small part due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah that Gujarat wields a disproportionately high influence on national politics. The so-called Gujarat model of development was an important part of the BJP's campaign in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. To say that the Gujarat Assembly election of 2012 had a huge bearing on the parliamentary election that followed in less than two years will be no exaggeration. For the same reasons, Gujarat 2017 carries an additional layer of importance: whether for the Congress or the BJP, a win or a loss will cast a much longer shadow until the summer of 2019. The two-phase polls on December 9 and 14 will thus be keenly fought, with the BJP seeking a sixth straight win, and the Congress trying for a breakthrough against all odds. The timing of the announcement of the election schedule itself became a controversy, as Chief Election Commissioner A.K. Joti faced criticism for delaying it till after Mr. Modi had made two more visits to Gujarat to inaugurate projects and announce new schemes. The argument that flood relief work in the State would have been affected if the schedule had been announced along with that of the election in Himachal Pradesh, which is ruled by the Congress, was not very convincing. One, relief work had been mostly completed, and two, the Model Code of Conduct would not have stood in the way of such works. However, when the votes are counted, what would have mattered is not the two-week delay in the announcement, but the BJP's performance over the last five years. Also the Congress's ability to offer a viable alternative. On the debit side of the political ledger for the BJP, Mr. Modi is not the chief ministerial candidate in Gujarat and may not be able to cash in on his charisma the way he did in previous elections. The three years since Mr. Modi moved to the Centre have not been the best for Gujarat in terms of governance. The BJP had to replace Anandiben Patel, who succeeded Mr. Modi as Chief Minister, with Vijay Rupani in order to infuse more life into the administration. But the Congress does not seem to be well-placed to press the advantage. It is reduced to seeking the support of leaders of caste groups to make a dent in the BJP's vote bank. The wooing of the Patidar leader Hardik Patel and Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani, and the induction of Alpesh Thakor, a leader of a backward classes grouping, into the Congress might have brought an accretion to its vote bank, but the party will not get far by artificially yoking together leaders with support bases locked in social conflict. These youthful leaders in the company of Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi will need much more in common than a desire to vote the BJP out. Without presenting a cohesive programme, this nascent, loose alliance will have no game-changing impact.

HAS MODI LOST HIS MAGIC?

► Sandeep Dikshit

There is no doubt that Narendra Modi, the politician, weaved magic. It's important to see how he did this. There are two parts to this magic. The first is related to Mr. Modi's persona and how he used opportunities and a trend in Indian politics to build an image. The second involves his complete identification with neo-liberal Indian economic interests that no other government could do to this extent. The first refers to his magical skill; the second turned this skill into an illusory drama on a national scale.

Seizing opportunities
Growing fundamentalism and the need to marginalise voices for justice and equity complement each other. Both help to sustain the hegemony of the privileged in terms of caste, religion and finance. Both arise from right-wing economics, and it was obvious from the 1991 liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation (LPG) period that this would happen. The Congress and other like-minded parties never prepared themselves to counter this, while the Bharatiya Janata Party and people like Mr. Modi seized this opportunity.

What happened in the last two decades is that the classes that tasted blood from the LPG period started wanting more. No one could give it to them the way Mr. Modi promised and even showed in Gujarat. These predators predictably went en masse to the one who promised more.

On the other hand, the discomfort and massive livelihood and support dislocation that follows all LPG programmes are countered either through a more equal and democratic economic system or by turning them into disgruntled mobs who turn against those who seek an equitable distribution of resources. In India, no government ensured the first solution, and so the latter became our reality, and in Mr. Modi the disgruntled sought succour.

Mr. Modi came in a beautifully constructed image of a commoner, a mass leader, a bold decision-maker, a harbinger of lost glory. In reality he is a fundamentalist who cloaks himself as a liberal, a pro-poor leader who flies in corporate jets, and a champion who unifies the majority through a divisive brand of politics. In the process, the real feudal vassals in the system — the bureaucracy, the police, the income tax officer, the priest — have become the only beneficiaries.

This call to Hindu pride has not translated into benefits and dignity for the poor. Crony capitalism has forced the state to ease its way into people's pockets. Development has got restricted to mega civil construction projects, and a male passion for size and show. Calls for justice, equity and equality are being labelled as populism, compromise, and vote-bank politics.

Pro-rich policies
Every brave decision is aimed at strengthening the rich. Demonetisation ensured that cash was turned into "white", while



the poor sacrificed for their nation. The goods and services tax was rolled out to ease business for the big entrepreneurs, while small and medium enterprises agitate for bottlenecks to be eased, not realising that the system is designed to kill them. The soldier continues to be sacrificed on our borders while cronies get away with defence contracts.

In his rush to please forces that brought him to power, and lacking the understanding and capacity to work for real India, Mr. Modi is losing his grip. Repeating Gujarat and playing to the gallery does not work nationally. An economy that is hostage to the rich damages the poor. The rhetoric of religious nationalism does not weaken Pakistan or China, just as strengthening the arms of the state in financial and uniformed bureaucrats does not lead to good and just "governance".

Mr. Modi always had a political plot, never a people's policy plot. As the first gets tiresome, there is no fallback. Till the magic of the Hindu Hruday Samrat sustains, Mr. Modi's magic will somehow stay afloat. But as people see through it, and go home after the show is over, the illusion will disappear.

It's unfair to use the word magic to describe the hard-earned success of a leader — it clearly undermines the serious thought process behind the painstaking effort and the resoluteness with which tough decisions have been taken. "Magic" also negates something which can be logically explained and rationally understood. At the core of the unstinted popular support that Prime Minister Narendra Modi commands even in the face of an aggressive negativist propaganda is not magic but a well-thought-out and neatly planned scheme of things. Since the plan is very much in place, relentless work on it is in progress and confidence in the leader who is implementing the plan intact. There is no question of any deficit being accrued in the bank of goodwill and trust.

What makes Mr. Modi tick
There are, among others, at least three clear factors that make Mr. Modi stand head and shoulders above all others, especially Manmohan Singh and his party

functionaries. First, the purity of purpose; nobody doubts Mr. Modi's intentions. Second, 18 hours of work a day to make India free of misgovernance. Third, a not-so-small section of people also appreciates that this is a government that draws its strength not from status quo-ism but from transformative governance.

For people to believe in the leadership, there has to be a track record. Let's take the example of Mr. Modi's war on black money. The Bharatiya Janata Party has been taunted, and derisive remarks have been made about its intention to eradicate black money and end corruption. But one must remember that Mr. Modi made three important revelations in his Independence Day address. First, he announced that within just three years, the government has recovered ₹1.25 lakh crore worth of black money. The second was his proclamation that the number of tax payers has increased from 22 lakhs to 56 lakhs. Similarly, his bold assertion that some three lakh shell companies that were unearthed after demonetisation, over half of which have now been deregistered, was important for multiple reasons. A few months ago, Mr. Modi had said that while his government can make some mistakes, its intentions cannot be challenged. But the most significant message to the nation was his emphasis that we all have to shed the 'chalta hai' attitude and cultivate a 'badal sakta hai' approach. And for that, he has been systematically promoting innovations in every sector of governance.

Challenging the status quo
While it is important to understand why people innovate, it is perhaps more instructive to understand why people do not. Simple solutions to chronic problems do not always elude human imagination. Many times, people wantonly shut their talent window and tend to turn their back to such solutions also because of their vested interests in allowing the status quo to continue.

After several years, India has seen a Prime Minister who embodies the principle of unattached involvement. Here is a leader without any personal agenda, with no selfish goals, and with absolutely no

intention of perpetuating political power for personal benefits. Mr. Modi is challenging the status quo with an extremely rare 'catch the bull by the horns' approach. This approach coupled with resoluteness has promoted an out-of-the-box thinking under the Modi sarkar. This is why the sheer number of innovations in governance that have been conceived and implemented in the last three years makes it the most innovation-friendly government. When one innovates, others get motivated.

With all these efforts, people know that it's not magic but about confidence and conviction to steer a nation forward.

