

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

FRIDAY

- OCTOBER, 06, 2017
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE

STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	29.4	8.4
JAMMU	33.4	21.6
LEH	22.5	1.3
KARGIL	24.0	6.6

SUNSET FRIDAY: 06:11 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 06:29 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR

Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 29°C & 09°C respectively.

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

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IN A FIRST, GOVT SETS UP STATE DISASTER MITIGATION FUND: VEERI

HCS WITHOUT FULL TIME CHIEF JUSTICES SET TO GO UP TO 7 NEXT WEEK

SPICEJET SIGNS PACT WITH JAPANESE FIRM TO OPERATE PLANES ON WATER, LAND

RANJI TROPHY: JAMMU AND KASHMIR TO PLAY OPENER WITHOUT PRACTICE

To strengthen economy simplify loaning to small enterprises: Dr Drabu to banks

'JK Fin Min urges banks to recognise difficulties of fledgling entrepreneurs'

Srinagar, Oct 06: Urging banks to simplify the process of giving loans to small enterprises, Minister for Finance, Labour & Employment, Dr Haseeb Drabu today said entrepreneurs fail not because of bad business model but due to social and domestic compulsions.

The Finance Minister was speaking at the opening ceremony of Mudra Pratsahan Abhiyaan here at SKICC. The campaign is going to be held at 50 locations across the country. The ceremony was also attended by Minister of State, PMO, Jitendra Singh, Principal Secretary, Finance, Navin Kumar Choudhary and J&K Bank chairman, Parvaiz Ahmad.

Pointing to a woman in the audience whose infant kid started crying in the middle of the promotional ceremony, the Finance Minister said the state of the woman reflects the state of an aspiring entrepreneur who has to factor in both the financial and



domestic compulsions before starting their entrepreneurial ventures.

"Like the difficulties of that woman, the financial institutions need to recognise the difficulties faced by a fledgling entrepreneur. There is pas-

sion of entrepreneurship and compulsion of domesticity which financial institutions need to factor in," Dr Drabu said.

Describing small-scale industries as the backbone of the country's

economy, Dr Drabu said various schemes have been devised since independence to address the issue of financing the micro industry but with little success.

"Mudra will try and restore balance by helping a banker understand where the intervention is required. There are millions of small enterprises in India which contribute 46 percent to manufacturing output and 44 percent to exports, yet they get only eight percent credit while their credit-to-GDP ratio is less than three percent," he said.

Urging the financial institutions to evolve their credit system in light of new technology, Dr Drabu said the Mudra scheme covers up for their lack of functioning. "The scheme is the indictment of the failure of banking sector because Prime Minister Narendra Modi had to intervene himself to get banks to lend loans at small

▶ See **Drabu**...Pg 02

Fresh braid chopping incidents create panic in Kashmir

Woman foils braid chopping attempt in Bandipora

Srinagar, Oct 5: A series of fresh braid cutting incidents were reported from Kashmir Valley on Thursday while in North Kashmir's Bandipora district, a young woman foiled the braid chopping attempt after raising alarm.

Reports said on Wednesday night some culprits chopped off the braid of a 40-year-old woman at Nowdal village of Tral town in South Kashmir's district Pulwama. The incident created panic in the village.

The family members said that the victim was attacked as she tried to enter the washroom located outside the house.

Confirming the incident, a police official said that they have started the investigation.

In another incident, the braid of a girl hailing from Uri was chopped off at Khojaba Baramulla where she has been living in a private quarter with her parents.

A police official said that they recorded the statements of the victim and her family and started investigation.

Meanwhile, a young woman foiled an al-



leged braid chopping attempt on her in Dangan Mohalla of Kaloosa area of Bandipora district in north Kashmir.

The family members of the woman (name withheld) said that an unknown person tried to cut her braid as soon as she came out of the washroom around 6 am.

"The unknown person had managed to enter inside our house and was waiting for her to come out of the washroom. When she came out, the attacker tried to catch hold of her and tried to chop off her hair with a knife," they said.

▶ See **Braid**...Pg 02

THREE YEARS ON, CABINET DECISION TO UPGRADE SCHOOL AWAITS EXECUTION

'In 21st century we have to travel 30 kms for higher education'

Srinagar, Oct 05: Even after three years the Government High School Chatoosa in Rafiabad area of north Kashmir's Baramulla, awaits its upgradation to Higher Secondary level despite a Cabinet order.

Three years ago, the State government had passed an order in the cabinet meeting to upgrade Government High School Chatoosa to Higher Secondary level.

The state government in the order under number 737-Edu of 2014 dated. 22/10/2014 directed the authorities to upgrade the Government High School Chatoosa to a higher secondary level.

▶ See **Cabinet**...Pg 02

PDP-BJP interested only in retaining power: NC

Sagar chairs high level review meeting for NC State Convention

Srinagar, Oct 05: National Conference Thursday reiterated its stand of fighting for the rights of the people against forces inimical to the unity and integrity of the state.

Addressing a marathon review meeting at party headquarters Nawa e Subah for the upcoming State Delegates' Convention in Srinagar later this month, Party General Secretary Ali Mohammad



Sagar said, "Present dispensation of PDP-BJP combine has time and again proved

that their interests lie only in keeping their chair safe. What people of the State are going

through in terms of turmoil-ridden security scenario, massacres, non-availability of essential commodities is something they are hardly bothered with. They have even forgotten to take into account the current spree of braid chopping incidents across the Valley and have failed miserably in assuaging the fears of general people particularly

▶ See **NC**...Pg 02

POLICE ISSUES STATEMENT ABOUT ALLEGED BRAID CHOPPING INCIDENT IN BARAMULLA

Baramulla, Oct 5: Police on Thursday issued the a statement about the alleged braid chopping incident in north Kashmir's Baramulla district

"Today morning a Braid chopping incident having taken place at Khwaja Bagh Baramulla was reported to Police Station Baramulla. Thereafter Police party went on spot and inspected the scene of occurrence and started preliminary investigation into the matter which revealed that: "The victim is a teenage girl (name withheld) living with her family in a rented accommodation in Khwaja Bagh Baramulla."

"The family is hailing originally from Uri and father of the girl works in Police department. The girl reported

▶ See **Police**...Pg 02

Mehbooba grieved over Atiqa Bano's demise

Recalls her contribution in educational spread among women, heritage preservation

Srinagar, Oct 5: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the passing away of noted educationist, heritage activist and former Director, Education and Libraries, Atiqa Bano, who breathed her last yesterday evening at Sopore.

In a condolence message, the Chief Minister, who is also the President of J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, said the relentless efforts put in by late Atiqa Bano to preserve the past heritage and culture of our society is noteworthy and worth emulating. She said her single minded devotion in this



regard led to the setting up of a first of its

▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

ARMY UNDERTAKING MULTIPLE INITIATIVES TO WIN OVER PEOPLE IN J&K

Srinagar, Oct 5, CNS: "In a bid to bridge the gap between Armed forces personnel and the common people, Army stationed in Kashmir has been undertaking multiple social, sports, educational and welfare initiatives," said an Army official.

He said that Army is committed to carry on with its welfare initiatives across Jammu and Kashmir, especially in trouble torn Valley.

"We launched 'Sadbhavana' in early 1990s with an aim to reach out to the people of Jammu and Kashmir reeling under the shadow of gun. The benefits accrued from the initiative in improving the social indices,

▶ See **Army**...Pg 02

Govt committed to tourism promotion: Dy CM

KHAROF Deputation calls on Dr Singh

Srinagar, Oct 5: A deputation of Kashmir Hotel and Restaurant Owners Federation (KHAROF) led by its president Abdul Wahid Malik Thursday called on Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Singh.

The Minister of State for Tourism Priya Sethi was also present.

The deputation projected several issues related to the promotion of tourism trade in the state. They also called

for putting in place the necessary mechanism to counter the negative publicity being

▶ See **DyCM**...Pg 02



MAJOR STRIKE AVERTED IN AKHNOOR: ARMY

Srinagar, Oct 05: Army on Thursday claimed to have prevented a major strike in Akhnoor area of Jammu division by detecting an improvised explosive device (IED) and two landmines.

"Alertness and vigilance of Army personnel helped in averting the strike. On Wednesday night, the sentries observed suspicious movement close to an Army Unit Location near the Akhnoor market.

▶ See **Strike**...Pg 02

Adnan Sami's concert will showcase the lively side of Kashmir: Kiren Rijju

New Delhi: Union minister of state for home affairs Kiren Rijju will travel to Srinagar this week for a concert by singer-composer Adnan Sami, which is being organised jointly by his ministry and the Jammu and Kashmir government to promote tourism and Kashmiri culture in the valley that has witnessed a rise in violence since last year.

"People everywhere can witness the beauty, culture and music of Kashmir. The concert will show the lively



side of Kashmir," Rijju said on Wednesday.

The state government will provide logistical support to the event to be held on Octo-

ber 7 on the banks of picturesque Dal Lake at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre. The minister

▶ See **Kiren**...Pg 02

Police uses pepper gas against Anganwadi workers outside Civil Secretariat

'Every successive regime made broken promises with us'

Srinagar, Oct 05: Police on Thursday used pepper gas canister to disperse the Anganwadi workers who are strike from past several week, demanding enhancement of their monthly honorarium at par with rest of the states.

The Anganwadi workers earlier assembled here at Pratap Park and later marched towards the civil Secretariat here to press the government over their demands.



The protesting women amid anti-government slo-

ganeering reached the Civil

▶ See **Pepper**...Pg 02

BRAID CHOPPING AN INSULT TO WOMANHOOD: HAKEEM YASEEN

Srinagar, Oct 05: Terming the mysterious braid chopping incidents in various areas of the Kashmir valley as an insult to the respect of the womanhood, besides creating fear psychosis, the Chairman, PDF and MLA, Khansahib, Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen has castigated the PDP-BJP coalition Government for its utter failure to provide security to the people of the state.

He said that the braid chopping incidents have

▶ See **Yaseen**...Pg 02

BRAID CHOPPING:

JRL seeks mass participation in the meeting on Oct 14

Srinagar, Oct 5: Joint resistance camp led by Syed Ali Geelani, Dr Mohammad Omer Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik on Thursday decided to call state level public meeting in TRC Polo View on October 14th. In a joint statement JRL while laying stress on mass participation, said that people have been asked to register their protest against incessant incidents of braid chopping, attempts, altering and changing, history, culture, heritage and Muslim majority status of state, by authorities in New Delhi.

Referring to its importance and need to call public demonstra-

tion, the leadership said that the resistance movement is in its crucial stage as such it is pertinent to call and send a peaceful message to international community and urge them to facilitate legitimate right and right to self-determination pledged to subjugated people of state.

Braid chopping is an attack on dignity and a war weapon against women folk, said leadership and while asking people to stand against these devilish acts, added that it was decided to resent and resist against those elements including RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and Nirmal Singh for their shameful and provocative

statements, wherein they have pleaded for complete integration of state with Delhi, in a joint statement they added. Referring to the character assassination campaign launched by NIA sleuths against resistance leadership, trader's fraternity, lawyers, intellectual including student community, leadership said that New Delhi is all set to abolish state subject law incorporated in article 370 and challenging it in supreme court of India, saying it is a well thought out ploy, conspiracy and attack by state and union authorities against state's specific & historical status, culture and its

heritage.

In a fervent appeal to people, the JRL asked to illustrate strength by participating in protest demonstration and added that it is time to expose coalition partners including PDP and BJP for carrying brutal killings, loot, plunder, unabated arrests and urged people from Kupwara, Kernah, Uri, Poonch, Rajori, Kashtwar, Bhaderwah, Doda, Jammu, Banihal, Islamabad, Shopian, Baramulla, Bandipora, Ladakh, Kargil and other parts of state to stand and resent against nefarious designs and deceit played by Delhi authorities and demonstrate commitment with

right to self-determination movement. Resistant leadership particularly while appealing to youth asked to offer their services as volunteers and maintain discipline during said march towards Srinagar.

Meanwhile Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Dr. Muhammad Omar Farooq and Muhammad Yaseen Malik called state-wide protests against braid chopping incidents, after Friday prayers. Resistance leadership also urged people in Jammu, Poonch, Peer Panchal and Chenab Valley including people in Azad Kashmir to hold peaceful demonstrations against braid chopping incidents.

BRAID CHOPPING INCIDENTS:

KEA HOLDS PROTEST DEMONSTRATION

Srinagar: Oct. 5: Kashmir Economic Alliance—an amalgam of traders, hoteliers, transporters Thursday staged a peaceful protest against braid cutting incidents in Kashmir Valley.

The protesting traders while carrying placards and banners assembled at Press Enclave Srinagar and carried out a march that culminated at Ghanta Ghar Lal Chowk.

KEA Co-chairman Farooq Ahmed Dar expressed serious concern over the incidents of braid chopping and urged locals, mohalla and masjid committees to keep vigil on miscreants involved in these immoral activities and expose them in public.

Dar termed it a part of "deep rooted conspiracy". "The mass hysteria has gripped the whole state and it's really frustrating as to how government is not able to identify and arrest those responsible for the mayhem. They have men and machinery at their disposal but unfortunately government is still clueless," he said and added that honor of daughters and mothers is supreme to us and that there should not be any compromise with it.

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DRABU

interest rates through Mudra," he said.

Dr Drabu said the Mudra scheme doesn't subsidise or give free loans to aspiring entrepreneurs but it will leverage the current banking infrastructure and technology so that the government is not burdened and enough traction is generated to create viable entrepreneurship.

"Once there is access to credit for an aspiring entrepreneur, next step would be the demand for credit. Mudra will provide access to credit by leveraging positions. The scheme will create securities in the mind of young entrepreneurs which will allow him to take risks that forms the basis of entrepreneurship. If risk mitigation is done, you will find a lot of appetite," he said.

