

TIME AND US

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SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

SUNDAY

- OCTOBER, 15, 2017
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE

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

SUNSET SUNDAY:
05:59 PM
SUNRISE MONDAY:
06:38 AM

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

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

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GOOD GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY BENCHMARKS OF PRESENT GOVT: VEERI

MODI PRAISES CM NITISH KUMAR FOR BIHAR'S DEVELOPMENT

GOLD RISES ON FIRM GLOBAL CUES, FESTIVE SEASON BUYING

TON-UP BABAR AZAM, SHOAIB MALIK HELP PAKISTAN EASE PAST SRI LANKA

2 militants, civilian killed in Pulwama encounter, clashes

IGP hails Army for foiling infiltration bids, Police verifying Musa- LeT strategy

Srinagar, Oct 14: Two Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants were Saturday killed in an encounter that raged between forces and militants in Lassipora village of Litter area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district, Police said.

A civilian was also killed during the clashes that erupted following the killing of militants in the area.

Following the killing of two militants, the locals took to streets and protested against the killing of militants.

The protesters also pelted stones on forces who in return fired upon the protesters, which resulted into the killing of a civilian.

The slain civilian was identified as Gulzar Ahmad Mir of Allaypora village of Pulwama district



He had sustained bullet injury and was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital wherefrom he was referred to Srinagar's for treatment. However, the injured succumbed to his injuries on way to the hospital.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Range, Munir Ahmad Khan admitted the killing of a civilian in Pulwama. "One civilian was killed in Pulwama while another sustained injuries," he said.

He said that the injured civilian is undergoing treatment at SKIMS. "He was operated in the hospital and is stable," he said.

While addressing a news conference here, IGP informed reporters that two LeT militants were killed in Pulwama district in an hour long gunbattle today.

He identified the slain militants as Waseem Shah of Heff Shopian and Naseer Mir, son of Hameed of Litter. IGP also termed the killing of Waseem Shah as big success for the

See **Encounter...**Pg 02

No power can stop resolution of Kashmir issue: Rajnath

Bardoli (Gujarat): Union home minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said no power in the world can stop the government from resolving the Kashmir issue and hit out at Pakistan for its "impious" activities against India.

Singh said the NDA government has given a free hand to the Army to act against terrorists and give a befitting reply to any firing from across the border in Kashmir.

"I would like to say that nobody needs to be worried about Kashmir. No power in the world can stop us from resolving the issue," he said.

Addressing a gathering here in Surat district as part of the BJP's 'Gujarat Gaurav Yatra', Singh attacked Pakistan saying it sends terrorists into India and wants to break the country.

"Pakistan is our neighbouring state. Its name is 'Pak'-istan, but it regularly indulges in 'napaak' (impious) activities, tries to break India and sends terrorists into India," he said.

"Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried his best (for peaceful resolution of bilateral issues) considering that Pakistan is our neighbouring state. He even went to Pakistan breaking all protocol, but Pakistan is not refraining from its activities. This can't continue for long," he said.

The home minister said he has asked the Army to reply with bullets to Pakistani firings



on the Kashmir border instead of showing the "white flag" (of peace).

"We have given a free hand to the Army. I have said you are free to act against terrorists," Singh said, adding this has resulted in a "record" number of militants being killed in Jammu and Kashmir in 2016-17.

"We do not need to tell you the numbers. Sometimes it is one (militant) in a day or two or four or six. The jawans of our Army keep greeting them with 'Jai Sri Ram.' It has never happened before that militants have been killed in such a large number," the Minister said.

Singh recalled how a few months after the Modi government came to power in May 2014, See **Rajnath...**Pg 02

Braid Chopping:

CLASHES AND PROTESTS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF VALLEY

Srinagar, Oct 14: The fresh braid chopping incidents continue to spark protest while in Boniyar Uri area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district at least 7 persons suffered pellet injuries when police after taking custody of an alleged braid chopper used force to disperse protesters.

Reports said that the locals caught hold of a man whom they accused of cutting the braid of woman and thrashed him. Amid pro-freedom slogans, the protesters dragged the suspected braid chopper on road while police arrived on the spot and took his custody. The protesters resent police action and pelted stones while police fired tear-smoke shells and pellets to disperse them.