The mandate that the Bharatiya Janata Party and Mr. Modi received has to be evaluated in the context of the promises made in 2014 — namely, internal security, transparency, and reforms. Mere rhetorical announcements will not yield magic.

Not keeping promises
On internal security, we find that Kashmir is on the boil. We are not in a better position, but it could be worse. The government is not doing anything different from the assurances made by the previous United Progressive Alliance government. There were promises made to restore peace and normalcy in the Valley amicably and that the effects of terrorism would not have any fallout in other parts of the country. Looking at the way our soldiers are dying and our borders are being breached, the promise of internal security has not been lived up to. Yes, three years is a short time, but there is a lot that needs to be done.

With regard to reforms and development, the major reforms this government promised, legislative or otherwise, were demonetisation, goods and services tax, and Aadhaar linkages. In a parliamentary democracy, people expect crucial decisions to be taken in a collaborative manner, as a consultative process to be debated in Parliament. That was not done regarding demonetisation. While taking such a drastic decision, the government should be 100% sure of factoring in its effects. The intent may have been noble, but the execution was not as effective as it should have been. People lost their jobs and many their lives. Perhaps in the long run it may help the economy by reducing cash transactions and reducing black money.

There was a promise to create employment — two million telecom jobs with 'Make in India' being launched in a big, big way. It is early days yet, but we are nowhere close to what was promised though there are a lot of things in the pipeline. The Commerce and Industry Ministry is stretching itself to ensure that projects on the lines of Make in India are launched. GST and Aadhaar, both proposed in the time of the UPA, are problematic. Aadhaar was introduced as a Money Bill to avoid discussion in the Rajya Sabha.

Left behind on the path ahead

► Nikhil Shenoy

The tragic death of an 11-year-old girl in Jharkhand — which has resulted in the government going into defensive mode — reflects the dire situation that poor families in India find themselves in every day. On October 18, the Aadhaar-issuing body, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), said that 'the family of the girl, who allegedly died of starvation, had Aadhaar and that stringent action should be taken against those who denied her government benefits'. While it has been accepted that she was excluded from having access to rations due to Aadhaar, the government has gone out of its way to assert that the child died due to other causes. The Jharkhand Minister for Public Distribution has rescinded the order requiring the cancellation of ration cards not seeded with Aadhaar. This is another addition to a long list of mass exclusions that a callous state claims as "savings".

While Aadhaar is part of a larger ecosystem of centralised governance where policymakers assert that digitisation, banking and cash transfers, and biometric tracking (JAM, or Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) will sort out all prob-

lems of welfare, inquiry will show how unbridled, mandatory digitisation is causing immense pain and suffering to the poorest and most marginalised of this country.

No magic wand
The social security pension system in Rajasthan is another critical welfare system being broken by this tidal wave of digital solutions. This year, on Gandhi Jayanti, the State government announced that from October 2, 2017 pension forms would be accepted only 'online' through 'e-mitra kendras' or licensed private sector operators.

Social security pensions are a lifeline for the elderly poor. In Rajasthan alone, there are 63,18,095 active pensioners. Previously, to apply for a pension, an eligible person could submit pension forms to the panchayat. Now, they have to first go to an e-mitra kendra. The applicant must have with them Aadhaar and Bhamashah cards (a State-level identification system similar to the UID/Aadhaar system), upload all the documents, submit their biometrics, pay a small fee and wait for verification and sanction. Pensioners must also periodically re-verify themselves. This process is supposed to cost ₹11 but "enterprising" e-mitras charge ₹100.



For the elderly poor, end-to-end digitisation of social security pension processes is a disaster waiting to happen. The inability to open and use bank accounts, send them with Aadhaar and Bhamashah, and then withdraw pension payments from their accounts using biometric authentication every month is resulting in sanctioned beneficiaries

being removed from pension lists. Nobody knows how many of them were alive when arbitrarily classified as "dead". Take the case of Kanku Devi, Sita Devi and Dhaku Devi, pensioners who the government said were dead.

Every village has a Kanku Devi. Now 50, she has a congenital disability that rendered her limbs lifeless. Single, she

lives in a one room, stone house. Her brother's daughter-in-law gives her enough firewood, ration and water to prepare a small meal for the day — a dry roti with salt.

Before she passed away, Sita Devi, 40, had been bedridden for five years after a spinal injury at work. Her three children, the eldest who is 15, looked after their mother and house. Her children are now struggling to get social security benefits, challenged by digital requirements.

Dhaku Devi, 90, who also passed away, and with no children to look after her, was almost blind and did not have an electricity connection in her house. She managed to be mobile within the house. Her daily roti, if it came, was brought to her by a family member who lived nearby.

These women were the luckier ones who got their pensions restarted after the intervention of civil society organisations. The meagre pension gives them some semblance of dignity and independence. There are countless such people across India, who are now bewildered and suffering the consequences of new digital systems.

Though effective digital applications exist, the question is this: who does digi-

atisation serve? And, are there other, better mechanisms freely available? The most sensible policy would be to provide a parallel digital option.

A demand that beneficiaries have the option to choose a payment mode that is convenient to them has been assiduously ignored.

There is, for instance, the plea to retain the option of choosing the panchayat route for pension applications. A useful digital-based reform would have been to have an automatic pension sanction as soon as people become eligible for it. The policies being pushed through appear to be more out of a concern for administrative convenience than the right to life. There is no consultation, no transparency, no accountability and no regard for what systems people know will suit them best.

Schemes such as 'Digital India' sound exciting as they "spell" progress. But what these schemes mean to a majority of the poor and the devastation they cause is lost on us. A disturbing lack of empathy, transparency and participation is allowing the weakest to be bullied into what is being portrayed as a way ahead.

Nikhil Shenoy is with the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan

Modi meets French minister Parly, pitches for greater cooperation under 'Make-in-India'

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday pitched for greater cooperation with France under the framework of 'Make-in-India' in defence manufacturing and research and development. He said this when French Minister for the Armed Forces Florence Parly called on him here.

Parly briefed the prime minister about developments in bilateral defence cooperation, a PMO statement said.

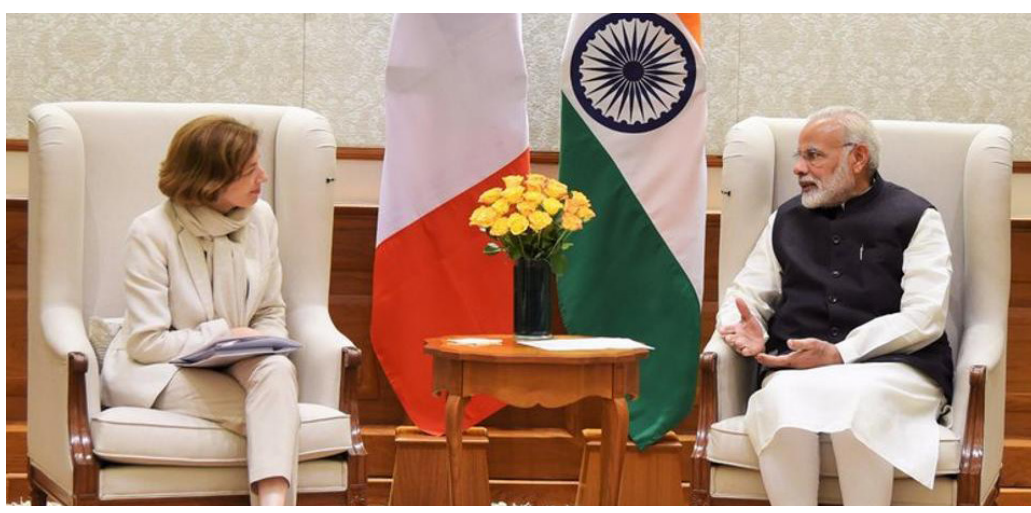
The prime minister said that defence cooperation is one of the key pillars of the Strategic Partnership between India and France, and called for greater cooperation

in the 'Make in India' framework in defence manufacturing and joint research and development, the statement said.