The Finance Minister said that bringing in subsidies and tax waivers erode the culture of entrepreneurship, "Entrepreneurs must be allowed to bloom in a competitive culture form the word go. J&K is used to a certain culture of exemptions which will not sustain in the long run. The enduring theme of economic policy should be to manage the finances and address the issues of social value system," he said.

Dr Drabu said the introduction of Goods and Services Tax regime is generating a certain degree of resistance because people were adopted to the old regime of indirect taxation, "People used to do certain way of business but they must adapt to the change in taxation system. As a policy, GST is meant to change national value system," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, MoS in PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh said the Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to strengthen the small scale industries across the country, "Our government has got the political will and resolve to initiate bold reforms to streamline the economy and we have done so in the form of GST and demonetization," he said.

The MoS in Prime Minister's Office said the Central government is committed to change the fortunes of the underprivileged in the country, "Soon after being sworn in, PM Modi stated that his government will work for the welfare of the poorest of the poor. Schemes such as Mudra and Jan Dhan Yojna will go a long way in improving the financial state of the poor in the country," he said.

Earlier, a short film was screened on the Mudra scheme and how it is going to change the culture of entrepreneurship across the country. The J&K Bank also showcased some success stories of the scheme from Kashmir Valley. On the occasion, sanction letters for loans availed under Mudra for various entrepreneurial ventures were handed out to the aspirants by Dr Drabu and Dr Singh.

BRAID

A family member said that the young woman pushed him and raised an alarm, forcing the attacker to flee.

"We tried to catch him but he managed to escape from the window of our kitchen," he said.

In Bhagat area of Srinagar city, police charged protesters with canes after a braid chopping incident people blocked traffic demanding arrest of the culprits. Protesters said that a girl had come out from her house to dump the garbage into a dust bin on road, when culprits chopped off her braid.

Police used tear-smoke shells to disperse protesters at Singhpora Pattan in North Kashmir after a braid chopping incident.

Reports said that two persons cut the braid of a woman inside her house in Singhpora area of Pattan.

"Her mother-in-law raised an alarm following which locals rushed towards the house and nabbed the attackers," said a local.

However, people staged protests and blocked the traffic on the highway after police took both the alleged braid choppers in their custody.

Police according to reports fired tear-smoke shells to disperse the protesters who had blocked Srinagar-Muzafarabad Highway.

The victim was shifted to Sub-District Hospital Pattan where a large number of people staged anti-government anti-India protest. Police rushed to spot and fired tear-smoke shells to disperse them.

At Sambora Pampore area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district people captured an alleged braid chopper. According to locals, police used force to take the custody of the alleged braid chopper. Several persons were injured during the clashes.

A police official said that locals were reluctant to handover the suspect non-local to them. "The local protesters pelted stones while police exercised maximum restraint," the official said.

Locals alleged that Army cordoned off the village and took the custody of the alleged braid chopper. Reports added that two persons were wounded during the clashes including a youth who suffered a bullet injury in his leg.

CABINET

The locals and the students according to KNS correspondent said that the administration has failed to follow the cabinet decision, resulting in immense sufferings to them.

They said that they are facing immense hardships in continuing their higher education as they are being forced to travel around 30 kilometres on daily basis to attend their higher secondary, situated in Dangiwa area of the district.

The locals said that the High School is running from the past 50 years and have produced noted academicians, writers, doctors and engineers but the education department has ignored their repeated requests for upgradation of this school to higher secondary level.

"It was after numerous representations from people of this area that state cabinet passed an order in 2014 to upgrade government high school Chatoosa but unfortunately the order is yet to be implemented," they said.

The locals especially the students appealed the department to implement the cabinet decision and upgrade this high school to higher secondary level so that students of the areas could feel a sigh of relief.

NC

that of our mothers and sisters."

The meeting also expressed a sense of deep disappointment over the casual and irresponsible attitude of the State Cabinet and the Chief Minister made evident by the fact that almost half of the State Cabinet gave the recently held Cabinet Meeting a miss. "This Government has shamelessly conceded the power of cabinet decisions to a select particular lobby. There is a thriving transfer industry operating outside the powers of the Chief Minister and the Cabinet".

"All the speakers congratulated the party leadership for taking the initiative of organizing a grand party convention after 15 years. Many issues concerning the party and its workers were raised in the meeting and appropriate decisions were taken to make the convention a grand convention. In that direction all the constituency in charges were directed to make necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the convention," the statement reads.

Among those who were present in the meeting include Additional general Secretary Dr Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, state vice president Chowdhary Mohammad Ramzaan, Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Spokesperson Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, senior leaders including Mian Altaf, Mohammad Akbar Lone, Mubarak Gul, Mohammad Syed Akhoun, Sakina Itoo, Ali Mohammad Dar, MLAs Ab Majeed Bhat (Iarimi), Altaf Kaloo, District Presidents, Womens wing Provincial President Shameema Firdous, Irfan Shah, Javed Dar, Minority Cell Incharge Sardar Jagdish Singh Azad Ji, Provincial President YNC Salman Ali Sagar, Mushtaq Guroo, Provincial Spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar, Sabiya Qadri, Mudassir Shahmiri

The meeting also reiterated a need for having a defined political outreach and simultaneously congratulated the party leadership for its stand on states special status including on Art 35 A/370. Talking about the proposed general convention Sagar said, "The convention should not be looked as an ordinary party convention. It is a political convention and will therefore delve on the political spectrum of the sub continent. Therefore a clear message should go across the younger generation including women that NC will continue to protect their interests and will fight for their needs. The convention holds significance in the sense that it is being conducted at a time when our state is going through a critical phase. It therefore is important to make the convention a grand success."

POLICE

that her Braid was chopped during the night, however she was sleeping in the same room with her parents and there seemed to be no possibility of any outsider making entry into the room."

"The father has gone to duty in the morning as per routine. During further investigation it was found that the victim girl is suffering from psychiatric ailment with DIS-SOCIATIVE symptoms and has been undergoing medical treatment for that. She was examined by psychiatrist on 28th September with a follow up check up yesterday only in District Hospital Baramulla. Today also a psychiatrist called by police to examine her and the report is awaited."

"The girl claimed that Braid Chopper made entry through wall and escaped through closed door which manifests conversion disorder (Hysteria). Police has also recovered a fresh shaving blade from the spot."

"Further investigating of the case is going on, taking into account all circumstances and facts.

Baramulla Police also expresses profound gratitude to the people of the area who cooperated with police and allowed us to conduct investigation without any interference."

MEHBOOBA

kind Meeras Mahal at Sopore which the deceased continued to supervise till her death.

Mehbooba Mufti also recalled the efforts of Atiqa Bano in the spread of education in north Kashmir, particularly among women. "As the founder of Majlis-un-Nisa, the first ever women exclusive educational organization in north Kashmir, late Atiqa Bano would be remembered for leading the movement of educational spread among the young girls of the area", the Chief Minister said in her message.

The Chief Minister has prayed for peace to the departed soul of late Atiqa Bano and conveyed her heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

ARMY

infrastructure and in consolidating the peace dividends in the state are far in excess of what was perceived during its conceptualization," he said but added that to reap more benefits under this initiative, proper ground work.

He said over one lakh students has been provided education under Army Goodwill Schools, an education initiative launched under the ambit of 'Sadbhavana'.

"Besides education, the Army has been providing media aid to people living in far flung areas and for this purpose, medical camps are being organized on daily basis. Over 300 National Integration Tours have been conducted under Sadbhavana, wherein, more than 5,000 beneficiaries (both students and elders) visited other states of the country and got a first-hand view of the culture of their fellow citizens and the growth trajectory of the nation. They came back motivated to become productive citizens of the country and actively leverage the growth trajectory for personal development," he said.

"We are also committed to skill development of the youth and women of the state to further facilitate their employment. We run vocational training centres and women empowerment centres spread across the state provide practical skills to interested and deserving candidates," the Army official said told news agency CNS.

"The Army has been identifying a number of civilians who have made some meritorious contribution to society or have an exceptional achievement to their credit to honour and award them," he said and added that the basic objective of Army is to win the hearts and minds of people.

DY CM

propagated by some vested interests and countering the same.

The issue of five years GST Holiday for the tourism industry and extending the industry related incentives to the tourism industry was also projected.

The Deputy Chief Minister assured the deputations that he would ensure the time bound redressal of the issues projected by them by taking up these with the concerned. He said that since tourism industry is the backbone of the State's economy, therefore the government is committed to ensure that the proper propagation of tourism sector is undertaken.

Dr Singh further added that several new initiatives have also been introduced for ensuring the proper augmentation of the tourist infra and providing the requisite necessary facilities to the tourists coming here. He said that under Prime Minister's Development Package, a special component has been earmarked for the tourism sector.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that in order to do away with a negative publicity being done by certain quarters, a sustained campaign has been undertaken and special travel marts are being organised in different states of the country.

STRIKE

A response mechanism was activated wherein the entire area was cordoned off and deliberate search operation was conducted," said a statement issued by Defence Ministry.

The statement further reads, "During the area sanitisation process, the security forces recovered the IED and two mines. Combing operations are in progress in the area," the statement added.

KIREN

added that the Centre will fund the expenditure incurred on the concert.

Trained in Indian and western classical music and known for creating magic with the piano, Sami is known for non-film hit songs like Kabhi To Nazari Milao, Bheegi Bheegi Raaton Mein and Tera Chehra.

The singer, who was born in London to a Pakistani diplomat father and mother from Jammu and Kashmir, has also won accolades for his Bollywood numbers in movies like Ajnabe, Saathiya, Lucky: No Time for Love and Bajrangi Bhaijaan.

The concert is being held four days after a suicide attack on a Border Security Force camp in Srinagar's Humhama

area. One security force official and three militants, believed to be from the Jaish-e-Mohammad, were killed in the attack on Tuesday.

When asked to comment on the security concerns related to the concert, the minister said, "Discussions on the security situation in the valley are ongoing. We are working to provide a peaceful environment for the concern."

Businesses in the valley, particularly tourism-related activities, have seen a slump since last year when the state was rocked by street violence following the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani.

The number of tourists visiting the valley has seen a sharp dip this year.

The tourism sector, which is a significant contributor to Jammu and Kashmir's economy, adds 8% to the state's gross domestic product. The sector employs over 100,000 people, directly and indirectly, according to approximate industry estimates.

Tourism figures for the valley have had a direct link with its law and order situation.

Kashmir was a favourite among national and international tourists until 1988, with over 700,000 arrivals. But in 1989, an armed violence began in the valley and the numbers dropped by 200,000.

There has been a decline in insurgency-related violence in recent years in the valley but the rise in street violence, mostly stone-pelting, has again scared away tourists.

Last week, a musical concert by Kashmiri singer Abha Hanjura — 'Saaz-e-Kashmir' — received a good response. Sami's show will be the first major musical event since 2013 when renowned conductor Zubin Mehta performed in the famous Shalimar Gardens of Srinagar.

The event, Ehsas-e-Kashmir, was organised by the then German ambassador to India Michael Steiner in an effort to reach "the hearts of the Kashmiris with a message of hope and encouragement".

In response to Mehta's event, a civil rights groups organised another event Haqq-e-Kashmir (the reality of Kashmir).

PEPPER

Secretariat. They later held a sit-in outside the secretariat and chanted slogans in favour of their demands.

The Anganwadi workers said that the government is turning their eye blind over their plights. "It is unfortunate that the government doesn't bother to take any appropriate step for the wellbeing of workers," the workers said.

They, according to KNS correspondent, said that the government has ignored the Anganwadi workers at all fronts.

"We are serving the department with dedication and honesty but the government is turning their eye blind towards our plights," they said, adding that the government should have increased the monthly honorarium of the workers upto Rs 14000 per month.

The protesters said that the government has assured them several times that their genuine demands will be fulfilled soon but unfortunately all the promises and assurances done with them proved hoax on the ground.

"Every successive regime has failed to fulfill its promises done with the Anganwadi workers," they said, adding that the government should take immediate steps in this regard to put an immediate end to the sufferings of people.

However, the police later used pepper gas canister to disperse the protesting workers.

YASEEN

put dignity of the sacred womanhood at stake which is totally unacceptable to a respectable nation. He said it was most unfortunate and shameful that our sisters and daughters are scared to move out of their homes.

In a statement issued to KNS, Hakeem Yaseen has said that the increasing incidents of braid chopping in various parts of the valley have put a question mark on the credibility of the present Government adding that the prevailing situation has upset the peace of mind of the people of Kashmir valley especially woman folk.

Expressing serious concern over the continuous incidents of Braid Chopping, Hakeem Yaseen has said that the Government has utterly failed to un earth mystery behind such ugly and shameful incidents. "In fact, since its inception, the present Government has bitterly failed to provide a safe and secure atmosphere to the people of the state and the fresh spell of mysterious braid chopping incidents have added to the woes of the already security scared people of the valley, "Hakeem Yaseen added.

He said the PDP led coalition Government has no right to be in place as it has failed to protect life and property of the people from the anti national elements and has also failed to come up to their expectations.

Hakeem Yaseen has demanded effective measures on war footing basis to identity of culprits behind the heinous braid chopping incidents and to punish them.

President seeks sustained engagement with overseas community, tells diaspora in Ethiopia that government cares for them

New Delhi, October 05: The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, addressed an Indian community reception in Addis Ababa yesterday (October 4, 2017) hosted by the Ambassador of India to Ethiopia, Shri Anurag Srivastava.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said Indian community in Ethiopia has been at the centre of India-Ethiopia relations. As teachers and educators they have given a helping hand to nation building in their host country. As entrepreneurs, they have created economic opportunities and imparted skills to local people. As tech-professionals and workers they have added value to Ethiopian

Industry. With hard work and dedication, the Indian community has built respect for itself within Ethiopian society. And yet it has retained and carried forward Indian values, family traditions and work ethic while adapting very well to this adopted home. The President said that Ethiopia, like India, is a land of diversity, of multiple languages and varied cuisines; of music, dance and drama. The Indian community here must take advantage of the local eclectic culture as well as showcase and share our own cultural diversity.