Witnesses told news agency CNS that nine people

See **Clashes...**Pg 02

Deepening her public outreach, Mehbooba convenes public redressal camp at Ramban

Also directs Div Com to ensure officers tour field areas regularly; releases Rs. 25 Lakh for Transformer Bank

RAMBAN, OCTOBER 14: Further deepening her massive public outreach programme, Chief Minister,



Mehbooba Mufti today visited Ramban to convene public grievances redressal camp in which scores of deputations

and hundreds of people from the hilly and far flung areas of the district apprised her of their problems.

The deputations came from the most hilly and far flung areas and raised issues like

See **Mehbooba...**Pg 02

Works get severely affected

JK'S VITAL DEPTTS, CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES LYING HEADLESS

Srinagar, Oct 14: Several departments and constitutional bodies are currently lying headless, resulting the work gets severely affected in them.

One of the vital departments is Regional Transport Office Kashmir that is lying headless despite having large public interface.

Farooq Ahmad Rather, Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir, was transferred on September 20 and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, J&K, against an available vacancy.

However, since than government has failed to appoint

See **Vital...**Pg 02

J-K passing through last phase of militancy, says Union minister Jitendra Singh

Jammu: Union minister Jitendra Singh said on Saturday that militancy in Jammu and Kashmir was in its "last phase" and that "militants are on the run".

"They (Militants) are on the run and are under tremendous pressure. I am sure that this is going to be the last phase of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir," he told reporters here.

Singh was replying to a volley of questions on the recent killings of militants in Kashmir Valley.

"Police and security forces are doing a commendable job. What is more praiseworthy is that the special operation group of J-K Police is cooperating and working shoulder



to shoulder in these operations," he said.

The minister said that the security forces had been successful in effecting a positive change in the security situation.

See **Jitendra...**Pg 02

GOVT RESPONSIBLE FOR PREVAILING POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY: DFP

'Braid cutting a well planned conspiracy not mass hysteria'

Srinagar, Oct 14: Expressing strong resentment over the prevailing political uncertainty, people's miseries, braid cutting, arrests, lockdown of educational institutions, the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) said despite tall claims of the so-called administration, the people feel scared even in their homes.

In a statement issued to KNS, a DFP spokesperson said the people's protest across valley against the attack on

See **DFP...**Pg 02

Anti-Corruption Cases:

Govt to take action against hostile witnesses under perjury

Turning hostile hampers investigation, deliverance of justice': Abdul Haq



Srinagar, Oct 14: Minister for Law and Justice, Abdul Haq on Saturday directed law officials to invoke perjury against officials or

private parties who turn hostile during trial of cases thus affecting the deliverance of

See **Govt...**Pg 02

ANGANWADI WORKERS DEMAND HIKE IN SALARIES

Srinagar, Oct 14: The Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Association (AWHA) on Saturday held a protest demonstration in Press Enclave Srinagar pressing for their demands.

The protest demonstration was led by Tasleema Subhan, president AWHA, Haseena Sofi, district president (AWHA) Islamabad and Aamina, General Secretary J&K, AWHA.

The workers were a hike

See **Demand...**Pg 02

26/11 attacks: India asked Pak foreign minister to leave, reveals Pranab book

New Delhi: Outraged by the 2008 Mumbai terror strike, India called visiting Pakistani foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi out of a press conference and asked him to "leave immediately", then external affairs minister and former president Pranab Mukherjee has revealed.

Mukherjee even offered an aircraft to take Qureshi home, the former president has written in the third volume of his autobiography, The Coalition Years 1996-2012, which was released on Friday.



At least 162 people were killed and more than 300 injured in the four-day siege of India's financial capital by

a group of terrorists from Pakistan-based outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba. One of the

See **India...**Pg 02

Locals, Congress protest as braid chopping incidents continue in Kashmir

Clashes erupt in Uri, scores injured

Srinagar, Oct 14: As the mysterious braid chopping incidents continued in Kashmir, the locals as well the opposition Congress on Saturday staged protest against the government's failure over tracing the culprits behind these incidents.

The braid chopping incidents were today reported in Boniyar area of Uri, in Sheeri area of Baramulla and Baderkoot area of Tangmarg.



According to the KNS correspondent, Naddem Kha-

waja, the braid of a woman

See **Congress...**Pg 02

COP KILLED IN MILITANT ATTACK

Kulgam, Oct 14: A police man was killed and two others including an Assistant Sub Inspector were injured after suspected militants attacked a police vehicle in South Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Police sources told news agency CNS that a security vehicle that had gone along with the PDP leader Abdul Majid Paddar was on way to Kulgam from Danew Kandimarg when militants fired

See **Cop...**Pg 02

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ENCOUNTER

forces. "The killing of Waseem who was affiliated with Lashkar and was active since the year 2014 would provide relief to the area," he said.