The two leaders also discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest, it added. The prime minister said that he looks forward to receiving President Macron in India at his earliest convenience, the statement said. India and France will jointly conduct naval exercise 'Varuna' next year.

This was decided during a meeting between Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Florence Parly on Friday.

Range of measures to expand



military to military ties, including enhancing the scope of their joint exercises, in particular the Varuna naval exercise scheduled in early 2018, were agreed upon.

Both countries will also actively explore additional measures to facilitate operational level interactions between their respective armed forces. The ministers reiterated their strong intention to further expand bilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism. Recognising the growing significance of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific and the need for greater maritime domain awareness, India and France will further ex-

pand information sharing arrangements building upon the Technical Arrangement on Exchange of White Shipping information signed earlier this year.

The two leaders also comprehensively reviewed developments in defence equipment and industry cooperation, where France is a major partner.

They agreed to strongly support projects for defence manufacturing under the 'Make in India' initiative as well as promote defence technology and R&D cooperation.

This was Parly's maiden visit to India as the French Minister for the Armed Forces.

Sonia Gandhi discharged, advised rest

NEW DELHI: Congress president Sonia Gandhi (71) was discharged from Sir Ganga Ram hospital at 4 pm on Saturday after being admitted with an upset stomach a day earlier.

"Her condition at the time of discharge was stable and she has been advised rest," according to Dr DS Rana, chairman, board of members at the hospital.

This is the third time Gandhi has been hospitalised this year. In May, she had food poisoning and spent nearly a week in the hospital. In January, she was hospitalised with fever and chest congestion.

Gandhi, who also suffers from chronic asthma, has been under the care of Ganga Ram Hospital consultant pulmonologist Dr Arup Basu.

The Congress president has been shuttling in and out of the hospital ever since she collapsed due to massive electrolyte imbalance at a rally in Varanasi, fracturing her left shoulder last August.

Her daughter, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, was also admitted to the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in August this year due to dengue.

Her son and Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi had earlier tweeted that she was much better.



Hardik Patel plays hardball, asks Congress to clear stand on Patidar reservation by Nov 3

NEW DELHI: Patidar quota agitation leader Hardik Patel, who has put forward a set of demands before the Congress as a pre-condition for extending support to the party in the upcoming Gujarat Assembly polls, today asked it to make its stand clear by November 3 on how it would ensure reservation for the community. In a tweet, he also threatened that the Patidar community would oppose Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi during his visit to Surat on November 3, like it did to BJP president Amit Shah during one of his public gatherings in the city.

"3/11/2017 tak Congress Patidar ko Samvedhanik aarakshan kaise dengi, us mudde par apna stand clear kar de nahi to Amit Shah jaisa mamla Surat mein hoga (Congress should make its

stand clear by November 3 on how it will provide reservation to the Patidar community under the Constitution, otherwise the Amit Shah episode will be repeated in Surat)," he tweeted. In September last year, Shah had faced a strong opposition from the workers of the Hardik-led Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) during his visit to Surat. Dozens of PAAS workers had disrupted a function which was being attended by the BJP chief.

Dinesh Bambhaniya, a PAAS convener, said the organisation and the community it represented would take a call on whether to support the Congress in the Assembly polls only after the opposition party made its stand clear on the issue.

He asserted that Hardik or anyone else from the PAAS had no plans to

meet Rahul Gandhi until the Congress convinced the Patidar leaders as regards how would it ensure reservation for the community.

"First, the Congress will have to make its stand clear regarding reservation and only after that shall we talk to Rahul Gandhi... He is visiting Surat on November 3 and we can oppose him like we did to Amit Shah," Bambhaniya said. Hardik (24) had recently met Congress' Gujarat affairs in-charge Ashok Gehlot and presented a list of demands to him, including reservation and a maximum number of poll tickets for the Patidar community members.

The Congress has so far maintained that it will offer a 20-per cent reservation to the economically backward classes (EBC), without disturbing the 49-per

cent reservation given to the scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST) and other backward classes (OBC).

Gujarat Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi said, "We have said that without touching the 49 per cent reservation for the SCs, STs and OBCs, we will offer a 20-per cent reservation to the EBCs in the state, who have been affected by the privatisation of the health sector and other institutions under the BJP rule."

"This 20 per cent EBC quota will not be a lollipop offer like the one made by the BJP, which was rejected by the high court. Our reservation ordinance will be a well thought-out one and based on a scientific survey," he added.

The Gujarat Assembly polls are scheduled to be held in two phases -- on December 9 and December 14.

Nitish-led JD(U) to contest Gujarat elections on its own

NEW DELHI: The Janata Dal-United faction led by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday announced it will contest the Gujarat assembly elections on its own, and not form an alliance with the BJP. It also urged the Election Commission to decide the party symbol case on urgent basis in view of the upcoming polls. "We will contest the Gujarat assembly elections on our traditional seats," JD(U) general secretary KC Tyagi told reporters here.

He said the party will not form an alliance with the BJP in the state.

"We won't form any alliance with any party, including the BJP," Tyagi said. He said that earlier when the JD(U) was part of the National Democratic Alliance it fought elections in Gujarat without any alliance.

Read more: Will join hands with Congress for Gujarat polls: Rebel JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav

The JD(U) had contested in around four-five seats in the 182-seat assembly. In 2012, the JD(U) won one seat in Gujarat. The Rajya Sabha member



requested the poll panel to hear the party's symbol case on urgent basis citing the assembly elections in Gujarat on December 9 and 14. "As the Gujarat polls have been announced, we request the Election Commission to give its verdict on the matter soon so that we can also announce our party's candidate," he said.

Lashing out at the rebel faction led by Sharad Yadav, Tyagi said the documents submitted by them in the party symbol case are "fabricated,

forged and false." "The EC has twice disposed of the party symbol matter in our favour. The documents submitted by the Sharad Yadav faction are fabricated, false and forged," the JD(U) general secretary said.

"The Election Commission was informed by Javed Raza (of the Sharad Yadav group) that Nitish Kumar has been appointed party President. Now how can he himself (Raza) claim that no election for the party President's post was held last year?" he

asked Tyagi slammed opposition leaders for demanding that the party symbol case be referred to Parliament's ethics committee or privileges committee. "In a press conference, CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury, Congress leader Anand Sharma and Nationalist Congress Party leader Tariq Anwar demanded that the matter be referred to the ethics or privileges committee. Who are they to advise?" he asked. He alleged that a few days ago two senior Congress leaders tried to "pressurise" the Rajya Sabha chairman over the party's symbol case. "Few days ago, two senior Congress leaders met the Vice President at a dinner party and requested him to help in the Sharad Yadav matter. Trying to influence the matter is completely unworthy, illegal and unconstitutional," Tyagi added. The JD(U) has witnessed a split after the Nitish Kumar faction formed an alliance with the BJP to rule Bihar in July after dumping the RJD and Congress. It has joined the BJP-led NDA.

Hindustan is a country of Hindus but it doesn't exclude others, says RSS chief

INDORE: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Saturday said 'Hindustan' is a country of Hindus, but it does not mean that it does not belong to "others". Addressing a gathering of college-going RSS volunteers in Indore, Bhagwat also said the government alone cannot bring development, and that it needs changes in the society. "Whose country is Germany?... It's a country of Germans, Britain is a country of Britishers, America is a country of Americans, and in the same way Hindustan is a country of Hindus. It does not mean that Hindustan is not the country of other people," Bhagwat said. "The term Hindu covers all those who are the sons of Bharat Mata, descendants of Indian ancestors and who live in accordance with the Indian culture," the RSS chief said. No one leader or party can make the country great but it needs a change and we will have to prepare the society for it, he said. "In ancient times, people used to look to God for devel-



opment, but in Kalyuga people look to the government... But the fact is, the government can go only as far as the society goes," Bhagwat said. "The society is the father of the government. The government can serve the society, but it cannot bring changes in the society. When the society brings changes in itself, this change reflects in the government and the system," the RSS chief said.