The President said both India and Ethiopia have large young populations. The youth are the future, and it is

from them that new ideas would come. He advised the Indian community to make special efforts to connect with Ethiopia's youth. He stated that this would help them germinate their ideas to provide solutions for a better world, be it tackling climate change or skilling people.

The President said the Government of India seeks sustained and proactive engagement with our overseas community. The purpose of this engagement is to provide an opportunity to familiarise the community with transformational changes taking place in India. The dialogue with the diaspora is also aimed at shaping possibilities and platforms through which

it can participate in India's growth and development.

The President said the Government of India cares for the overseas Indian community and keeps its promise to stand by them. He referred to efforts made to evacuate Indian citizens from Yemen (as part of Operation Rahat in 2015) and Libya, or more recently help individuals and families during the floods in parts of the United States.

The event in Addis Ababa was attended by some 500 members of Ethiopia's Indian community. The Indian community is spread all over the country and is 5,000 strong.

President Kovind's visit to Ethiopia continues today.

PM addresses gathering at event to mark the inauguration of Umiya Dham Ashram at Haridwar, via video conferencing

New Delhi, 5 October: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today addressed the gathering at the event to mark the inauguration of Umiya Dham Ashram at Haridwar, via video conferencing.

The Prime Minister said that spiritual institutions in India, have been centres for the spread of social reform. He described tourism as an ancient concept in India, and a spiritual tradition. He said the Ashram being inaugurated today would benefit the pilgrims coming to Haridwar. He said the idea of a Yatra existed as an integral part of our culture. Through a Yatra, we get acquainted with various parts of the country that we may have never seen otherwise, he said.

The Prime Minister said that the work being done by devotees of Ma Umiya has touched the lives of several people. They have



spread awareness on gender equality. He specially thanked the women of Mehana district, who have furthered the message of "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao."

The Prime Minister appealed to all devotees of Ma Umiya, to become Swachhagrahis, and add strength to the Swachh Bharat Mission.

Peace, selflessness core message of Imam Hussain (AS): Imran Ansari

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 05: Minister for Information Technology, Technical Education, Youth Services and Sports, Molvi Imran Raza Ansari today said Hazrat Imam Hussain's (RA) core message to humanity is to become incarnation of selflessness, and to wage a consistent struggle for creation of peaceful and harmonious environment for the humanity.

The Minister was addressing a congregation organized by Jammu and Kashmir Shia Association to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (RA) at Khoshpur HMT here today. The Minister said martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) brought about an incomparable and unprecedented revolution in the history of mankind, a unique miracle for all times teaching us to fight against falsehood.

Moreover, the Minister added that the tragedy of Karbala taught humanity a lesson that standing for the truth and fighting unto death for it is more honorable and valuable than submitting to the wrongful.

Earlier, the event started with the recitation of Holy Quran followed by elegies and Nawakhani.

Later, a procession was also carried out in which men women and children participated.

Government keen to ensure a decent living Habitat for the poor, says HUA Minister

New Delhi, 5 October: The Government is committed to ensure a decent living habitat to all in urban areas and in particular, for the poor and has taken various initiatives in this regard, asserted the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri today. The flagship new urban missions launched during the last three years constitute an integrated urban habitat model, he further said.

Shri Puri spoke at a programme organized by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on the occasion of 'World Habitat Day' on the theme 'Housing Policies: Affordable Homes' in New Delhi.

The Minister said the new urban missions launched by the Government

like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) is at the core of ensuring affordable homes to the poor and the needy while other missions like the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) aim at enabling the much needed basic infrastructure for a decent habitat.

Under PMAY (Urban), the Ministry has so far approved construction of 28,57,321 affordable homes for Economically Weaker Sections, Low and Middle Income Groups with an investment of Rs.1,54,180 cr. Central assistance of Rs.44,278 cr has been approved for these houses.

Shri Puri said that the Government has taken several initiatives to give a

boost to housing sector and in particular to affordable housing to meet the housing needs of the people. He further noted that the real estate sector has run into some problems for various reasons and he had reasons to believe that this sector will soon bounce back. Shri Puri said after a long time, the Government has brought this sector under a regulatory framework in the interest of the sector. Shri Puri, while referring to the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030 noted that India's performance would be the key to achieve these goals at global scale. Noting that 15 of the 17 SDGs are in the domain of urban local bodies, he said the Government is endeavoring to improve the capacities of city governments.

Embryo Transfer Technology, a promising revolution in Bovine breeding

New Delhi, 5 October: Embryo transfer technology (ETT) has revolutionized the breeding strategies in Bovines as a tool to optimize the genetic improvement in cattle.

Department of Animal husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries in co-operation with 12 States has undertaken a Mass Embryo Transfer programme in Indigenous Breeds under the scheme, National Mission on Bovine Productivity. It has been planned to carry out 440 embryo transfers during October 2-10, 2017 throughout the country. The programme is implemented with the objective of conservation and development of indigenous breeds under Rashtriya Gokul Mission.

Through the use of ETT, (i) a farmer can get a 5-6 fold increase in number of offsprings, (ii) the calves so born will be of high genetic merit and (iii) the offsprings born will be free from diseases.

The programme has been initiated in 12 ETT centres across the country from 2nd October and will continue till 10th October 2017. Under this programme, embryos of higher genetic merit indigenous bovines are being transferred in to surrogate cows. Embryos of Indigenous breeds such as Sahiwal, Gir, Red Sindhi, Ongole, Deoni and Vechar have been proposed to be transferred under this programme. On first day of ET programme held on 2nd October, 35 Nos. of embryos were transferred in to recipients. Remaining will be transferred on different days till 10th of October 2017.

The technology now being taken up to the doorstep of the farmers will result in rapid propagation of high genetic merit indigenous cattle.

Zulfkar calls on Union Consumer Affairs Minister

Seeks financial assistance for consumer affairs projects in JK

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 05: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Information, Choudhary Zulfkar Ali today called on Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan at New Delhi and sought financial aid for various consumer affairs related projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

Zulfkar also handed a memorandum seeking attention of the Union Ministry regarding various issues of Jammu & Kashmir pertaining to Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology.

Seeking adequate funding for implementation of Confonet Scheme in J&K, Zulfkar said that since registration of complaints, recording of court proceedings, issue of notices, generation of cause lists, recording of judgments, record-keeping and generation of statistical reports and all other court related activities are carried out through this standardized software alone, the State Government desires to implement Confonet in Jammu and Kashmir for which central funding is required.

Demanding grant-in-aid for construction of infrastructure of Legal Metrology Department in Jammu & Kashmir, the State Minister projected that J&K having 22 districts requires proper in-



frastructure for which a financial assistance to the tune of Rs 8.5 crore is needed to construct Working Standard Laboratories in every district along with construction of R&D Lab in Jammu.

In view of the topography and geographical disadvantage of the State, the Minister informed Paswan that 22 enforcement vehicles are highly required, each for a district in J&K.

The Minister also projected that a set of Secondary Standard equipments and 15 sets of Working Standard lab Equipments are required for the labs of Legal Metrology Department besides 26 sets of computers for the Department.

Zulfkar also pressed for funding to develop infrastructure for District Consumer Foras and State Consumer Commission for broaden the scope of Commission by open-

ing two Benches each at Leh and Rajouri.

He also said that the State Government is contemplating to set up State Consumer help line numbers and establish Consumer Welfare fund. He said funds to the tune of Rs 7.5 crore as Centre share and Rs 2.5 crore from State are required to create this Fund. He also demanded setting up of Retail Price Monitoring Cell (RPMC).

The Union Minister assured that Centre would give a considerate look to all the projected demands to mitigate the all issues pertaining to FCS&CA and Legal Metrology. He also praised the Minister for efficiently running the Department in J&K and ensuring greater transparency in its functioning. He suggested holding Gram Panchayats to address issues regarding Food and Consumer Affairs.

In a first, Govt sets up State Disaster Mitigation Fund: Veeri

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 5: Describing J&K as one of the Disaster vulnerable places in South Asia, Minister for Revenue Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Disaster Management Abdul Rehman Veeri today said that for the first time in the history of J&K, State Disaster Mitigation Fund worth Rs 25 crore has been created for mitigation of Disaster.

The Minister said that it is almost impossible to prevent disasters, but it is the job of the Government to create resources for the mitigation of disasters.

He said that Flood mitigation, preparedness and response plan shall be prepared on scientific lines, inter alia, including traditional methods of watch and ward, and effective community participation.

The Minister appreciated the role of health Department in formulating the disaster response protocol at district level.

The Minister said that it is important to have the inventory of medical resources at district level besides important medicines and machines should be kept on the first floor of the hospital.

Veeri also asked the Divisional Commissioners of Kashmir and Jammu to direct all the Tehsildars to identify

the boats, boatmen, high rise buildings, Tractors, tippers, JCBs and other material in their jurisdiction which can be used in any eventuality and submit the report within 15 days.

Citing the example of Uttarakhnad where help pads were constructed in every area after 2013 Floods to facilitate food material and deployment of rescue forces, Revenue Minister also asked the Divisional Commissioners to identify land for help pads in every area at vintage points which can be specially meant for usage in disasters.

Veeri also asked the FCS&PD Department to identify land and build new godowns at Vintage points in all areas besides making existing ones disaster resilient.

He also stressed on further undertaking community based disaster preparedness activities by involving management committees of local mosques, Gurdawaras, Temples and Churches etc and training of local volunteers.

Regarding the construction of central Emergency Operation Center (EOC), Minister asked the officials to fast track its construction with all the facilities and communication facilities

required in a disaster.

Stressing on the role of Communication, Veeri asked the Home Department to take up the matter of satellite linking of the cellular telephone towers to ensure uninterrupted communication during any disaster besides procurement of satellite phones and wireless sets for SDMA.

Revenue Minister also asked the Department of Metrology to install two more Dopplarradars at Gulmarg and Banihal within 15 days.

Minister also impressed on strict implementation of school safety policy 2016 and disaster resistant construction of schools.

Financial Commissioner Revenue Lokesh Jha, Principal Secretary Health and Medical Education Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Commandant, General, Home Guards/CD/SDRF Dilbag Singh, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Baseer Khan, Commissioner/Secretary Revenue Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Commissioner/Secretary PWD Sanjeev Varma, CEO/JFRP Saurabh Bhagat, Commissioner/Secretary FCS&CA Shafeeq Raina, Director F&ES Rajinder Hak, Director Disaster Management Aamir Ali and other officers of concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Kohli takes stock of works under ASH, Fisheries

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 05: Minister for Animal, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries, Abdul Gani Kohli Thursday convened a meeting to review the progress of various ongoing developmental works under Animal, Sheep Husbandry (ASH) and Fisheries Departments.

The Minister asked the officers to identify land at Srinagar city outskirts for setting up of Veterinary Hospital and also directed them to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) in this regard. He also asked the Fisheries Department to prepare a DPR for establishment of Aquarium at Botanical Garden Srinagar.

Establishment of fish market was also discussed in detail and the Minister directed

the concerned to identify the suitable site for the purpose. He said an amount of Rs 24 lakh have already been sanctioned for the same.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on allocation of funds under RKVY. It was said that a DPR regarding Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries (AHDF) under RKVY has been prepared and forwarded to Centre for accord of approval.

The meeting was informed that there are 16 poultry units presently registered with the Department who are importing chickens to the State. Discussions were held on State Poultry Policy and the Minister directed the concerned to work on the project and formulate a comprehensive policy in this regard at

an earliest.

Kohli said the proposed policy will help to promote poultry industries and create opportunities for generating employment to the educated unemployed youth of the State.

Taking stock of ongoing construction of Veterinary Hospital Buildings, the Minister directed the concerned Departments to take up the matter with the Engineering Wing of JK Horticulture Planning and Marketing (HPMC), to redouble their efforts and pace up work on all hospital buildings and complete them in a stipulated time frame. He also asked them to work in unison and ensure to utilize the available funds in full and judiciously.

It was said that 229 hospital buildings

with an estimated cost of Rs 28.87 crore were sanctioned for which work on 135 buildings is apace.

He also asked the officers to keep a proper check on livestock at all entry points so that quality of them is ensured. He impressed upon them to work with added zeal and dedication so that the set targets are achieved in full.

Commissioner Secretary, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, R K Bhagat, Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir, Mohammad Yousuf Chappo, Director Sheep Husbandry Kashmir, Mohammad Ramzan Sheikh, Director Fisheries, R. N Pandita and other concerned attended the meeting.

Home Minister and Minister for Road Transport, Shipping and Water Resources on a two day visit to Andaman & Nicobar Islands

New Delhi, 5 October: The Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari, along with Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh, will lay the foundation stone for four National Highways projects worth Rs 1121 crore and several shipping projects worth Rs 200 crore in Andaman and Nicobar Islands in events at Port Blair, Diglipur and Baratang today and tomorrow.

The highways projects for which foundation stone will be laid include construction of 26 km of NH between Beodnabad-Ferrargunj at a cost of Rs 170 crore and 56 km of NH between Austin Creek and Kalra Junction at a cost of Rs 410 crore. In addition, foundation stone will be laid for construction of Middle Strait Creek Bridge and Humphrey Strait Creek Bridge at estimated cost of Rs 262.97 crore and Rs 277.17 crore respectively. On the Shipping side an Alternate Sea Route to Baratang Island will be launched. The project has been completed at a cost of Rs 45.16 crore and aims to improve connectivity of the island from Port Blair, reduce traffic on the route which passes through the Jarawa Tribal Reserve.