Khan told reporters that an operation was launched in Lasipora Litter yesterday after specific information about the presence of two LeT militants in a house, which belong to a slain militant who he identified as Pintu.

"Following the inputs, a joint operation was launched by Army, CRPF and Pulwama Police," he said, adding that the militants hiding in house were asked to surrender but they didn't and opened fire upon the forces.

"The fire was retaliated, ensuing the gunfight. The encounter was ended after one hour," he said, adding that following the encounter, magazines and other ammunition were recovered.

IGP further informed that 60 FIRs were registered against Waseem Shah who was killed today. "Among the 60 FIRs, there was a murder charges against him and recruiting the youth," he said.

Asked about the reports that the LeT and former Hizb commander Zakir Musa will jointly operate, IGP said that he will not deny the intelligence report. "We have received the inputs in this regard and we are verifying it," he said.

IGP Kashmir also hailed Army for foiling the number of infiltration bids along LoC. "Yes, the infiltration attempts along LoC have been increased. The number of infiltrated militants in Kashmir could have been swelled but all credit goes to Army who foiled various big attempts along LoC. At least 60-70 militants were on LoC while infiltration," he said.

He also informed that a few militants are infiltrating. "A big group that as per reports has entered in this part of Kashmir is being investigated," he said.

RAJNATH

he had given standing orders to the BSF DG to stop the practice of showing "white flags" to Pakistan in response to their firings at the Indo-Pak border.

Singh said he came to know about the practice after he talked to the BSF chief following news that five Indian citizens had been killed in firing by Pakistani personnel.

He (The BSF DG) "told me it is an old practice to show white flag in response to Pakistani firing... this is to tell them that we want peace. I asked the DG as to what was Pakistan response to our flags being shown 16 times.

"He said Pakistan did not show any white flag. On telephone I told him not to show white flag for the 17th time. And it is my standing order that while first bullet shall not be fired by India, if we receive even a single bullet, we will retaliate," he said.

Singh said had Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the country's first deputy prime minister who launched a satyagrah (in support of farmers) during the British rule from Bardoli in 1928, been allowed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to act freely, India would not have been facing the Kashmir issue.

"Sardar Patel got Junagad and Hyderabad to become part of the country. Had Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru not stopped him from also deciding the fate of Kashmir, then, I think, the Kashmir issue would not have been before us today," he said.

The BJP has launched the 'gaurav yatra' to galvanise support ahead of the assembly elections in Gujarat. A number of BJP leaders and Union ministers have taken part in the campaign and addressed rallies.

CLASHES

suffered injuries in the clashes including seven with pellets.

At Sheeri Baramulla also people protested against fresh braid chopping incident.

Reports from Lawaypora HMT area of Srinagar city said that two braid chopping incidents were foiled by two young girls. One of the girls has suffered injuries while reportedly confronting the burqa clad braid chopper. According to family members, the girl raised alarm and pushed back the chopper.

At Chana Mohalla Chattabal area of city, people hit to roads after the braid of a woman was chopped off by miscreants. People alleged that police have failed to expose the criminals responsible for crime.

MEHBOOBA

supply of drinking water, road connectivity, tourism development, upgradation of health and educational facilities and other related demands. They demanded that local youth be engaged by the companies working on mega projects in the district and taking of initiatives under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by these companies in their catchment areas. Legislators, Neelam Kumar Langeh; Vikar Rasool Wani and Shyam Lal Bhagat were present on the occasion.

The deputations in general thanked the Chief Minister for choosing to come to their place for listening to their grievances and problems.

Many deputations from Batote sought setting up of a Kendriya Vidyalaya in the town besides opening up of a women's college there and development of tourism, particularly water sports, in the area. They also demanded connecting Batote with Patnitop-Sudhmahadev ropeway to give the local tourism a boost. The deputations also demanded posting of adequate staff at the local hospital, development of a modern sanatorium at Batote in view of the climate, availability of veterinarians, development of horticulture and extension of paying guest scheme in tourism to the town. A deputation of contractors sought release of payments of flood restoration works done in the area.

A deputation from Sanasar sought improvement of Patnitop-Sanasar road, development of Sanasar tourist spot and opening of a bank branch there besides posting of adequate staff at the local schools.