To make India powerful, prosperous and "vishva guru", the countrymen will have to rid their hearts of the thought of "discrimination on any grounds", he added.

Congress confronts BJP with audiotape

Releasing transcripts of a conversation between Narendra Patel, convener of the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti, led by Hardik Patel, and one of his colleagues who was allegedly trying to persuade him to join the BJP for a bribe of 1 crore, the Congress on Friday made a fresh demand for a judicial investigation. Senior Congress leader Ajay Maken, at a party briefing, questioned why no FIR was lodged against the BJP State president, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and others whose names figured in the episode.

Call to poll panel Since Mr. Patel released the audio recording of his conversation on Thursday, the Congress argued that the Election Commission (EC) should take cognisance of the issue as the Model Code of Conduct was now in force. On Mr. Patel's claims, Maken said since the Model Code of Conduct was in force in Gujarat, the EC should take suo motu (on its own motion) cognisance of the issue and take necessary action "based on the tape". Sena praise for Rahul irks BJP

"The question is why no FIR is registered against Amit Shah, Vijay Rupani, [BJP leader] Jitu Vaghani and Varun Patel? Why no judicial probe has been announced? What is the reason that the Prime Minister, Shah, Rupani are tight-lipped on the issue," Mr. Maken asked. The PAAS leader had alleged that the BJP tried to bribe him, and to back his claims, he had circulated an audio recording of his purported telephonic conversation with his former associate Varun Patel who had joined the BJP after quitting the Hardik Patel-led PAAS.

Supreme Court questions govt over delay in judges' appointment

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court asked the government's top law officer on Friday to explain the delay in finalising a new procedure to appoint judges, setting up possibly yet another confrontation between the judiciary and executive. The Supreme Court and the government have been at loggerheads over how to appoint judges, one of several areas of divergence between the two, the most recent being the judiciary's stand over the dismissal of state governments and the right to privacy.

In 2015, the top court struck down a law the government brought -- the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act -- to end a more than 20-year-old practice, unique to India, of judges appointing judges under a collegium system.

The court had then asked the government to draft a so-called new Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) to lay down guidelines for appointments to the higher judiciary in consultation with the chief justice of India and the collegium. But the two sides have failed to agree on it. A bench of justices AK Goel and UU Lalit observed that more than 22 months

had passed since the top court had asked the government to write an MoP.

"Even though no time limit was fixed by this court for finalisation of the MoP, the issue cannot linger on for indefinite period," the court said, asking the attorney general KK Venugopal to come back with an explanation of the delay.

More than four million cases are pending in 24 high courts which are together short of 378 judges. Also, some high courts do not have a full-time chief justice. The court is hearing a private petition challenging the validity of all judicial appointments after the top court struck down NJAC.

Senior advocate KV Vishwanathan was asked to assist the court in the matter. It fixed November 14 to hear the attorney general. In March this year, the Supreme Court collegium -- a panel of top five judges -- unanimously rejected the Centre's proposal that it should have the power to reject a nomination for reasons of "national security". Calls for a permanent secretariat to appoint judges were also disallowed.

On Friday, the bench expressed concern over delay in the appointment of

chief justices to high courts.

Under the current MoP, the SC collegium initiates the proposal to recommend a new chief justice before the term of the incumbent ends to ensure timely succession. An acting chief justice cannot be in office for more than a month.

In Uttar Pradesh, the last round of appointments were cleared by the government almost a year after the top court's collegium made its recommendations. Similarly, names cleared for the Madras high court were delayed by a year.

In a related development, the Supreme Court collegium has decided to assess judgments of additional judges before they are confirmed as permanent judges of high courts.

Judgements of additional judges will now be sought from the respective chief justices and evaluated by a committee of two Supreme Court judges to be nominated by the chief justice of India.

The move came days after the government urged the collegium to take a relook at its decision in March to end the practice of evaluating the judicial performance of additional judges.

Moin Qureshi hid details of foreign firms, says ED

NEW DELHI: Under investigation for money laundering, meat exporter Moin Qureshi had hidden his business interests in three overseas companies from Indian authorities. He had also denied having any overseas bank accounts in his name and that of his family members, the Enforcement Directorate has said.

In the charge sheet against Qureshi, the ED has identified the three companies as Barro Holdings in the Seychelles, Bulova Holdings in British Virgin Island and Noyce Consultancy in Belize. Their bank accounts were opened in Singapore and Hong Kong. The ED probe into the affairs of Barro Holdings revealed that Qureshi allegedly had complete control over the company and his ownership of Bulova Holdings was also established. Holdings liquidated in 2014

"However, in November-December 2014, Qureshi liquidated all the accounts in the name of Bulova Holdings and Barro Holdings. The proceeds were transferred to Bulova's account in Lugano (Switzerland) for the settlement of a property mortgaged for £2.1 million in January 2015," said an official. These alleged transactions took place after the Income-Tax Department searches against Qureshi and his AMQ Group of companies in February 2014.

It has been alleged that Qureshi also redeemed the insurance policies held in the name of Bulova (\$3.9 million) and Barro Holdings (\$3.4 million) in Hong Kong. In February 2015, after offsetting the loans pertaining to the insurance company, about \$2.9 million dollars were remitted to Bulova's Logano account from its Hong Kong account. The remaining balance of £51,000 with the Lugano bank account was remitted to a real-estate agent, London Wall Private Office the following month, the charge sheet said.

POOR SLEEP MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT KIDNEY FUNCTION

Short and poor quality of sleep may worsen kidney function in patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD), says a study.

"Short sleep and fragmented sleep are significant yet unappreciated risk factors for CKD progression," said one of the researchers, Ana Ricardo, from the University of Illinois at Chicago in the US.

"Our research adds to the accumulating knowledge regarding the importance of sleep on kidney function, and underscores the need to design and test clinical interventions to improve sleep habits in individuals with CKD," she added.

Although there is increasing evidence that sleep disorders are common in individuals with CKD, its link with CKD progression is unknown. To investigate, Ricardo and her colleagues examined the



sleep patterns of 432 adults with chronic kidney disease. Participants wore a wrist monitor for five to seven days to measure sleep duration and quality, and their health was followed for a

median of five years.

Participants slept an average of 6.5 hours/night, and during follow-up, 70 individuals developed kidney failure and 48 individuals died. The researchers calculated that each additional hour of nighttime sleep was linked with a 19 per cent lower risk of developing kidney failure. There was also a significant association between sleep quality and kidney failure risk - each one per cent increase in sleep fragmentation was linked with a four per cent increase in the risk of developing kidney failure. Also, patients who experienced daytime sleepiness were 10 per cent more likely to die during follow-up than those who were not sleepy during the day, said the study presented at American Society of Nephrology (ASN) Kidney Week 2016 at McCormick Place in Chicago, Illinois.

More sexual partners doubles prostate cancer risk: Study

The more sexual partners a man has may double his risk of developing prostate cancer, a study has claimed.

The study found that men who had more than seven sexual partners in their lifetime were twice as likely to have prostate cancer than those with fewer than three partners.

Men who are sexually active earlier may also be a risk, the researchers said.

"The more partners you had, the more orgasms you had, the younger you were when you first had sex, all pointed to an increased prostate cancer risk," Visalini Nair-Shalliker, doctoral student at Cancer Council New South Wales in Australia, was quoted as saying to smh.com.au.

It's believed this increased risk associated with sexual activity could be due to hormonal changes.

Sexual activity and metabolism were associated with antigen, a male sex hormone that is also strongly linked to the initiation of prostate cancer.

Other risk factors included having a father with a history of prostate cancer, a previous diagnosis of prostatitis or benign prostatic hyperplasia.

In addition, the study found that being overweight or obese was also associated with increased risk of the disease, but to a lesser extent.

There was no association found between prostate cancer risk and circumcision, vasectomy or erectile function, the researchers observed.

It is important to identify risk factors so men could be given advice, and men aged over 50 who fell into those risk categories should speak to their doctors, especially if they had a family history of the disease, Nair-Shalliker said.