Time and US

The cold facts

Ever since the influenza virus known as H1N1 landed on Indian shores during the 2009 pandemic, outbreaks have been an annual occurrence. The worst was in 2015, when 2,990 people succumbed to it. This year the virus has been particularly active; mortality, at 1,873 by the last week of September, is quickly catching up with the 2015 toll. In comparison, official figures show 2016 to be a relatively benign year, with an H1N1 death toll of 265. The problem with these official figures, however, is that they only capture H1N1 numbers, a practice that has been adopted in response to the severity of the 2009 pandemic. But influenza was present in India even before 2009 in the form of H3N2 and Influenza B virus types. Out of these, H3N2 is capable of causing outbreaks as big as H1N1, and yet India does not track H3N2 cases as extensively as it does H1N1. This means that seemingly benign years such as 2016 may probably not be benign at all. Data from outside government surveillance systems are making this fact apparent. For example, a surveillance project for acute febrile illnesses, anchored at the Manipal Centre for Virus Research in Karnataka, has found that influenza accounts for nearly 20% of fevers across rural areas in 10 Indian States — fevers that are often undiagnosed and classified as “mystery fevers”. During the years when the H1N1 burden is low in these regions, H3N2 and Influenza B circulation tends to spike.

All this indicates that India's surveillance systems are still poor and underestimate the influenza burden substantially. If numbers are unsatisfactorily tracked, so are changes in the viral genome. As a 2015 commentary by a pair of researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology pointed out, India submits a woefully small number of H1N1 genetic sequences to global open-access databases for a country of its size and population. Sequencing is important because it can detect mutations in genetic material that help the virus evade human immune systems, making it more deadly. Because India does not sequence a large enough sample of viral genomes, it would be missing mutations that could explain changes in the lethality of the virus. Put together, the numbers data and sequence data will enable sensible vaccination decisions. Vaccination is the best weapon that India has against this menace, because Oseltamivir, the antiviral commonly deployed against flu, is of doubtful efficacy unless administered early enough. Yet, India has thus far stayed away from vaccinating even high-risk groups such as pregnant women and diabetics, because influenza is thought to be a more manageable public health challenge compared to mammoths such as tuberculosis. Better surveillance of influenza will possibly change this perception by revealing the true scale of this public health issue.

Style over substance

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's “think big” projects such as the bullet train and the Statue of Unity are at best attempts to showcase the politics of spectacle that the Prime Minister is adept at, in the context of the growing negative perceptions about his government. By VENKITESH RAMAKRISHNAN

“I don't think small. When 125 crore people are with me, I cannot think small,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said while dedicating the Sardar Sarovar dam—built across the Narmada over a span of 56 years—to the nation on September 17. The day also marked his 67th birthday. The Prime Minister's highfalutin proclamation came barely three days after he along with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe laid the foundation for the Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train project, expected to cost an estimated Rs.1,10,000 crore.

Modi had consistently projected this as his big idea. In fact, on May 2, 2013, approximately a year before he was elected Prime Minister, Modi propounded this idea. He did this at an interactive meet between him as the Chief Minister of Gujarat and members of the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC) and the All India Business Council (AIBC) in Mumbai. It was nearly an hour-long session, which opened with Modi's lengthy presentation in Hindi.

Abroad translation of the portions where Modi held forth on the linkage between “thinking big” and the “bullet train” went as follows: “It is of no use we keep doing things in a small scale. We have to think big, in big scale and in a big canvas. Instead, what do we do? We think in terms of going up by 0.1 per cent, then 0.2 per cent. Finally, we would reach a stage where we think in terms of growing by 0.001 per cent. This is not going to help. I met the Prime Minister [Manmohan Singh of the Congress] recently and we were talking exactly on this point. I told him that no discussion is happening on the whole of China [hailed as a nation with high growth]. They do not show the whole of China to us. They only show what the world will appreciate. So I told him [Manmohan Singh] that we too have to do such things that would showcase our strengths to the world. For example, I told him, do a small thing. Start the Ahmedabad-Mumbai high-speed bullet train. What will be the outcome of this? The world will know about our strength. It is not as though anybody is going to come and sit in this train. But to tell the world that we are not any less we need to do things like this.”

The sum total of the articulation of his idea is unambiguous. To him, “thinking big” is essentially about showcasing “our strengths” and not necessarily bringing any benefit to the people. An excerpted video clip of this presentation is doing the rounds on social media after the September 14 launch of the bullet train project. The fact that Modi had linked yet another big idea of his—of building a Statue of Unity to commemorate Sardar Patel, India's first Deputy Prime Minister, and fixing its height at 186 metres, twice as tall as the Statue of Liberty (United States)—has also been highlighted on social media, exposing the deep fascination for spectacle that the politician, termed widely “as the most powerful ever after Indira Gandhi”, nourishes within his political self.



Modi's penchant for thinking big has a chilling similarity with Mussolini's Fascist Italy as depicted in the professor of sociology and author Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi's Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy (University of California Press, 1997). Summing up the key aspects of Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi's cultural history tome, the reviewer Vitalie Sprinceana points out that in the Mussolini regime, politics starts to be less concerned with the act of governing people in an efficient way, for instance, in solving their economic problems. “Instead, it is focussed more on the spectacle of power, on the visual and impressive display of symbols, myths and rituals. Verbal and non-verbal forms of discourse are more than mere means of political legitimisation—they are fundamental to the construction of the power of the regime. Politics itself assumes the form of an artistic act—to govern means to Mussolini to create (a new man, a new Nation, a new Empire), and Mussolini views himself as the creative soul of the nation, the guide to a future renewal of the country, the propeller of new ways of living. In terms of everyday life this aestheticisation of political power takes the shape of a domination of form—visual appearance, effects—over the content. It also means that politics ceases to be measured by political criteria,” she writes.

Behind Modi's “think big” syndrome is an effort to create a situation where politics ceases to be measured by political criteria and people's concerns. The bullet train and Statue of Unity are not the only examples of this effort. The promises made by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government under Modi's leadership day in and day out also belong to this category. Consider the following. Modi and other leaders of the BJP had repeatedly promised, through the 2014 Lok Sabha election cam-

campaign and even after the formation of the government, that the farmers' income across the country would be doubled by 2022. Three years into that promise, both Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley have asked farmers to look elsewhere. While Jaitley said it was for State governments to initiate measures to double the farmers' income, Modi has exhorted cooperative societies to come up with their own facilitation.

Critics see the grand proclamations of Modi and his party as diversionary tactics in the context of farmers' protests. Across northern India, farmers are restive since they are not getting remunerative prices for their produce. The intense agitations that started in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in April-May 2017, have spread to other States such as Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. BJP governments in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have apparently been cautioned by intelligence reports that this could turn into a major law and order problem. In Uttar Pradesh, the newly elected Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government announced a farm loan waiver programme in its first Cabinet meet in March 2017.

Again, at the level of the larger economy, the Modi regime has been repeatedly claiming that notwithstanding the global recession, India's economic situation is good and that it has the potential to improve. However, even as Modi was holding forth on the bullet train project, Jaitley had to admit that the economy had decelerated to the slowest pace in three years and that there was a need for more concentrated and specific efforts to revive growth. The general consensus among a large number of economists was that the demonetisation drive launched by Modi in November 2016 would aggravate economic deceleration. The government had strongly denied it. However, more and more government agencies are

now forced to admit that demonetisation has aggravated economic deceleration.

RSS warning
Apparently, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the mother organisation of the Sangh Parivar, has taken note of the repeated reverses suffered by the Modi government. At a recent coordination meeting of 40-odd Sangh Parivar outfits, the RSS leadership reportedly warned the BJP to be wary of a repeat of the 2004 electoral defeat suffered by the then BJP-NDA government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Vajpayee government faced the 2004 Lok Sabha elections with a feel good “India Shining” campaign only to be humbled by a practically leaderless but broadly united opposition. By all indications, the BJP leadership, including party president and Modi's close associate Amit Shah, has taken the RSS warning seriously.

According to Sivanand Tiwari, former Rajya Sabha member of the Janata Dal (United), the BJP leadership and other Sangh Parivar outfits could come up with two responses to this unenviable situation. “First, they would fall back on their time tested ploy of communalising society and polarising communities in the name of religion. This was employed to the hilt in the 2014 ascent of Modi, along with the raising of a vision of development. Now that Modi and his Ministry are increasingly displaying their inability to live up to their development vision, they would be planning to aggressively pursue the polarisation-communalisation route. The revival of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir agitation could well become an instrument for this. The second response would be by way of appropriating the gains made by other governments as their own through clever propaganda and media management. Even as Chief Minister, Modi had shown his mastery over this stratagem when he took credit for the Amul dairy, set up originally in 1946 and nurtured under several regimes, including the Congress. But then Modi's propaganda and media management is what prevailed in the end.”

Tiwari's view is endorsed by former BJP Union Minister Arun Shourie, who terms the Modi Ministry essentially as an event management company where everything is turned into a spectacle for one individual and a clutch of political courtiers.

There is a stream of opinion that the ruling BJP in Gujarat, which is to face the electorate later this year, needs a booster and that is why Modi inaugurated the Sardar Sarovar dam and initiated the work on the bullet train. However, field reports suggest that the BJP continues to be on a strong wicket in the State, essentially because of the absence of a cohesive opposition and a popular leader in the Congress.

Thus, the new spectacles on display in September 2017 are aimed at reinforcing the omnipotence of the big leader. That task is evidently of utmost importance given the warnings that are emanating from different quarters of the country and the RSS.

BUILDING INDIA

By DIVYA TRIVED

WHEN the greatly admired 18th century poet Mir Taqi Mir wrote “The streets of Delhi are not mere streets, they are like the album of a painter”, he was onto something. Throw a stone in or around Delhi and it is bound to hit an architectural wonder, possibly hundreds of years old. Home to striking structures from the Tughlaq, Lodi, Mughal and British imperialist eras, Delhi's architecture has a great legacy to live up to. In post-Independence India, as the nation-building process was afoot, there was a choice to be made—whether to rely on traditional building styles or to attempt new shapes, designs, compositions and layouts. As new State capitals had to be designed, homes to be built for the refugees, cities to be expanded, institutions to be constructed, building and building styles became a primary concern.

Not known to many, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru took a keen interest in fostering young talent in architecture and patronised the “modern” style in an effort to make it emblematic of an ambitious new nation. Until 1947, modern architecture was practically non-existent in India. Nehru recognised early on that architecture could be the outward and

visible manifestation of changing times and used it to showcase an India that was progressive with a distinct urban identity.

Sanjay Kanvinde, son of the pioneering architect of independent India Achyut Kanvinde, said: “Even as a Bill was being contemplated in Parliament to have a national style for buildings, Nehru's address put the matter to rest.” Nehru invited the French architect Le Corbusier to design Chandigarh and in one fell swoop changed the landscape of architecture in India. He said: “Now I have welcomed one great experiment in India, which you know very well, Chandigarh. Many people argue about it, some like it, some dislike it. It is totally immaterial whether you like it or not; it is the biggest job of its kind in India. That is why I welcome it. It is the biggest because it hits you on the head, because it makes you think.” He encouraged the idea of not being tied down by old rules. He goaded designers to think in terms of light, air, water and human beings and declared that Chandigarh was of immense importance whether it succeeded or not.

During Nehru's centennial year, a volume of his writings on art, architecture, heritage, cities and city-planning was released by Syed Shafi, who prepared

the first Master Plan of Delhi and was part of a team that prepared a Plan for Mecca. Ram Rahman, son of renowned architect Habib Rahman, said: “It is a 164-page book. I have never seen any world leader anywhere who has actually engaged and written so deeply on issues of urbanism and architecture as Nehru has.”

At Independence, there were only three schools of architecture: Bengal Engineering College, University of Hyderabad and JJ School of Arts, Bombay. Delhi had become a meeting place for architects, designers, technocrats, bureaucrats, artists and engineers. The government was the single largest builder at the time—constructing office buildings, educational and cultural institutions and huge housing projects to house Partition refugees and the bureaucracy. Ram Rahman said: “Father came to Delhi in 1952 or 53, Kanvinde came in 1947. Both had intimate interactions with Nehru as designers.” The two architects (Rahman was from MIT and Kanvinde from Harvard) had the biggest projects in the 1950s and both joined government service. Rahman remained with the Public Works Department (PWD) throughout his career, while Kanvinde left the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in 1955 for private

practice. Both had trained under the Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius, and his influence was evident in their earlier work in Delhi.

Other architects, who had worked under either the Edwin Lutyens team or Corbusier in Chandigarh, also came to Delhi. There were many large-scale projects and Delhi produced a rich mix of modernist buildings. Resources were minimal in the 1950s. Despite the shortage of finances and other limitations, structures built between the 1950s and 1970s stood out for more reasons than one.

Mahendra Raj, a civil engineer, who worked with Kanvinde, Raj Rewal, Kuldeep Singh and Charles Correa remembered the days when the search for a new capital city for Punjab was on. He was sent to the site where Chandigarh stands today as the first engineer, in 1949, before construction had even begun. “I studied in Lahore and was appointed by Punjab PWD there. When Partition happened, government officers were asked where they would like to go. Being a Hindu, I had to opt for India and was posted in Shimla. Many Muslims also opted for India and several Hindus opted for Pakistan. Anyhow, in Shimla I was tasked with the maintenance of the Shimla-Tibet road, which was not

even a road, just a dust track, but it had to be maintained. I used to travel on foot. In those days, Shimla was the capital of Punjab as it had infrastructural facilities since it used to be the temporary summer capital. When the site for Chandigarh was selected, it was my task to collect material. Coal was in very short supply. And to burn bricks you needed coal. We started collecting coal, steel, whatever we could.” He recounted his exchanges with Corbusier, with whom he worked on projects such as the High Court of Chandigarh. As a 22-year-old upstart, he argued with him over the facade of the Secretariat building. Initially Corbusier was angry. A day later, he changed his mind and accepted Mahendra Raj's idea.