However, "we can't make any recommendations around sexual activity because it's multi-faceted. We're not saying 'increase or decrease your sexual activity' because the evidence is still grey about that," Nair-Shalliker noted, in the paper published in the journal in the International Journal of Cancer.

'Vaccine against HIV infection closer to reality'

In a significant progress towards the development of a vaccine against HIV, scientists have developed a new approach to help the immune system actively fight the virus in the body.

For the first time, researchers showed that a combined approach - using a common cold virus to introduce a vaccine into the body, as well as an injection of a DNA-based vaccine - may help protect against HIV in the gut and bodily cavities.

"With sexual activity being one of the primary methods of HIV transmission, it is necessary to try to protect those parts of the body that are most likely to encounter the virus first," said Branka Grubor-Bauk, from the University of Adelaide in Australia.

"A possible reason why previous HIV vaccine trials have not been successful is because of this lack of a frontline protection," Grubor-Bauk said.

The laboratory studies, conducted so far in mice represent an important step forward in attempts to introduce a first line of defence against HIV at the site of infection.

"In mice, we delivered a rhinovirus (or common cold virus) inside the nose, and this virus had been altered to include HIV proteins," Grubor-Bauk said.

"At the same time, the mice also received an injection into the skin containing a DNA-based vaccine. This approach resulted in very specific responses in the immune system," she said.

"This vaccine approach encompasses two different arms of the immune system: white blood cells that attack the HIV virus, and specific antibodies that recognise and shut down HIV-positive cells," she added.

"There is an element of HIV known as Tat that helps the virus to replicate quite rapidly," said Eric Gowans, professor at University of Adelaide.

The antibodies inhibit the Tat effect, preventing HIV from replicating itself, Gowans added.

"Overall, we found that infection was considerably reduced in the mice we studied," he said.

The study appears in the journal Scientific Reports.

Sex linked to prostate cancer risk - study

The more sexual partners a man's had the greater his risk of developing prostate cancer.

A study by Cancer Council NSW published in the International Journal of Cancer has found sexual activity is among the risk factors that at least doubles the risk of the disease.

"Our study points towards men who engage in higher levels of sexual activity and start being sexually active earlier as being at a higher risk of prostate cancer," said Visalini Nair-Shalliker, a research fellow at Cancer Council NSW.

The following factors at least double the risk of prostate cancer in men: having a father with a history of prostate cancer, a previous diagnosis of prostatitis or benign prostatic hyperplasia, the number of sexual partners in a lifetime, with the risk being highest in the group that reported the most sexual partners.

Previous research had pointed to greater sexual activity in early adulthood as reducing later risk.

"The role of sexual activity is just not straightforward, due to its multifaceted nature. It's an area that needs further exploration," Nair-Shalliker added.

It's believed this increased risk associated with sexual activity could be due to hormonal changes.

Novartis Acquires US Pharma Firm Selexys Pharmaceuticals

Swiss-based pharmaceuticals giant Novartis said today it was acquiring Selexys Pharmaceuticals Corp, a US research lab in blood and inflammatory disorders, in a deal costing up to \$665 million (627 million euros).

Selexys specialises in sickle cell disease, an inherited form of anaemia that is most common among people of African descent.

In a statement, Novartis said it exercised rights to buy the company after seeing results from a large trial into a drug to treat pain for people with the disease.

The drug, called SelG1, aims at easing so-called vaso-occlusive pain crises, which happen when sickle-shaped red blood cells block the flow through blood vessels.

The prototype treatment has just completed the second phase of the



three-phase process to test new drugs for safety and effectiveness.

"Sickle cell disease affects millions of people around the world and there are limited therapies available for

treatment of vaso-occlusive pain crises, a very common complication of the disease," Bruno Strigini, head of CEO of Novartis Oncology, said in the statement.

SMOKING E-CIGARETTES KILLS MOUTH CELLS

E-cigarette vapours can kill a large number of mouth cells, increasing the risk of infection, gum disease inflammation and even cancer, a new study has warned. Researchers found that exposing gingival epithelial cells to e-cigarette vapour in the laboratory causes them to die within a few days.

"Mouth epithelium is the body's first line of defence against microbial infection. This epithelium protects us against several microorganisms living in our mouths," said Mahmoud Rouabhia from Universite Laval in Canada. To simulate what happens in a person's mouth while vaping, re-

searchers placed epithelial cells in a small chamber containing a saliva-like liquid.

The Royal Opera House Re-opens After Decades Of Neglect: Here's A Quick Tour

Electronic cigarette vapour was pumped into the chamber at a rate of two five-second "inhalations" per minute for 15 minutes a day. Observations under the microscope showed that the percentage of dead or dying cells, which is about two per cent in unexposed cell cultures, rose to 18 per cent, 40 per cent, and 53 per cent after one, two and three days of exposure to e-cigarette vapour respec-



tively. "Contrary to what one might think, e-cigarette vapour is not

just water," said Rouabhia. "Although it does not contain tar compounds like regular cigarette

smoke, it exposes mouth tissues and the respiratory tract to compounds produced by heating the vegetable glycerin, propylene glycol, and nicotine aromas in e-cigarette liquid," he said.

The cumulative effects of this cell damage have not yet been documented, but they are worrying, said Rouabhia. "Damage to the defensive barrier in the mouth can increase the risk of infection, inflammation, and gum disease. Over the longer term, it may also increase the risk of cancer," Rouabhia said. The study was published in the Journal of Cellular Physiology.

BEING CURIOUS MAKES YOU MORE CREATIVE: STUDY

Now you don't have to worry about your curious attitude as a recent study has found that curious people have creative mind. A research from Oregon State University suggested that people, who have strong curiosity traits, perform better on creative tasks and those with a strong diverse curiosity trait were more likely to come up with creative solutions to a problem.

The findings contribute to a growing body of evidence suggesting that testing for curiosity traits may be useful for employers, especially those seeking to fill complex jobs, said Jay Hardy, an assistant professor in

OSU's College of Business and lead author of the study.

As workplaces evolve and jobs become increasingly dynamic and complex, having employees who can adapt to changing environments and learn new skills is becoming more and more valuable to organizations' success, he said.

"But if you look at job descriptions today, employers often say they are looking for curious and creative employees, but they are not selecting candidates based on those traits," said Hardy, whose research focuses on employee training and development.

"This research suggests it may be useful for employers to measure curiosity, and, in particular, diverse curiosity, when hiring new employees," he added.

The findings were published recently in the journal Personality and Individual Differences co-authored by Alisha Ness of University of Oklahoma and Jensen Mecca of Shaker Consulting Group.

Past research has shown that curiosity is a strong predictor of a person's ability to creatively solve problems in the workplace. But the questions remain about how, why and when curiosity affects the creative

process, Hardy said. The latest research helps to pinpoint the type of curiosity that best aids creative problem-solving.

Diverse curiosity is a trait well-suited to early stage problem-solving because it leads to gathering a large amount of information relevant to the problem. That information can be used to generate and evaluate new ideas in later stages of creative problem-solving. Diverse curiosity tends to be a more positive force.

On the other hand, the people with strong specific curiosity traits or the curiosity that reduces anxiety and fills gaps in under-

standing tend to be more problem-focused. Specific curiosity tends to be a negative force.

For the study, researchers asked 122 undergraduate college students to take personality tests that measured their diverse and specific curiosity traits.

They then asked the students to complete an experimental task involving the development of a marketing plan for a retailer. Researchers evaluated the students' early-stage and late-stage creative problem-solving processes including the number of ideas generated. The students' ideas were also evaluated based on their quality and originality.

The findings indicated that the participants' diverse curiosity scores related strongly to their performance scores. Those with stronger diverse curiosity traits spent more time and developed more ideas in the early stages of the task. Stronger specific curiosity traits did not significantly relate to the participants' idea generation and did not affect their creative performance.

"Because it has a distinct effect, diverse curiosity can add something extra in a prospective employee," Hardy said. "Specific curiosity does matter, but the diverse piece is useful

in more abstract ways."

Another important finding of the research, Hardy noted, is that participants' behavior in the information-seeking stage of the task was key to explaining differences in creative outcome. For people who are not creative naturally, a lack of natural diverse curiosity may be overcome, in part, by simply spending more time asking questions and reviewing materials at the early stages of a task, he said.

"Creativity to a degree is a trainable skill," he said. "It is a skill that is developed and can be improved. The more of it you do, the better you will get at it."

US assures India it won't cut imports despite \$30 billion trade deficit

MUMBAI: The United States on Friday assured India that it will not curtail imports to reduce or eliminate the trade deficit of \$29.6 billion which has been a red flag for President Donald Trump who had promised American companies a fair deal globally by expanding exports. The assurance came from the US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross in his meeting Friday with Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu at the third US-India Commercial Dialogue in Washington, the first iteration of the annual meet under President Trump's watch. Prabhu told reporters that while Ross admitted that the trade deficit was indeed an issue, the US would deal with it "not by reducing imports from India but by promoting more exports from the US to India".

The Commerce Minister said it was a positive idea that India welcomes. "He basically meant we will be able to buy more from the US," Prabhu said.

The Minister also said there was progress on long-stalled issues bedeviling export of Indian mangoes, pomegranate, apples and grapes into the US that were subjected to long inspection delays involving irradiation which added to cost overruns making them prohibitively expensive in grocery stores.

Alphonso, a prime mango variety eagerly awaited by American fans every year, retails at almost seven times more than the standard rivals that come from Mexico that sell quicker. They are a tough sell even at speciality outlets popular with South Asians.

Indian exporters were assured of express clearance, but in a while.

"While highlighting many areas of progress, both principals also noted the need to lower barriers and committed to make meaningful progress to unlock new trade and investment opportunities for US and Indian businesses," India and the US said in a joint statement after Prabhu's meeting with Ross.

Prabhu tweeted that the dialogue with Ross was an engaging one.

US trade deficit with India was also a top issue at Prabhu's discussions with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer on Thursday as part of the Trade Policy Forum. Prabhu and Lighthizer also discussed market access and regulated pricing of medical devices for Americans and H-1B and totalization (social security collections from Indians employed in the US) for Indians.

In both these meetings the two countries acknowledged lingering differences on an entire range of trade issues, reinforcing the notion that this is perhaps the most vulnerable part of the growing relationship but one that both sides are eager to fix.

Bilateral trade between Indian and the US stands at \$115 billion, which is thrice the figure in 2005. America's trade deficit of \$29.6 billion had prompted Trump to order an investigation into all unfavorable trade to ascertain if they were caused by unfair trade practices.

Trump's war cry on balance of trade has been a concern for India after he pulled the US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, renegotiated Washington's position in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and even took on allies such as South Korea and Japan and, of course China.

Airtel, Vodafone compete to grab Reliance 2G subscribers base



NEW DELHI: After media reports of Anil Ambani led Reliance Communications (RCOM) reporting to exit the 2G business, Bharti Airtel has swooped in to grab the subscribers of Reliance. In a print advertisement, published on Saturday, in a leading media organisation, Bharti Airtel has lured the subscribers of Reliance 2G saying, "Airtel welcomes Reliance Communications Customers." As per media reports, Anil Ambani-led telecom operator has decided to shut down major parts of its wireless business.

The advertisement by Airtel added, "Switch to India's fastest network without changing your number. Enjoy unlimited calling and lots of data. Call 1800-103-1111 (toll-free)." Meanwhile, Vodafone hasn't given an advertisement in a daily newspaper, but it has announced two special Voice offers for pre-paid customers in Delhi & NCR who wish to join Vodafone's SuperNet 4G network.

Earlier, in the latest Bombay Stock Exchange filing, RCOM said, "As already announced on 1st October 2017, RCOM has decided to adopt a 4G focussed strategy for profitable growth of its wireless business. Accordingly, RCOM will be optimizing its 2G and 3G footprint, and related infrastructure and human resources, with effect from 30 November 2017. The Company's 4G-led strategy will be executed, as at present, on the back of capital-light access to India's most extensive 4G mobile network, through already operational spectrum-sharing and ICR arrangements with Reliance Jio."

As per the latest data by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), RCOM had 81,272,601 subscribers, at the end of the month, July.

Apparel exporters signal decline in shipments from India, job losses post-GST

NEW DELHI: Apparel exporters have brought up the problems faced by them post Goods and Services Tax (GST) before a parliamentary panel, signalling the "strong likelihood" of a decline in garment shipments from India and possibility of job losses. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC) made a presentation to the Parliamentary Standing Committee (Rajya Sabha) on Commerce chaired by Naresh Gujral earlier this week.

The body pressed for early consideration of tax refunds blocked on the purchase of ginned cotton (agricultural inputs such as agricultural machinery, seeds, fertilisers, power, diesel and the like) and miscellaneous central or state levies like power cross subsidy, stamp duty, property tax and other levies for refund under Rebate of State Levies.

The council also drew the attention of the committee members to the issue of extension of exemption of IGST on import under EPCG (Export Promotion Capital Goods) or Advance Authorisation from March 31, 2018 to December 31, 2018, in order to provide a longer window for investment decisions.

It also asked for allowing utilisation of MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme) scrips for use in payment of CGST, SGST and IGST to ease the challenges of working capital blockage and other procedural issues. To arrest the decline



in exports, the AEPCC suggested that the competitive exchange rate and rupee appreciation be stabilised to protect the interest of exporters.

"The positive impact of GST is yet to be felt by garment industry where input costs have not come down. Overall effect of GST on apparel exporters, especially small

and medium exporters, is burdensome and stressful due to substantial increase of working capital and higher transaction cost," AEPCC Chairman Ashok Rajani said.

"It has not only impacted the production of apparel adversely, but has also led to pressure on margins for exporters due to lowering of

drawback rates."

The council, according to him, has informed the parliamentary panel that under the prevailing circumstances, there is a strong likelihood of exports from India dipping in the near future, as the global garment industry is very competitive. "Further, competing countries like Bangladesh

and Vietnam have cost advantages on account of preferential trade agreements with major export markets, and buyers are moving to these destinations for sourcing.

This could have a cascading effect on the job scenario as exporters will be forced to shed jobs," Rajani added.

CBI files fresh case against Sterling Biotech for Rs 5,000-crore loan default

NEW DELHI: The CBI has registered a fresh case against Sterling Biotech Limited for defaulting loans worth over Rs 5,383 crore.

The agency has booked Gujarat-based Sterling Biotech, its directors Chetan Jayantilal Sandesara, Dipti Chetan Sandesara, Rajbhushan Omprakash Dixit, Nitin Jayantilal Sandesara and Vilas Joshi, Chartered Accountant Hemant Hathi, former director Andhra

Bank Anup Garg and other unidentified persons. The CBI has alleged that the company had taken loans of over Rs 5,000 crore from a consortium led by Andhra Bank which have turned into non-performing assets.

The FIR has alleged that the total pending dues of the group companies were Rs 5,383 crore as on December 31, 2016.

The directors of the company "con-

nived with the in-house chartered accountant and falsified material records of the company", such as production, turnover and investments in capital assets, the FIR alleged.

"This was allegedly done using various India-based entities and those situated abroad," it alleged.

The company is already under investigation for allegedly bribing tax department officials.

Sensex, Nifty rebound on Centre's boost of capital spend

MUMBAI: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty marked a chain of record smashing sessions during the week trade, with Sensex crossing the 33-k mark on a closing basis, while the broader Nifty breaching above the psychological 10,300-level.

Key Indices started the week on a strong note and remained bullish to touch fresh highs for most of the days during the week.

The government announced bank recapitalisation on Tuesday, plan to overcome their bad loans problem, a booster dose to the economy through public sector banks (PSBs) in a front loaded manner, with a view to support credit growth and job creation.