Kanvinde spoke about his father's exchange with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was then Minister of Education. He wanted domes, arches and turrets in the design for Azad Bhavan, now headquarters for the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. “People in the meeting kept quiet and blindly supported him.” But Achyut Kanvinde, despite being the youngest, interjected and presented a different point of view. “To his credit, Azad reacted by saying: ‘What you said is correct and can be adopted.’” Achyut Kanvinde went on to build sev-

eral modern buildings, including private homes, CSIR laboratories and Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. The last incorporated a series of corridors linking all the buildings. In designing his own house, Kanvinde incorporated a central atrium around which all activities are organised. Nehru was interested in the construction of private houses, too. He said: “A house is not merely a place to take shelter from the rain or the cold or the sun. It is, or should be, an enlargement of one's personality, and if human welfare is our objective, this is bound up with the house. Indeed, changes in housing in other parts of the world have effected social revolutions in the community.”

In an attempt to record and preserve modern architecture of the Nehruvian era, an exhibition titled “Delhi: Building the Modern” was put together by Roubina Karode as part of a string of exhibitions called Stretched Terrains at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art. It included models, structural and engineering drawings, photographs of architects Raj Rewal, Mahendra Raj, Kuldeep Singh, Habib Rahman and Kanvinde, covering a period of two decades between the 1960s and the 1980s. The architectural photography of Madan Mahatta charted the scale, innovation.

Govt open to criticism but dont create panic: Key points from PM Modis speech

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday addressed the inauguration of Golden Jubilee Year of the Institute of Company Secretaries (ICSI) in New Delhi, emphasising on the achievements of the government and its economic policies.

Modi hit out at critics but accepted for the first time that the economic growth had slowed.

The Prime Minister's speech comes in the midst of a raging debate over the state of economy after a stinging attack by BJP leader Yashwant Sinha, former Union minister Arun Shourie and the opposition parties over slowdown and unemployment.

Here are the key points of Modi's speech:

'Open to constructive criticism but don't create panic'

Modi on Wednesday admitted for the first time that there has been an economic slowdown but told critics not to spread negativity and promised steps to put the economy on the path of recovery.

"In the past few days the criticism that we have received, we don't take it in a bad way. We are a sensitive government. We accept the constructive criticism with all our hearts and make sure that we consider it with modesty and work on improving the economy. The whole world is talking about India."

"We don't believe that all the things that critics say are wrong, but one should restrain from creating an environment of panic in the nation. We have started walking

towards development of new India, new culture, new celebration and new traditions," Modi said.

Hitting out at critics Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacks "people who sleep well only after spreading pessimism", days after BJP veterans Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie slammed government of economy slowdown.

"It is for these people, fall of growth in one quarter, is like the biggest dose they will ever receive," Modi said. He said that now is the time to recognise these people. "When the data are favourable, it is the same people who like that institute and process but the moment this data are beyond their imagination, they say the system is not right, the process is not right, people working in it are not right and just accuse people." Prime Minister Modi also said that before coming to any conclusion, it was important to recognise these people.

Accepting the drop in growth rate of economy

Modi said that after achieving an average growth of about 7.5% over three years, he accepted that the growth rate had come down in April-June this year, but the "the government is committed to reverse that and we are ready to take the decisions".

"The nation's financial stability too has to be maintained and we will keep taking steps to improve the economy," Prime Minister Modi said. Modi assured people that India would remain in a new league of development and said that even the



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has predicted 7.7% growth in the coming quarters. "In the past if due to structural reforms any sector needed tatkal help, the government was ready to help them, no matter what," Prime Minister Modi said. Prime Minister Modi also said that it has been three months and the Central Government is taking feedback for all things, including for GST. "I have asked the GST council to review the problems being faced by traders, issues in technology or filling the forms."

On demonetisation Speaking about demonetisation, Prime Minister Modi said, "After demonetisation, the cash to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio has come down to 9%, which before November 8, 2016, was 12%."

He also asserted that demonetisation will be known as the start of 'corruption-free day' in the Indian history, adding that this would not have been possible, if there was no

honesty in the nation. "You people know more than me, as to how one has to think fifty times before giving and taking black money," he said.

On inflation Prime Minister Modi said that more than 10% inflation has decreased and has come to down to 2.5%. "While taking toll of all these parameters, the central government in its fiscal deficit, has brought it to 3.5% from the previous government and has decreased from 4.5%," Modi said.

He further said that foreign investors are investing records in India, adding: "India's foreign exchange reserve has increased from 30,000 crore dollars to more than 40,000 crore dollars."

On economic growth Modi said that during the previous governments there were eight instances when GDP was at or below 5.7%.

"India's economy has also seen quarters where, don't forget the past, the growth fell down to 0.2%, 1.5%,"

PM Modi said.

He said that this kind of fall is more dangerous for the economy, because during that period, India was struggling with, high inflation higher current account deficit, and higher fiscal deficit. If we see two years prior to 2014, meaning if we see 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 then the average was around 6 per cent, now the GDP data of these years and the GDP data of the last three years of the previous government before that have been the same. The institute has been the same, the process has been the same and that's why comparing it is normal," Modi said.

On black money

"To bring back black money in foreign lands, strong black money acts were established, where, with a lot of countries, tax was strategized and in old tax agreement, we brought about a change and sat down with them to find new ways as well," Modi said. He further commented that insolvency and bankruptcy codes were created, and 'Benami Sampati' law was established, which was stuck for a long time.

"The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was applied and the bravery of implementing demonetisation was taken by this government only," the Prime Minister stated.

The Prime Minister said that this government has worked really hard and instil honest work in the system. "And it is due to this hard work of the government that even due to minimum cash the nation is working very well," said Modi.

Centre helping select telecom firms: Cong.

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Wednesday accused the BJP government of promoting "crony capitalism" to help a few telecom companies.

The party alleged that by abusing its discretionary powers, the Telecom Ministry was likely to cause a loss of 23,821 crore to the exchequer.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the BJP government "is... surreptitiously deferring recovery of spectrum auction amount by six years, causing an interest loss of 23,821 crore to the public exchequer." On August 8, 2016, the BJP government had invited auction of spectrum in 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz and 2500 MHz bands. He said the terms of auction required an upfront payment of 50% (1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz and 2500 MHz bands) or 25% (700 MHz, 800 MHz and 900 MHz) of the final bid amount and the balance in 13 years — no payment for first the three years up to August 26, 2019, and thereafter, 10 equal annual instalments.

The auction ended on October 6, 2016 with 965 MHz sold for 65,789.12 crore, of which 32,000 crore was paid upfront, the balance amount to be paid in instalments is 33,789.12 crore. The three successful bidders were Reliance Jio (269.9 MHz for 13,672 crore), Airtel (173.8 MHz for 14,244 crore) and Idea (349.20 MHz for 12,798 crore).

But Mr. Surjewala said the underwriters, IDFC Securities Ltd., had expected to raise 80,000 crore. Thus, the amount represented a shortfall of 14,281 crore. To help the telecom companies, he said, the inter-ministerial committee decided to alter the auction terms by recommending payment of 33,789.12 crore within 16 years instead of 10.

The Telecom Ministry and the Telecom Commission had approved this.

Seniors vie for slot in key BJP body

The election of M. Venkaiah Naidu to the post of Vice-President has left an important vacancy on the BJP's parliamentary board, the party's highest decision-making body. Several seniors in the party and government are in the race for the post.

Apart from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief Amit Shah, the parliamentary board now has Cabinet Ministers Rajnath Singh, Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj, Nitin Gadkari, J.P. Nadda, Ananth Kumar and Thawar Chand Gehlot; Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan; and BJP's general secretary (organisation) Ram Lal.

Sources say there are two schools of thought with regard to who could fill the vacancy. "One school of thought veers towards someone like Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar who has not only held multiple terms as Chief Minister but was also Defence Minister in the Union government earlier. The others want someone from within the party, who enjoys the confidence of Amit bhai," a senior office-bearer of the party said. Under the BJP's constitution, the national executive constitutes the parliamentary board with the party president as chairman and 10 members, including the parliamentary party leader. It also stipulates that the party chief then has to nominate one of the general secretaries to act as secretary of the board.

When Mr. Shah had constituted the board after he took over as party chief, he had removed former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and senior leaders L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi and brought in Mr. Chouhan.

Multiple elections soon With Assembly polls in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram due in the next few months, the parliamentary board becomes crucial in terms of distribution of ticket, as it has a final say in these matters.

"Looking at the piecemeal way in which Amit bhai has filled in positions in the party hierarchy, he may well decide to take a call after the Gujarat polls," the office-bearer said.

Rahul wants Modi to address unemployment issue

NEW DELHI: Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi over employment and asked him to address the issue instead of "wasting time" of the countrymen. On a visit to his Lok Sabha constituency Amethi, Mr. Gandhi said the Prime Minister should say if he is unable to address the problems like unemployment and the Congress will come and do it in six months.

"Farmers and youth are the two main issues concerning India and if Modi cannot address these, he should say so and the Congress will come and do it in six months," he said at a 'chaupal' (village gathering) in Kathawra village under Jagdispur area here in Uttar Pradesh. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi needs to stop wasting time of the countrymen and start giving employment to the youth as promised," said the Congress leader soon after his arrival here this afternoon on a three-day visit.

"The youth of the country feel they are not getting opportunity to work for the nation... their anger is increasing and... the farmers are committing suicide," he said. Charging the BJP with ignoring schemes like food park and others projects meant for the development of Amethi, he said.

"It is unfortunate that the BJP has harmed the interest of people of Amethi... this is wrong. Their (BJP's) thinking is like this only... but I will fight for you all."

HCs without full time chief justices set to go up to 7 next week

Karnataka high court Chief Justice S K Mukherjee will retire on October 9, taking the number of high courts without regular CJs in the country to seven. There are 24 HCs in the country of which the HCs of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Calcutta, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Manipur are without a full-time chief justice, sources in the law ministry said.



The Andhra Pradesh and Telangana HC has had an acting CJ since July 30 last year while the Calcutta high court has an acting chief justice since December 1, 2016. Acting CJs were appointed to the Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Manipur high courts this year. Sources in the ministry confirmed there is no move to fill these vacancies in the next few days. Justice Mukherjee's name was recommended for transfer to the Uttarakhand high court in May last year but it did not go through. He was to replace the Uttarakhand HC CJ K M Joseph who had sought a transfer on health grounds and was recommended for transfer to the Andhra Pradesh/Telangana HC. The government is yet to take a call on the two recommendations of the Supreme Court collegium.

On October 1, the total number of vacancies of HC judges stood at 387 as against 1079 sanctioned positions.

Despite a string of appointments last month, Allahabad HC is still 50 judges short of the sanctioned strength of 160 while Calcutta HC has more than half of the 72 judges' posts still lying vacant. Nearly a third of HC judges' posts are still vacant in the country amid the wait for a new set of guidelines for appointments. The Memorandum of Procedure (MOP) stuck due to differences between the judiciary and the executive over its contours.

Need more economic reforms for social equality: Manmohan Singh

BENGALURU: Advocating higher growth rate, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday called for more economic reforms to ensure social equality with inclusive growth.

"We embarked upon economic reforms to open up opportunities to the people born without social privileges. I must confess that the process is not complete. We need more such reforms and higher growth rate for social equality," said Singh at a function here.

Inaugurating the academic session of the newly set up Bengaluru Dr BR. Ambedkar School of Economics, Singh said with the abolition of the Planning Commission, fresh efforts were needed to ensure social and economic equality. "In our republic, we have equality

in politics but inequality in social life. In politics, we have one vote for one man but the same is denied in social life. How long can we deny equality in social and economic life? Fresh efforts have to be made to keep inequality in control," asserted Singh, quoting from Ambedkar's speech in the Constituent Assembly. Hoping that scholars from the new economics school would help in finding ways for a cohesive growth, the noted economist said high employment generation was imperative to ensure social justice. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre abolished the Planning Commission in 2014 and set up the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Ayog in its place on January 1, 2015. Noting that

Bengaluru had several institutions of higher learning and were among the best in the country in their respective fields, Singh said the state-run Ambedkar School of Economics should follow the same principle to become a renowned institute. "As Bengaluru did not have an institute to teach social sciences in its entirety, this school would not only fill the vacuum to learn economics, but also give opportunity to budding economists, as it is dedicated to comprehensive study of economics," added Singh.

Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor C Rangarajan, Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah and Congress leader in Lok Sabha Mallikarjuna Kharge were among the dignitaries present on the occasion.

Out of luck and luxury, Honeypreet braces for bitter pill in custody

CHANDIGARH: Given to a life of luxury, jailed Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim's adopted daughter Honeypreet Insan now stares at tough times in police custody. Honeypreet, whose real name is Priyanka Taneja and described herself as 'Papa's Angel', travelled to different places with the dera head and knew people in the corridors of power. She did not find much time to sleep on her first night in the custody at the Chandimandir police station as her interrogation went on till 1am following which she was taken to the General Hospital, Sector 6, as she complained

of chest pain, officials said. She was at the hospital till 3am and then taken back. Her questioning started at 6pm, hours she was arrested from the Patiala-Zirakpur highway on Tuesday along with a woman. Her questioning, being recorded on camera, resumed at 7am on Wednesday. She was offered chapatti and dal. Doctors at the hospital said except a minor migraine problem, she has no health problem. Another medical check-up was conducted on her before she was produced in court in the afternoon. Honeypreet was evasive in her replies about her whereabouts and her role in inciting violence when she was questioned by inspector general of police (IGP) Mamta Singh. She was also asked about the last time she made a call to Aditya Insan and Pawan, who are absconding besides the amount of money allegedly sent to Panchkula before violence broke out. She was also asked about the role of the 45-member dera core committee in the entire incident following the conviction of Ram Rahim.

Supreme Court refers to constitution bench issues related to freedom of speech

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday referred to a five-judge constitution bench questions such as whether a public functionary or a minister can claim freedom of speech while airing views in a sensitive matter which is under investigation. A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said the questions raised by senior advocates Harish Salve and Fali S Nariman were required to be dealt by a larger bench. The bench, which also comprised Justices AM Khanwilkar and DY Chandrachud, said it was concerned over the misuse of social media platforms and said people disseminated wrong information even about the court proceedings.