As various measures taken by the government spur economy including capitalisation of public sector banks and massive road building program boosted sentiment, with volatile session on the back of firmness in European cues, Sensex touched a first ever record all-time high at 33,286.51. Opening the week on a high note at 32,411.86 points, the index marked all time historic record high of 33,286.51, before closing the week at 33,157.22, showing a smart rise of 767.26 points or 2.37 per cent. Buying for the week was led by Bankex, Capital Goods, Power, Metal, Oil&Gas, Auto, Realty, Teck, IT, FMCG and Healthcare sectors, while IPOs and Consumer Durables witnessed profit-booking. The second-line shares of S&P BSE Midcap and S&P BSE Smallcap spurred by 1.88 pct and 1.30 pct, respectively. Both the indices underperformed the Sensex.

The Nifty started the week at 10,176.65 and touched new historic milestone at 10,366.15. It finally ended at 10,323.05, up 176.50 points, or by 1.74 per cent. Nifty PSU bank, Media and Metal stock were the top most gainers for the week, while Pvt Bank and IT were losers.

Reliance Nippon Life IPO over subscribed

MUMBAI: The initial public offer (IPO) of Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management Company was subscribed 81.53 times till 9.45 p.m. on Friday, the last day for submitting bids. As per NSE data, the issue received bids for 349.28 crore shares as against 4.28 crore equity shares on offer for the public in the price band of 247 to 252.

The portions reserved for institutional investors and high net worth individuals have been subscribed more than 100 times each. Further, the segment reserved for retail investors has been subscribed more than five times. The company has already raised nearly 463 crore by allocating 1.84 crore equity shares to anchor investors that included Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Kuwait Investment Authority and Morgan Stanley among others.



The company will be raising little over 1,500 crore from the offer that will increase the public stake from the current 4.43% to 14.25%, according to a note by HDFC Securities. The mutual fund entity had total assets under management of nearly 3.63 lakh crore as of June 30, as per the brokerage.

US keen to move forward on key defence pacts with India that will facilitate sale of F-16, F-18 jets: Official

MUMBAI: The US is keen to move forward on some important defence agreements with India that will make it easier for the Trump administration to share classified data and facilitate the sale of F-16 and F-18 fighter jets to New Delhi, a top American diplomat has said.

The Trump administration last month told Congress that it "strongly supports" the sale of F-18 and F-16 fighter jets to India and asserted that the proposals have the potential to take the Indo-US defence ties to the next level.

There are important defence agreements that the two countries can move forward on, Alice G Wells, acting assistant secretary of state for the South and Central Asian Affairs, said Friday. The agreements will make it easier for the US to share classified data and that will facilitate sales like the F-16 or the F-18 fighter jets and will help create a defence technology partnership, which is what India is seeking, but which will also create jobs for Americans at home, she said. "This is a dynamic relationship which really hasn't



begun to see the potential yet," Wells said. Wells had accompanied US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on his just concluded trip to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. This was an extremely friendly, very wide-ranging dialogue on how we can partner together on the strategic relationship that we think is going to define the rest of the 21st century," Wells said. While there was a bilateral component to the visit, they

talked about how the two countries with shared values — a respect for democracy, transparency, freedom of navigation, for economic development — can inculcate these values in the broader Indo-Pacific region, working with important partners like Japan and Australia. "Tillerson's visit to Gandhi Smriti was very moving and was a touchstone for what unites — that this relationship is very much one built on values," she

said, adding that the Secretary of State laid out a lot of ambitions for the relationship. "We want to build on the June visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the President (Donald Trump). We'd like to deepen the military-to-military cooperation that has moved very quickly; over the last decade we've gone from zero to 15 billion in defence sales. "We'd like to expand the bilateral trade and investment dimension of the relationship. We have about \$115 billion in trade, \$40 billion in bilateral investment," Wells said, noting that this week they have two important meetings going on, the Trade Policy Forum and the Commercial Dialogue.

The US sees this as a two-way street. In November Mahindra is opening an auto plant in Michigan.

"We've seen purchases of Boeing aircraft, all of which produce, again, thousands of jobs for American citizens," Wells said.

Later in November, the president's daughter Ivanka Trump will attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit which is going to bring together

1,300 entrepreneurs and investors, demonstrate the entrepreneurial spirit of the relationship.

"During his India visit, Tillerson focused on how they can promote regional stability. In the South Asia strategy, we have given an important role to India on helping to stabilise Afghanistan economically and to build its human resource capacity," she said. Since 2001, India has invested \$2 billion in Afghanistan. They have pledged another \$1 billion by 2020. India has projects in 31 provinces and all of these projects have been very well received. "They are constructive, and I think it has demonstrated that India is an important and valuable partner. "At the same time, we have made it clear to everyone that we would never tolerate anyone's soil being used against the other. On the fight against terrorism, building on the joint designation we did of Harakat ul-Mujahidin during Modi's visit, we're looking forward to working with the Indians on identifying additional designations that we should pursue together," Wells added.

Gautam Gambhir supports playing national anthem in movie theatres



Mumbai: Indian cricketer Gautam Gambhir is all for playing the national anthem in movie theatres, asking his fans how 'tough' is it to stand for a mere 52 seconds. Gambhir is known for his patriotic messages on social media and had recently declared his lifetime support for the education of a martyred soldier's daughter. The left-handed batsman has now questioned those opposing playing the national anthem in movie theatres with a sarcastic remark. "Standin n waitin outsid a club:20

mins. Standin n waitin outsid favourite restaurant 30 mins. Standin for national anthem: 52 secs. Tough? (sic)," wrote Gambhir. There were mixed responses to Gambhir's tweet as the debate rages on whether to play 'Jana Gana Mana' theatres before the start of a film. In order to instil the feeling of 'patriotism and nationalism', the Supreme Court had in late 2016 asked movie theatres across the country to play the national anthem, urging the countrymen to 'show respect' towards it.

Faheem Ashraf becomes Pakistan's first bowler to take Twenty20 hat-trick

ABU DHABI: Faheem Ashraf became the first Pakistan bowler to take a Twenty20 international hat-trick in a dramatic two-wicket series-sealing win as Sri Lanka paid for an almighty batting collapse in Abu Dhabi.

Sri Lanka coach Nic Pothas urged the tourists to show more character after they lost the first match on Thursday, but they capitulated from 106-1 to 124-9 a day later after a half-century from Danushka Gunathilaka (51) at the top of the order.

Hasan Ali (2-31) and Shadab Khan (1-14) produced impressive spells, but it was all-rounder Ashraf who stole the show, finishing with figures of 3-16 after striking three times in as many balls in a sensational penultimate over at Sheikh Zayed Stadium.

The tourists were far more impressive in the field, but Shadab struck a six and Gunathilaka dropped a catch in a tense final over as Pakistan sealed victory with a ball to spare to take a 2-0 lead in the three-match series. The 23-year-old Ashraf is the sixth bowler overall to register a hat-trick in the shortest format of the game, finishing with 3-16 in his



three overs at Sheikh Zayed Stadium. Ashraf dismissed Isuru Udana, Mahela Udawatte and Dasun Shanaka off successive deliveries in only his third Twenty20 international.

Australia's Brett Lee became the first bowler to take a hat-trick in the shortest format during the 2007 World Twenty20 against Bangladesh in Cape Town. Jacob Oram and Tim Southee secured hat-

tricks against Sri Lanka and Pakistan respectively. The Sri Lankan duo of Thisara Perera and Lasith Malinga also claimed hat-tricks in 2016 and 2017 against India and Pakistan.

Martina Hingis bids farewell to tennis with semi-final defeat in WTA Finals

LONDON: Martina Hingis ended her career on a losing note when the retiring Swiss great and her partner Chan Yung-jan of Taiwan were beaten 6-4, 7-6(5) by Timea Babos and Andrea Hlavackova in a WTA Finals doubles semi-final on Saturday. Hingis announced on Thursday that she was hanging up her racket for a third and final time following this week's event, bringing an end to an illustrious career that has garnered 25 grand slam wins -- five in singles, 20 in doubles.