Nariman, who is assisting the benches as an amicus curiae, concurred with the observation of the bench and said that a lot of misinformation and abuses are there on social media platforms and he has stopped looking at them. "I have deleted my Twitter account," Salve said, adding that once when he was appearing in a case related to a Christian medical college and the subsequent

happenings on his Twitter handle forced him to delete it. He said now private players were more into infringing the privacy rights and such things are no more restricted to the state only. The court was hearing a plea filed by a man whose wife and daughter were allegedly gangraped

in July last year on a highway near Bulandshahr, seeking transfer of the case to Delhi and lodging of an FIR against former Uttar Pradesh minister Azam Khan for his controversial statement that the gangrape case was a "political conspiracy".

The brutal incident had happened on the night of July 29 last year when a group of highway robbers stopped the car of a Noida-based family and sexually assaulted a woman and her daughter after dragging them out of the vehicle at gun-point.

Salve had told the bench that ministers cannot have personal views on official business matters as whatever the person says, must reflect government policy. The apex court had earlier said it would consider whether the fundamental right of speech and expression would be

governed under reasonable restriction of decency or morality or whether other preferred fundamental rights would also have an impact on it. The apex court had on July 31 asked the Attorney General to assist it on legal issues including whether a minister or a public functionary could claim freedom of speech while airing views in matters of official business of the state, such as criminal investigation.

However, Khan had on December 15 last year tendered an "unconditional apology" for the remark, which the apex court had accepted.

The top court had earlier proposed to refer to a constitution bench the issue whether a minister could claim refuge under the right to free speech while expressing views in matters of official business.

MOTHER FLOUTS COURT ORDERS TO GET SON VACCINATED, GETS SENTENCED TO 7 DAYS IN JAIL

A mother from Michigan, US has been sentenced to seven days in prison after she dismissed a judge's order to get her nine-year-old son vaccinated.

On Wednesday, Rebecca Bredow was sentenced for contempt of court, nearly a year after an Oakland County judge ordered her to have her son vaccinated.

Citing religious reasons, Bredow refused to get her son the medically allowed amount of vaccination - which would be up to eight vaccines - for which she had received time till Wednesday.

She had initially agreed with the father - her ex-husband,

Jack Horne - to get their son immunised. However, her eventual refusal to do so earned her a 7-day jail sentence, while her ex-husband has been awarded temporary primary custody in order to get the boy his vaccinations.

According to a BBC report, Michigan parents are legally allowed to skip or delay their children's vaccinations due to personal beliefs.

But Bredow fell foul of the law because she reneged on agreements with her former spouse dating back to November 2016 to have the boy immunised. "I'm a passionate mother who cares deeply about my children, their health and



their well-being. ... If my child couldn't bring myself to do it," Bredow said during a court hearing, according to the Associated Press.

The couple separated in 2008, according to ABC News, but they shared parental custody and the father still wanted the boy vaccinated.

"I understand you love your children. But what I don't think you understand is that your son has two parents, and dad gets a say," Judge Karen McDonald told Bredow, the AP reported. As per the Washington Post, parents who either delay or refuse vaccinations for their children do so for a number of reasons, including religious, personal and philosophical beliefs, safety concerns, and a desire for more information from health-care providers, according to 2016

research published in the Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics.

The American Medical Association has long decried allowing parents to decline vaccination for nonmedical reasons and has cited vaccines' ability to prevent diseases such as measles, mumps and other infectious diseases.

Still, a majority of states allow religious exemptions for vaccinations. Nearly 20, including Michigan, provide exemption for religious and personal reasons. Only three, California, Mississippi and West Virginia, don't allow nonmedical exemptions, the Washington Post reported.

Mumbai doctors set record, remove world's heaviest kidney tumour

Doctors at a hospital in Mumbai have removed the world's heaviest kidney tumour reportedly weighing 5.5 kg, which has fetched them a new world record.

A team of doctors successfully operated on Manju Devi, a 28-year-old woman from Bihar's Darbhanga district, who complained of an 'abdominal lump'. As per reports, the 5.5kg tumour was 50 times heavier than a healthy kidney, which weighs about 110 to 140 grams. Because of the 31cm wide and 19cm long tumour, the woman had been suffering from immense pain for the last three years. A CT scan was conducted that revealed the enormous tumour, that had completely replaced the right kidney.



The woman's quality of life was compromised as she struggled to carry on with her daily activities.

The Guinness Book of World Records recently confirmed their feat.

DNA-based Zika vaccine found effective for humans

An experimental DNA-based vaccine has demonstrated both safety and the ability to elicit an immune response against Zika virus in humans, according to new research.

The Phase-1 clinical trial showed that humans who received up to three doses of the vaccine candidate produced an immune response against Zika with minimal adverse effects.

The findings published in the New England Journal of Medicine could open the door to further clinical trials for this vaccine candidate.

The GLS-5700 vaccine is a synthetic DNA vaccine that contains the instructions for the host to mount an immune response against a specific

Zika virus antigen.

"With these new results, we are one step closer to hopefully finding a way to prevent infection, which can cause serious birth defects and developmental delays in babies born to women who are infected with Zika," said the study's lead author, Pablo Tebas, Professor at University of Pennsylvania in the US. In 2015 and 2016, Zika virus spread rapidly through Brazil, the Caribbean, and even into the southern US. However, a vaccine to prevent infection has remained elusive. For this study, the researchers enrolled 40 participants in the safety trial between August and September of 2016. Two groups of 20

participants received either one or two milligram doses of the vaccine candidate intradermally at zero, four, and 12 weeks. Each dosage was followed by the delivery of small electric currents into the skin at the site of injection, known as electroporation (EP), to facilitate optimal vaccine uptake, production of the intended antigen, and immune responses. Two weeks after participants received the third and final dose of the vaccine, all of them developed Zika-specific antibodies and 80 percent of them developed significant neutralising antibodies against the virus. No serious adverse effects were reported. Minor adverse effects included injection site pain, redness, and swelling,

the study said. "Synthetic DNA vaccines, such as this Zika vaccine candidate our team has developed, are an important approach to preventing emerging infectious diseases," said David Weiner, Executive Vice President of The Wistar Institute in the US, and co-lead author of the study.

"This novel DNA vaccine was developed and implemented in just months via a platform that has advantages in temperature stability, storage, dose, and distribution compared to most traditional vaccines, making DNA vaccines an important tool to respond quickly to curb an emerging epidemic," Weiner added.

Working night shifts ups risk of obesity, says study

DC: You may want to avoid doing those overnight shifts, as working in late night shifts is linked to 29 percent increase in risk of becoming obese or overweight, warns a study.

The results suggested that night shift workers had a higher frequency of developing abdominal obesity than other obesity types. Permanent night workers demonstrated a higher risk than rotating shift workers.

Researchers suggested that modifying working schedules to avoid prolonged exposure to long-term night shift work might help reduce the risk of obesity. The findings, from the 28



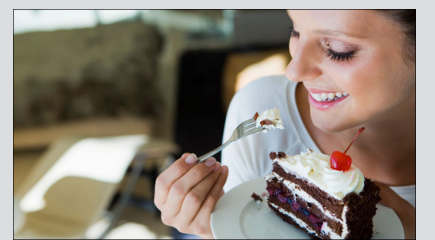
published studies, suggested that night shift work was associated with a 29 percent increased risk of becoming obese or overweight.

Senior study author Dr Lap Ah Tse said that globally, nearly 0.7 billion workers are engaged in a shift work pattern. The study revealed that much of the obesity and overweight among shift workers is attributable to such a job nature. Obesity has been evident to be positively associated with several adverse health outcomes, such as breast cancer, cardiovascular diseases. The research appears in Obesity Reviews journal.

Regular consumption of sweets may put you at heart disease risk

Eating a lot of sweets may put you at increased risk of heart disease, warns new research. The study conducted by researchers showed that healthy men had increased levels of fat in their blood and fat stored in their livers after they consumed a high sugar diet. "Our findings provide new evidence that consuming high amounts of sugar can alter your fat metabolism in ways that could increase your risk of cardiovascular disease," said Bruce Griffin, Professor of Nutritional Metabolism at the University of Surrey in England.

The researchers looked at two groups of men with either high or low levels of liver fat and fed them a high or low sugar diet. The low sugar diet contained no more than 140 calories a day worth of sugar - an amount close to the recommended intake - while the high sugar diet contained 650 calories worth. After 12 weeks on the high sugar diet, the men with a high level of liver fat - a condition known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) - showed changes in their fat metabolism that are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, heart attacks and strokes. Fat metabolism is the biochemical



process by which fats are transported and broken down in the blood, and used by the cells of the body. The results also revealed that when the group of healthy men with a low level of liver fat consumed a high amount of sugar, their liver fat increased and their fat metabolism became similar to that of the men with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. "While most adults don't consume the high levels of sugar we used in this study, some children and teenagers may reach these levels of sugar intake by over-consuming fizzy drinks and sweets," Griffin said. "This raises concern for the future health of the younger population, especially in view of the alarmingly high prevalence of NAFLD in children and teenagers, and exponential rise of fatal liver disease in adults," Griffin added.

Women with asthma more likely to have underweight babies

Women suffering from asthma are more prone to develop preeclampsia - a dangerous pregnancy complication characterised by high blood pressure - and run a higher risk of giving birth to underweight babies, says a new study.

Asthma is a common disease caused by chronic inflammation in the lungs with symptoms of coughing and breathlessness.

The study, published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice, suggests that well-controlled asthma during pregnancy could reduce the relative incidence of complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

"We found that the risk of preeclampsia is 17 per cent higher in women with asthma compared to women without asthma," said the study's lead author Gustaf Rejmo from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden.

The researchers used data from the Swedish birth registers and examined the link between asthma in pregnant women and the relative pregnancy and delivery outcomes.

After studying more than one million births to just over 700,000 women between 2001 and 2013, it was found that 10 per cent of the babies born had a mother suffering from asthma.

In addition, women with asthma were more likely to have underweight babies, instrumental deliveries, caesarean sections and shorter pregnancies.

In order to ascertain whether the complications could be attributed to hereditary or environmental factors, the researchers also identified the women's asthma-free cousins and sisters who had given birth during the same period. On comparing the groups they found that the correlations between maternal asthma and complications during pregnancy and delivery held. "It seems to be the asthma per se that causes these complications," Rejmo said.

Japanese woman clocks up 159 working hours in a month, dies

Overworking at office proved fatal for a woman in Japan as she died by clocking up 159 hours overtime in a month.

A political journalist by profession, Miwa Sado, suffered a heart failure in July 2013, albeit the case was only made public this week.

As per reports, the doctors declared her dead by citing the reason of Karoshi, that is death from overwork.

She had just taken two days off in an entire month which led to her death, reports

Independent.

With almost 2,000 people killing themselves due to work-related stress in a year, the government of Japan has taken the issue seriously.

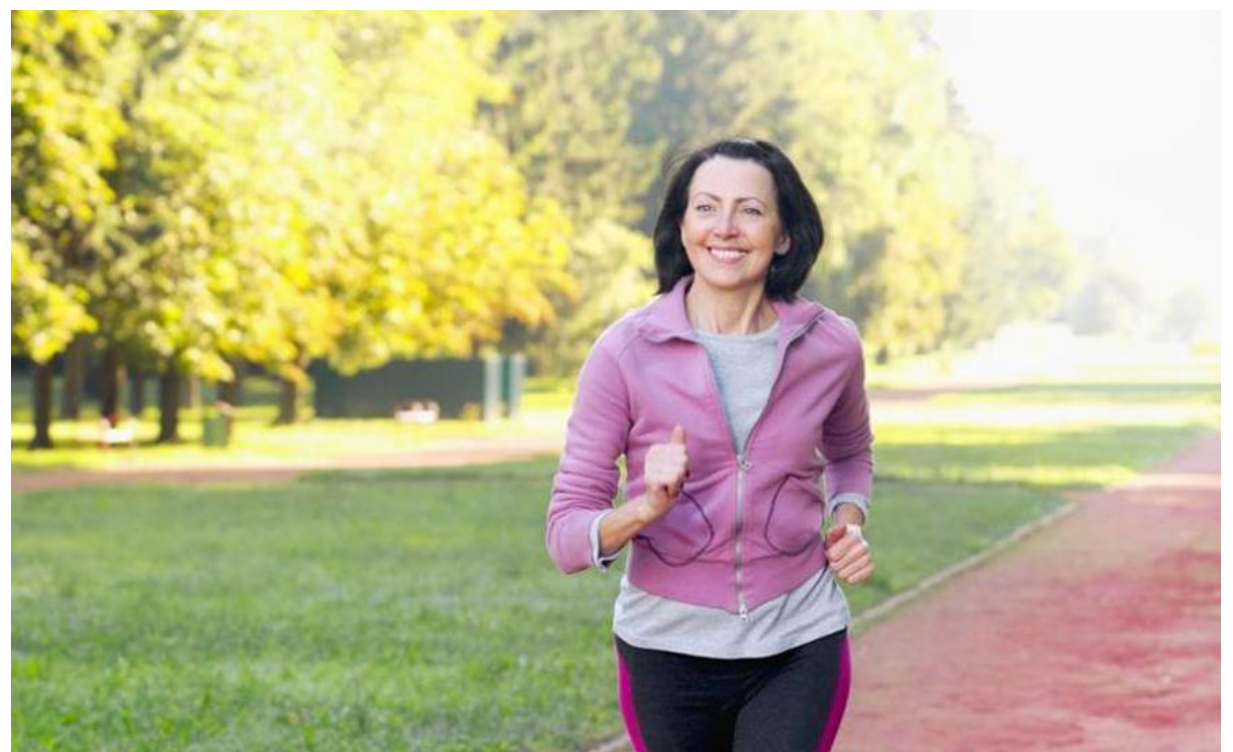
As per a survey conducted, a fifth of the country's workforce are at risk of karoshi, since they clock more than 80 hours extra work time each month.