The top seeds had hoped to send Hingis off with a fourth WTA Finals doubles crown after two triumphs with Anna Kournikova and one with



Sania Mirza, but Hungary's Babos and Czech Hlavackova proved too strong at the Singapore Indoor Stadium. The Hungarian-Czech duo edged a high-quality opening set but were given an almighty scare when Babos tumbled to the ground at 5-5 in the second set while trailing 30-0, twisting her left ankle and requiring a lengthy medical break for treatment.

Both pairs remained strong on serve to send the contest into a tie-break and the top seeds were beaten when Hingis sent a backhand long on the first match point to end both her and Chan's interest in the competition and her own career.

"For me to play on a court like this and against an opponent like this makes me emotional... for me and her," Babos said in a courtside interview. "It's an incredible moment for her after all she has achieved and to play against her is just amazing to be part of her history. Hopefully, just once in my life, I can achieve the kind of things she did."

Despite the defeat, Hingis will go out on at least one high after the WTA confirmed on Friday that the Swiss had secured the year-end number one ranking in women's doubles alongside Chan after the pair won nine titles in 2017, including the U.S. Open.

Ben Stokes hailed as 'real hero' by gay couple he defended outside nightclub



LONDON: Ben Stokes has been hailed a "real hero" for stepping in and protecting a gay couple in the incident which threatens his place on the Ashes tour.

The 26-year-old will not travel to Australia with the rest of the England cricket team when they fly out on Saturday as he waits to learn whether he will face criminal charges over an incident outside a nightclub in Bristol in September.

However, Kai Barry and Billy O'Connell told The Sun on Saturday that Stokes had been their white knight by stepping in to stop a group of revellers hurling homophobic abuse at them.

Barry and O'Connell said Stokes bought them drinks when they met him and fellow England team-mate Alex Hales in a club that evening.

"We were so grateful to Ben for stepping in to help. He was a real hero," 20-year-old O'Connell told the newspaper.

"Kai feared he could be attacked. If Ben hadn't intervened it could have been a lot worse for us."

Barry added things could have got ugly if the England star hadn't intervened.

"I'm not a fighter and we didn't want a fight," said Barry, 26. "We could've been in real trouble. Ben was a real gentleman."

Barry said they hadn't realised the fall out for Stokes until they received a visit from a police officer this week. O'Connell said he hoped Stokes would get to play in Australia.

"Ben is a really nice guy and I hope he can still play for England in the Ashes," said O'Connell.

"It would be awful (if) his career was ruined over this. He was just trying to help defend Kai.

Virat Kohli's rotation policy has benefited pace bowlers: Mohammed Shami



KOLKATA: India pacer Mohammed Shami said he has benefited from Virat Kohli's rotation policy. "I fully support Kohli's rotation policy. It gives rest to players like me to get ready not only for Tests but across all formats," Shami said.

Shami was part of India's five-match ODI series against Australia and featured in the Bengaluru ODI where he returned wicketless.

The Bengal pacer bagged a match haul of eight wickets in their innings win over Chhattisgarh in Raipur in the Ranji Trophy. Along with Shami, Umesh Yadav has also endorsed the rotation policy of the current Indian cricket team.

Umesh earlier lauded skipper Kohli's rotational policy for fast bowlers, stating that using a select group of pacers for Tests and limited-over format helps them stay fresh throughout the year.

"I think it's good for the fast bowlers. If you continuously play Test cricket, it's a lot of load for a fast bowler. Playing in sub-continental conditions is very tough. Slow wicket, no pace and bounce. It's very hard for the fast bowlers to come to one-day cricket with the same intensity," Umesh said while addressing the media a day ahead of the fifth ODI between India and Australia.

"When you have played a long season, recovery is very crucial. You can play a lot of matches but your fitness can take a hit. There are more chances of injuries and breakdowns. I think the management is doing a good job in balancing our workload."

India vs New Zealand: Bhuvneshwar Kumar enjoying his bowling, not tired at all

KANPUR: New Zealand seamers Tim Southee and Trent Boult make up arguably the best new-ball pair in the Test cricket nowadays. It happened because former captain Brendon McCullum showed great patience in nurturing their abilities, always ensuring they got enough rest between Test series to remain fresh.

Dominant in the ongoing series, Bolt and Southee complement each other with their swinging skills, be it England or Australia or even the typically slow sub-continent wickets. In fact, Bolt was the one who had troubled Sachin Tendulkar the most with his incoming deliveries before his retirement. It was their bowling that helped the Black Caps reach the 2015 World Cup final.

In contrast, India has just one good swing bowler in Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who can be pretty versatile irrespective of the tracks. Mohammed Shami, despite being a superb old ball bowler, doesn't play consistently. And the likes of Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Jasprit Bumrah have some limitations.

Considering the paucity of consistently effective swing bowlers, India's



prerogative should be to make best use of Kumar's ability and yet conserve him for as long as possible. "It's not my job to decide resting myself or not, it's up to the team management and the BCCI to take a call," Bhuvni told Hindustan Times on the eve of the India-NZ third and final ODI here. "But one thing is sure that I am not tired at all, and enjoying my bowling very well," he added. Bhuvni, who has been part of Indian team in all formats, credits bowling coach Bharat Arun for his recent success. "He (Arun)

is somebody who manages bowlers really well. At this level you don't want to get too much into the technique. He sometimes pinpoints certain things which can really improve your bowling," said Bhuvni, adding, "For example I increased my pace but my lost swing. I did not how to go about it. So he shared some fine points that helped me get my swing back. His role in the team is invaluable."

With four wickets in the series so far, including a match-winning 3/45 in Pune, Kumar said there was no change in team's mental set up despite this being a short series. "It is a short series but mental approach is the same as any other series. But as I said, we have not been challenged in a while at home, so everyone is looking forward to the challenge," he said at the pre-match press conference.

For New Zealand, Boult is likely to play a crucial role in Sunday's decider. "Boult is outstanding in the series, especially in tough conditions at Mumbai and Pune. How he was able to bowl is a good example," New Zealand's bowling coach Shane Jurgensen said.

Kevin Pietersen not impressed with England batting ahead of 2017-18 Ashes series

MUMBAI: With less than a month left for the 2017-18 Ashes series, Kevin Pietersen has termed England's batting order as 'incredibly weak and inexperienced', with the potential absence of Ben Stokes threatening their chances of retaining the prestigious title. Pietersen was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo, "I think without [Joe] Root or Cook, that batting order is incredibly weak, incredibly inexperienced, and with Stokes maybe not going, I mean, it's even worse."

While Alastair Cook is likely to have yet another opening partner in Mark Stoneman, the pressure will be on skipper Root to steady the innings in the middle order. "People say that 'one bloke doesn't make a team', well, I mean one bloke who bowls 140kph, get important

wickets, can hit 100 off 70 balls, can hit 200 off 100 balls in a Test match, and also, more importantly, catches everything at slip off the spinner, is a massive player. A massive, massive player," he added.

Pietersen continued, "The opening batting with Cook, that worries me. No 3 worries me, I think Root should bat at three, five worries me, six will worry me too if Stokes doesn't go. I mean there's a lot of numbers in that batting order. I've been in Australia this week, and they are very confident of their chances and they talk of some very big gaps in the England team."

The former England skipper says it will be critical for the players in the touring party to develop a strong bond as they set out to play in Aus-



tralia. "When we had the great tour Down Under in 2010-11, we had the most incredible couple of nights out at the start of that tour, which brought the team so close together," he said.

"I know that it sounds so stupid, but if you go and get hammered as a team on a night out — as senior and junior players — so long as you don't do something

ridiculously stupid, the bonds you can create there are better than any ridiculous sessions you can do in the forest in Germany. Those are the little bits and pieces of cricketing nous and sense of understanding a team that were good on that tour but horrendous in 2013-14." However, Pietersen cautioned against taking advantage of relaxed rules. "Do whatever you want, but don't get caught drinking at 2 o'clock on the morning before a game, don't get caught fighting in the streets, don't get caught doing things you shouldn't be doing before the games and, in particular, before training days, because those always stood me in good stead for when I went into battle."