A campaign was also launched which urged employees to leave early on the last Friday of every month.

Are you postmenopausal? Just 30 min of exercise can greatly benefit you

Women who are regularly active during menopause can significantly reduce their weight and BMI. However, it's ideal to continue exercising even after menopause. Just 30 minutes of high intensity resistance and impact training - jumping jacks, push-ups and squats - twice a week may improve functional performance and bone density in postmenopausal women with low bone mass, reveals a recent study.

Exercise is known to be beneficial to bone health but there is reluctance to use high intensity programs in older women with low bone mass because of the risk of fracture or other injury. The results indicate that closely supervised exercise training interventions of this type are effective and safe for bone. Senior author Dr Belinda Beck said, "We were delighted to find that even women with very low bone mass could tolerate the high loading required to increase bone mineral density as long as it was introduced gradually with close attention to technique." "The simultaneous improvement in functional perfor-



mance suggests our exercise program provides dual protection from osteoporotic fracture by also preventing falls,"

Beck added. The research appears in journal of Bone and Mineral Research.

Rajnish Kumar appointed new SBI chairman

MUMBAI: Rajnish Kumar, 59, the senior most of the managing directors at State Bank of India (SBI) will become the 25th chairman of the country's largest lender, succeeding Arundhati Bhattacharya, who is set to retire on 6 October.

The government on Wednesday announced his appointment for three years. Kumar currently is in charge of retail banking at SBI.

Kumar's appointment comes at a time when SBI's profitability is under strain because of ballooning bad loans and sluggish credit growth. At the end of June, the bank was weighed down by gross non-performing loans of Rs 1.88 trillion. Gross bad loans account for almost one-tenth of its total advances. SBI is also the lead bank in a majority of the 40 cases referred for bankruptcy proceedings at the National Company Law Tribunal.

"Asset quality is a challenge. So that will definitely receive priority," Kumar told CNBC-TV-18 in an interview. "We are undergoing a major transformation in terms of adoption of new technology and digitisation. So these two things are on the top of my mind."

Kumar's predecessor Bhattacharya, who was the first woman chairperson of the 200-year-old state-owned bank, was instrumental in the merger of SBI's associate banks and Bharatiya Mahila Bank with the SBI. In her tenure, the bank saw the listing of its life insurance subsidiary, the first among public sector banks.

She also steered the bank through the demonetisation process that resulted in a cash crunch, making currency available to customers across its 16,000 branches and automated teller machines (ATMs)

"NPA recovery especially in the case of big corporate loans and a smooth merger should be Kumar's priorities. Investors got a shock from the associate banks' losses," said Hemindra Hazari, an independent banking analyst. "Secondly, Kumar should be outspoken in defending the autonomy of public sector banks."

Kumar's name was recommended for SBI's top post by the Vinod Rai-led Bank Board Bureau after interviews with candidates took place in June.

Besides Kumar, other SBI managing directors including B Sriram, Dinesh Kumar Khara and PK Gupta appeared for the interview. Sriram is in charge of corporate banking. Khara and Gupta look after associates and subsidiaries, and compliance and risk respectively.

"Kumar was the unanimous choice... However, it was a tough choice. But Kumar's global experience, long stint in credit and practical wisdom gave him the edge over others," said a senior government official aware of the matter. While the banking board bureau conducts the interview, the final call is taken by the appointments committee of the cabinet.

Kumar joined the bank as a probationary officer in 1980 and served in positions including head of SBI Capital Markets Ltd, the bank's investment banking unit. In a career spanning over three decades, Kumar has also held overseas assignment in Canada and UK.

"Rajnish is an all rounder with experience in international, corporate and retail banking. During demonetisation and Jan Dhan programme, Kumar's execution ability was of the highest order," said OP Bhatt, former chairman, SBI. Jan Dhan is a reference to the government's financial inclusion programme aimed at ensuring that every household in the country has a bank account.

"Asset quality continues to be an unfinished agenda for SBI. The new chairman faces a challenging task of resolving the NPA problem and HR (human resources) related issues pertaining to the merger," said Alpesh Mehta, deputy head of research at Motilal Oswal Securities Ltd. "While most of the past problematic accounts were recognised during Arundhati's tenure, systemic issues led to delays in resolutions."

Adidas Brings the Fast Shoe Revolution One Step Closer

In a production hall as clean as a hospital, pea-size beads of white plastic pour into what looks like a mini-van-size Adidas shoe box, complete with three white stripes down the side. That's fitting, because in just a few seconds the machine heats and molds the stuff into soles of Adidas running shoes, with only one worker needed to wedge in pieces of plastic called stability bars. This is Adidas AG's "Speedfactory," where the shoemaker aims to prove it can profitably produce footwear in high-cost, developed economies. By next fall the facility, as large as half a soccer field, will employ about 160 people to make 1,500 pairs of shoes a day, or 500,000 annually. The plant, halfway between Munich and Frankfurt, and a twin opening this fall near Atlanta, will be key to Adidas's effort to catch industry leader Nike Inc. It replaces manual stitching and gluing with molding and bonding done by machines, churning out running shoes in a day, vs. two or three months in China and Vietnam, where components are shuttled among suppliers that produce individual parts. "In the history of sneaker making, this is probably the biggest revolution since manufacturing moved to Asia," James Carnes, a 23-year Adidas veteran responsible for company strategy, says as he tours the plant. "Or maybe since sport shoes were made." The factories take a page from fast-fashion pioneers Zara and H&M, part of an effort by Adidas to more quickly get shoes, soccer jerseys, and other goods from designers' sketchbooks to store shelves. Adidas says coupling speed with customization will allow it to sell more gear at full price and keep customers from defecting to rivals. It used a prototype of the Speedfactory to manufacture a running shoe called "Futurecraft Made for Germany," a big hit a year ago, with buyers camping outside stores to get one of just 500 pairs at €249 (\$293) apiece.

Spicejet signs pact with Japanese firm to operate planes on water, land

NEW DELHI: Soon you can land on water or small piece of land. Low-cost carrier Spicejet had signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Japan's Setouchi Holdings for 10 and 14-seater amphibious plane operations.

In the next year, the airline will study the commercial viability of using amphibious planes that can take-off and land from short, unimproved strips of land as well as water bodies.

If approved by authorities, Spicejet may order over 100 such planes by October 2018.

"...the ground reality remains that only about 3% Indians travel by air. Infrastructural challenges



have been a key deterrent for providing air connectivity to smaller towns and cities..." Spicejet CMD Ajay Singh said.

"Spicejet has been a big supporter of the government's UDAN scheme. With the ability to land in a small or confined space, smaller fixed-wing aircrafts are the perfect flying machines that can effectively connect the country's remote cities and airstrips which can in turn revolutionise the regional connectivity scheme," he added.

These aircrafts can land on water bodies, gravel and grass.

The planes have been demonstrated in flight in Nagpur and Guwahati.

Finland can play role in India's Smart Cities mission, says minister

NEW DELHI: Smart grids, smart cities and clean water are among the areas where Finland's know-how converges with India's needs, Finnish minister for energy and environment Kimmo Tiilikainen said on Wednesday.

The minister, who was in India with a business delegation for a four-day visit, said every Finnish household has a smart meter and the country's power grids are among the most efficient in the world.

"We experience an electricity loss of only 3%, among the lowest in the world," Tiilikainen said.

India's ambitious Smart Cities programme too is complementary to the expertise of Finnish companies. In Finland, he said, utilities not only clean wastewater efficiently but also remove nutrients from the waste and use them for other purposes.

Asked what is unique about Finnish capabilities in these areas, Tiilikainen said they can "manage the whole system...we don't simply solve one problem and move on". He said it was "typically Finnish to make all the parts work together".



Already, a Finnish firm and its Indian partner are setting up charging systems for electrical vehicles. Another firm is offering a means to wash coal -- a problem in India which has high ash coal -- use the residue for fuel and use the ash for construction material. Asked about the experience of Nokia's cellphone factory, the largest Finnish investment in India that was shut down by tax authorities, Tiilikainen said: "It is not wise to talk about a single investment."

He noted Finnish success stories in India -- Kone, an escalator and elevator maker, is now the market leader in the country while Valmet provides automation technology for 60% of India's power plants.

After a dip, Indian economy bouncing back: NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant

NEW DELHI: NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant on Wednesday said that while there has been a "little bit of dip" in the Indian economy, it is now bouncing back.

"We've been growing at 7.6%... There has been a little bit of dip in the economy but we are bouncing back. This month's figure seems to be good," Kant said at a public dialogue organised by St. Stephen's College Alumni Association.

He was apparently referring to the core sector growth rebounding to a five-month high in August while manufacturing activity expanded for the second month running in September.

During the discussion with Mastercard CEO Ajay Pal Banga at the event, Kant said India needed to focus on exports "in a big way" if it wanted to grow rapidly.

"Globalisation has lifted vast segments of population above poverty line. Japan, (South) Korea and China have become prosperous on the back of exports.

"My view is that we must push for exports in a very big way. We must penetrate global markets as it'll help our people and our coun-



try to grow and prosper much more rapidly." Kant also stressed on the need for women to be brought into the growth process in a more inclusive way. "There is a larger issue of gender parity in India as here women contribute towards only 24% of the GDP. How do we make a conscious policy for greater gender parity and how do we push India's GDP through women? That's a big challenge," Kant said.

Mastercard CEO Banga suggested that while several initiatives had been taken by the central government to push growth, bringing "true labour reforms and true land reforms" would go a long way in transforming India in the coming five to seven years.

Uber, Lyft avoid fingerprint checks again under proposed California regulation

MUMBAI: State regulators declined to require biometric background checks, such as fingerprints, for Lyft and Uber drivers.

But plan to require annual checks, codifying something the companies already do.

A proposal from the California Public Utilities Commission, which oversees ride-hailing companies, would require them to ensure that companies that conduct the commercial background checks are accredited by an industry association, and to provide proof of that to the CPUC, as well as proof of annual screenings.

However the CPUC said it was declining to require biometric screening "after much consideration and public comment... finding that doing so would not add a greater level of safety." Uber and Lyft have fiercely resisted any such attempts, saying that the process is onerous and discriminatory. Fingerprint checks go

through an FBI database tracks criminal activity over an entire lifetime and are subject to continuous criminal status monitoring. The current Lyft and Uber checks go back seven years and involve courthouse searches in every jurisdiction where a driver has lived as well as of the National Sex Offender website.

Both companies went so far as to cease operations in Austin, Tex., when it required fingerprint checks for drivers last year.

The city has since axed that requirement and Uber and Lyft resumed service there in May.

The PUC proposal would maintain requirements that ban registered sex offenders and people convicted of violent crimes such as misdemeanor assault or battery, domestic violence and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Lyft welcomed the proposal. "We appreciate the CPUC's thoughtful deliberation on this issue and the

supportive comments from a wide range of experts who helped to inform the decision," said spokeswoman Chelsea Harrison.

"Today's proposal is a recognition of Lyft's strong background check process which prioritizes public safety without limiting innovation or economic opportunity".

District attorneys of San Francisco and Los Angeles sued Uber two years ago for claiming that its background checks were industry-leading. Uber settled for \$10 million and stopped making the claim. Lyft settled similar allegations before charges were brought and agreed to pay \$250,000 in civil fines.

Uber did not immediately respond to a requests for comment.

Wingz, which provides airport rides in drivers' personal cars, said the proposal continues the status quo. "It appears this is the process we already have in place," said founder and CEO Geoff Mathieux.

5 Surprises In Store— Even For Ikea Lovers

MUMBAI: It was November 18, 1998. My husband and I were still in college and living in our first apartment, in Noblesville. And that Wednesday morning, we giddily—there is no other word for it—drove out to Schaumburg, Illinois, for the grand opening of its Ikea store. Ikea! We'd heard about the hip (and cheap!) home-goods chain from friends, even flipped through the catalog that you could admire, but not really order from, back then (believe me, we'd tried, and found only hassle as a result). A store was the answer to our decorating dreams. When the Swedish behemoth opens a location in Fishers on Wednesday, it will be the 45th in the United States. Back then? There were a few Ikeas on the coasts. This Chicago-area one would be the biggest in North America—and the first within our grasp. And so we happily road-tripped to Illinois that morning, clutching our dog-eared catalogue, practically frothing at the mouth to hit those aisles and appoint our humble one-bedroom with (in our minds) the highest of design, at prices we could afford. Then we did it all over again later that day. Because that pair of sunny yellow Tullsta chairs we fell in love with? Yeah, only one fit into our beat-up, two-door BMW at a time. So, back to Noblesville, then Schaumburg, then Noblesville again! Ah, the things you do when you're young, in love, and too broke to shop Crate & Barrel. Today, I can't imagine voluntarily driving 824 miles in one day for a pair of mass-market tub chairs. At the time, it seemed the tiniest of prices to pay for furniture we actually liked, and could afford as college students.

Senate bill to clear obstacles to self-driving cars advances

MUMBAI: Legislation that could help usher in a new era of self-driving cars advanced in Congress on Wednesday after the bill's sponsors agreed to compromises to address some concerns of safety advocates.

The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved the bill by a voice vote, a sign of broad, bipartisan support. It would allow automakers to apply for exemptions to current federal auto safety standards in order to sell up to 15,000 self-driving cars and light trucks per manufacturer in the first year after passage. Up to 40,000 per manufacturer could be sold in the second year, and 80,000 each year thereafter. Action by the full Senate is still needed and differences with a similar bill passed by the House would have to be worked out before the measure could become law. The bill initially would have allowed manufacturers to sell up to 100,000 self-driving vehicles a year, but that number was reduced in last-minute negotiations. In an-



other change, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration would evaluate the safety performance of the vehicles before increasing the number of vehicles manufacturers can sell. Supporters of the bill, which was sought by the auto industry, say it would be a boon to safety since an estimated 94 percent of crashes involve human error. They say it would also help the disabled. The bill "is primarily about saving lives," but it will also increase international competitiveness and create

jobs," said Sen. Gary Peters, D-Michigan. Safety advocates say they still have concerns. Joan Claybrook, a former NHTSA administrator, said the bill is one of the "biggest assaults" ever on the landmark 1966 law that empowered the federal government to set auto safety standards.

"The public will be the crash dummies in this dangerous experiment," she told reporters on a conference call Tuesday.

Under the bill, the NHTSA would have 180 days after an application

in which to grant or deny the exemption. Manufacturers must show that they can provide an equivalent of safety. Safety advocates say six months isn't enough time for an agency that is undermanned and lacks expertise in self-driving technology to effectively make such determinations.

The bill is broad enough to permit exemptions to standards that protect occupants in a crash, like air bags, safety advocates said.

There are no federal safety standards for many of the technologies at the heart of self-driving cars, like software and sensors, and there is no sign that the Trump administration would create such standards. Administration and auto and technology industry officials suggest that new regulations would be unable to keep up with rapid developments in technology and would slow deployment of self-driving cars.

The bill pre-empts state and local governments from enacting their own safety standards in the absence

of federal standards. Industry officials have complained that being forced to comply with a patchwork of state safety laws would be unmanageable. But another compromise made to the bill allows states to continue their traditional roles of licensing vehicles and regulating auto insurance even if their actions affect the design of vehicles. Wrongful death lawsuits against manufacturers would also be allowed in states that permit them. Automakers have experienced the largest number of recalls for safety defects in the industry's history in recent years. General Motors, for example, was found to have buried evidence of an ignition switch defect that ultimately caused the recall of 2.6 million small cars worldwide. The switches played a role in at least 124 deaths and 275 injuries. Also, about 70 million defective Takata air bag inflators are being recalled in the U.S. The inflators are responsible for up to 19 deaths worldwide and more than 180 injuries.

Ranji Trophy: Jammu and Kashmir to play opener without practice

NEW DELHI: In these days when teams are so meticulous in their preparation,

The Jammu & Kashmir cricket team will go into their opening Ranji Trophy game without a single practice session at the venue, Jaipur.

While all other teams have already settled in their respective match venues for their opening ties starting on Friday, October 6, Jammu & Kashmir will only reach Jaipur on Wednesday evening for their game against Team Rajasthan to be played at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium.

"We are taking an 11.00am flight from Srinagar to New Delhi on Thursday. From Delhi, we are trav-



elling by bus to Jaipur, which is around a five to six hour drive, so there won't be time for practice," said a member of the J&K team.

After refusing to sanction the funds directly to the state's office-bearers, the Indian cricket board is itself making all the arrangements for the J&K team, including the flight tickets and hotel accommodations.

Asked about the reason for the delay, the team member informed that a plea had been filed by a local cricket club in the Jammu High Court seeking appointment of an administrator to oversee the affairs of the association, but the decision has been delayed.

Though the players were directly informed about their selection into the team, the team had not been officially announced till Wednesday.

Indian women's cricket team captain Mithali Raj to pen autobiography

Indian women's cricket team captain Mithali Raj will come out with her autobiography next year which will provide a candid and revealing look into her personal and sporting life. Penguin Random House India today announced that it has acquired the rights to publish the memoir.

Raj says she's excited to share her story and hopes that people come to like it through this book. Raj is credited with propelling Indian women's cricket to the centre stage. The Arjuna award winner, at 19, emerged as one of India's most capable batswomen with a staggering 214 against England in the second and final Test at Taunton in 2002. She is the highest run getter in the world with 6190 ODI runs and a batting average of 51.58. She is one of five women with an average above 50, and the first player to score seven consecutive 50s in ODIs.

Radhika Marwah, Associate Commis-



sioning Editor at Penguin Random House India, says, "Mithali Raj is a remarkable role model and is testament to the virtues of perseverance and hard work."

She is hugely admired the world over for her talent, grit, and leadership on the field, and most strikingly remains a very grounded and introspective person."

Lewis Hamilton aiming to build championship lead at Japanese Grand Prix

SUZUKA: Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton can widen his lead when Formula One wraps up its Asian leg at the Japanese Grand Prix on Sunday. With five races remaining, Hamilton leads Ferrari rival Sebastian Vettel by 34 points after finishing second at the Malaysian GP. Vettel, despite starting last on the grid, finished fourth in Sepang.

Hamilton has won twice before in Suzuka, in 2014 and 2015, and was runner-up to former Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg in last year's race. A win in Suzuka would move Hamilton a step closer to a third F1 title in four years with Mercedes and his fourth overall. Mercedes was slower than Ferrari and Red Bull for the second straight

race in Malaysia after similarly struggling for pace in Singapore. "We're still leading the championship, we've still got a great car," Hamilton said Thursday. "Each race is just really trying to understand more about the car because there's constantly something new thrown in the mix, (that) can catch us off guard." Mercedes was debating whether to run the team's latest aerodynamic package for the Japanese GP. "After Malaysia, we have found ourselves analysing our problems, beginning to understand their causes and working on solutions," Mercedes head of motorsport Toto Wolff said.

"While we work to improve in those areas, we must not forget the many strengths we have shown this season," Wolff added. "Our car has taken more pole positions and race wins than any other and we lead both championships." Vettel, who had a new engine for the race in Malaysia, is a four-time winner in Japan. Red Bull driver Max Verstappen, who overtook Hamilton with ease early on to win the race in Malaysia, is sixth in the standings and will be looking to build on his momentum in Japan.

Australian cricket's 'new group' eager to revive team in T20Is vs India

RANCHI: The Australian cricket head into the Twenty20 International series against Virat Kohli's dominant India side, having lost the ODI series 4-1. The team from Down Under's record in the T20Is against India is not great either, having lost their last six encounters.

In this daunting scenario, the players who have come in the Australian squad for the T20I series are hopeful of relieving some of the burden of their colleagues. Left-arm pacer Jason Behrendorff, allrounder Dan Christian and wicketkeeper Tim Paine are the three players who have been selected.

"We speak about having a good attitude in the training, good attitude during the game. Making sure that we are doing everything we can keep the situation positive. I am one of the new guys in the group, we are expected to have the energy and keep



the room buzzing," Behrendorff said.

"I have worked hard for it (getting a national call). I am really excited. I am very much hopeful of making debut in one of the three matches here," said the 27-year-old Behrendorff, who is yet to debut for Australia and till

recently was playing for Western Australia in the domestic JLT One-Day Cup. The left-arm pacer has an impressive record, having taken 123 wickets in 29 first class games, and 53 wickets in 38 T20s. "The wickets here are really different from those

back home. Execution of plans with proper field setting and bowling right ball at the right time will be really important." With Nathan Coulter-Nile by his side, Behrendorff is expected to be the second Australian pacer in the first T20Is starting on October 7. "I'm 100 per cent focused on these three games. (Glad to be) making my debut. I've had an uninterrupted pre-season for a change which is my first time in quite a while," he said.

Since the fifth ODI in Nagpur on October 1, the Australians have got a week-long break and it will help them regroup, feels Behrendorff.

"The moral is really good. The boys who played in the ODI series had a couple of days off and they had a good time relaxing, recovering. We have just joined the squad for the T20Is, we are full of energy and looking forward to an exciting series," he said.

ICC U-19 World Cup: New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson named event ambassador

MUMBAI: The International Cricket Council announced that New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson has been named as the event ambassador of the upcoming under-19 World Cup that starts on January 13 next year. The 16-team tournament will be held in New Zealand for the third time in history and will be played across four cities and seven venues.

"It is extremely exciting to be involved again in the U19 World Cup. I played two of them - it is the first stepping stone to playing international cricket. You go from playing domestic cricket to playing international cricket - it's a big step but it's a step that is necessary," Anderson was quoted as saying in an ICC release. "To have it in our backyard is great. We are going to see players who peo-



ple may not know now but who in the years to come will become household names. In 2010, it was my first snip-

et of playing international cricket at home," Anderson, who had been part of two under-19 World Cups (2008

in Malaysia and 2010 in New Zealand), further added. Anderson made his debut back in 2012. Anderson has so far played 13 Tests, 49 ODIs and 29 T20Is. He burst on to the international stage when he broke Shahid Afridi's 17-year record for the fastest century when he blasted a 36-ball ton against West Indies in Queenstown.

A number of current captains, including Virat Kohli, Sarfraz Ahmed, Kane Williamson, Steve Smith, Kane Williamson and Joe Root, have taken part in the previous editions of the under-19 World Cup. India and Australia are the most successful teams, having won the trophy thrice each, while Pakistan, West Indies and England were won it once each.

Karolina Pliskova, former world number one, loses in third round of China Open

BEIJING: Karolina Pliskova, former number one and fourth seed, became the latest high-profile casualty at the China Open on Thursday, going out in the third round to unseeded Sorana Cirstea. Cirstea follows fellow Romanian Simona Halep into the quarter-finals, after second seed Halep sent Maria Sharapova packing on Wednesday. Cirstea, ranked 44 in the world, stunned the Czech Pliskova 6-1, 7-5 on Beijing's outdoor hard courts to surge into the last eight. She will play home hope Peng Shuai or Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko, the Roland Garros champion. World number one Garbine Muguruza and reigning champion Agnieszka Radwanska are both out to leave world number two Halep the favourite in the Chinese capital. Also into the quarters



is Caroline Garcia, who defeated French compatriot Alize Cornet 6-2, 6-1. Garcia is in red-hot form after winning the Wuhan Open title on Saturday.

Germany cruising, France on thin ice as 2018 qualifiers near climax

ZURICH: Europe will provide 14 of the 32 competing teams in Russia, the hosts included. But so far only Belgium have punched their ticket to the finals going into the last two sets of fixtures.

World champions Germany, who need just a draw in Northern Ireland on Thursday, lead a handful of other sides who can wrap up qualification this week.

England are five points clear in Group 'F', while Serbia are in control of their section and 2010 champions Spain have the edge over Italy in their two-horse race.

The nine group winners will qualify automatically. The worst runner-up will be eliminated, with the other eight second-place teams entering a playoff round in November. The winners of the four play-offs also qualify for the World Cup. The results against the bottom-placed teams in the group do not count in determining the best runners-up.

Portugal, while sure of at least making the play-offs, face a critical final match at home to Switzerland as Cristiano Ronaldo and his team-mates look to overturn

a three-point deficit in Group 'B'.

France hold a tentative one-point cushion over Sweden in Group 'A' and will be all too aware of the dangers posed by a trip to Bulgaria, the country responsible for their absence at the 1994 World Cup. Germany need only one point from their final two games, against Northern Ireland in Belfast on Thursday or Azerbaijan in Kaiserslautern three days later, to ensure qualification as Group 'C' winners. The world champions have eight wins from eight games and coach Joachim Loew said that anything less than 10 wins from 10 would be a disappointment.

France take on Bulgaria on Saturday and Belarus three days later knowing they may still need all six points to book a direct berth for the World Cup. They can also qualify on Saturday in the unlikely event of Sweden also losing at home to Luxembourg. In the same group, the Netherlands must win away to Belarus on Saturday and then beat Sweden at home, probably by several goals, next Tuesday to have a realistic chance of finishing second and making



the playoffs. The Dutch are third in the group, four points behind leaders France, and after missing out on qualifying for the European Championship last year, they could be out of the World Cup race by the end of the weekend if they can't match Sweden's result. England will qualify if they

win at home to Slovenia on Thursday while a draw will also do the trick if Slovakia fail to beat Scotland away. Serbia lead Group 'D' by four points and will earn automatic qualification by beating Austria on Friday or if they draw and Wales and Ireland fail to win. Spain, who are guaranteed a

top-two finish in Group 'G', will qualify if they beat Albania at home on Friday and Italy drop points at home to Macedonia, although the latter seems unlikely. Assuming Spain and Italy both win, then Spain would need a draw in their final match away to Israel to guarantee qualification.

PORTUGAL, SWITZERLAND SET FOR LISBON SHOWDOWN

Switzerland kicked off Group 'B' with a shock 2-0 home win against a groggy Portugal who had barely recovered from their Euro 2016 triumph two months earlier and were missing Cristiano Ronaldo through an injury sustained in that tournament. Both teams have won all their matches since then, leaving the Swiss top with 24 points from eight games and Portugal second on 21, helped by 14 goals in seven outings from Ronaldo. If Switzerland beat visiting Hungary on Saturday and Portugal win in Andorra that will set up a showdown in Lisbon on Tuesday where the European champions, who have a far superior goal difference, could snatch top spot by beating the Swiss.

Group 'E' leaders Poland need just a point from their game against Armenia in Yerevan to be assured of a top-two finish, while Montenegro and Denmark can both still qualify automatically ahead of their clash in Podgorica. However, if Montenegro and Denmark - both on 16 points,

three less than Poland - draw in Podgorica, Poland can qualify automatically with a win on Thursday. Otherwise, Poland face a potential group-decider at home to Montenegro in Warsaw on Sunday, when Denmark host Romania in Copenhagen.

Montenegro, led by Sevilla midfielder Stevan Jovetic and Atletico Madrid's Stefan Savic, are bidding to qualify for their first major tournament since independence in 2006.

No team can win Group 'I' on Friday when Croatia host Finland, Turkey entertain Iceland and Ukraine visit Kosovo with the top four teams separated by only two points. Group leaders Croatia and Iceland have 16 points each, while Turkey and Ukraine are both two points behind.

Turkey would be eliminated if they lost to Iceland, and Croatia win. Ukraine will be eliminated if they draw or lose, and both Croatia and Iceland win.

Croatia then travel to Ukraine for the last match on Monday, when Iceland host Kosovo and Turkey play at Finland.