Deputations from Gool sought pacing up of work at the local Degree College, opening of a Kendriya Vidyalaya in the town, strengthening of the local hospital, opening of JK Bank at Dharam and Ind. They also sought upgradation of Budhal-Ramban road besides improving facilities at Tatapani, Sangaldan in view of the tourist rush.

Deputations from Ramban town thanked the Chief Minister for visiting the place to know the difficulties of the people. A deputation of District Bar Association sought improvement in the Banihal-Ramban stretch of National highway, upgradation of judicial infrastructure at the district headquarters, setting up of a district jail and construction of a bridge over river Chenab in the town. They also sought

operationalization of the local trauma hospital and making the consumer court in the town functional.

A deputation of Ramban Beopar Mandal sought approval for the water supply augmentation project for the town, making more power available from the Bhagliar power project and setting up of a Girls Higher Secondary School at Maitra.

A deputation of social workers from Banihal sought setting up of a Women's Police Station there, construction of a playground in the town and curbing the drug menace. A deputation of residents of Chamalwas sought upgradation of local health centre besides upgradation of a local High School.

Many deputations from Mahu Mangat area sought upgradation of Gingni-Chakka and Magerkote-Dardehi roads besides relocation of a local army camp at Nachlana. They also demanded carving out a hydraulic division at Ramssoo and completion of work on the Dak Bungalow, Mahu.

A deputation from Kastigarh sought start of work on the Surnikund Water Supply Scheme besides completion of Kabaddi-Thalwa road.

Many other deputations also met the Chief Minister and it continued upto late in the night. These include various Civil Society groups, a deputation of local mediapersons, deputations from Tragam, Khari, Neel, Ukhral, Magerkote etc

Deputations from Rajgarh area sought construction of road from Samthi to Banjar More to connect it with Kastigarh road besides connectivity among all panchayats of the area. They also sought construction of road from Zangaldam to Galadhar, upgradation of health facilities and tapping the hydel potential of the area.

The Chief Minister, on spot, directed construction of road from Samthi to Banjar More and augmentation of health facilities in the area.

Mehbooba Mufti assured the deputations to look into their demands and take appropriate action. In many cases the Chief Minister gave on spot directions for the redressal of the problems. She directed start of work on the Dak Bungalow, Ramban and preparation of contour maps for the same.

The Chief Minister directed the Deputy Commissioner to make a survey of the schools in the district which need some additionalities for completion and operationalization. She also directed the Divisional Commissioner, Jammu to ensure that the district officers tour the far flung areas regularly, meet the people and assess their development needs.

Mehbooba Mufti also directed release of Rs. 25 lakh for setting up a transformer Bank in the district to be used during winters. She also directed identification of land for setting up Guitjar & Bakerwal Hostels at Banihal and Ramban. Besides, Mehbooba Mufti also directed establishment of a Blood Bank and exploring the possibility of setting up a small ICU at the Banihal hospital in view of the high rate of accidents on the National Highway.

The Chief Minister later left for Banihal where she would also be meeting people and listening to their problems.

Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Rohit Kansal; senior officers from the Chief Minister's Secretariat and Planning Department; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, M K Bhandari; IGP, Jammu zone, SDS Jamwal; heads of several Departments; Chiefs of many Engineering wings; Deputy Commissioner, Tariq Hussain Ganae and officers of District administration were present on the occasion.

It may be recalled here that the Chief Minister started her massive public outreach programme from Pulwama, Kupwara and Budgam during which hundreds of people apprised her about their problems and difficulties.

VITAL

RTO Kashmir resulting the work gets severely affected. "Rather Sahab has been asked also to look after this this department. But the work is getting affected. Important files are gathering dust," an official at the RTO Kashmir told KNS.

He said without RTO Kashmir, the officials were not able to ensure smooth functioning of the department.

Another important department is Irrigation and Flood Control Department Kashmir that is headless for the last two weeks.

The previous Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control got retired on September 30 and since than government has failed to appoint the new head of the department. "The dredging work has been severely affected as we don't have Chief Engineer who could issue orders for various important decisions," an official of the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, told KNS.

The official said that presently the Chief Engineer Public Health Engineering was holding the additional charge of Irrigation and Flood Control Department.

Sources believe that there is tussle between the PDP and BJP over appointment of Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Department. The BJP wants that Chief Engineer should be from Jammu while the PDP wants that a Kashmiri should be appointed there.

Similarly, several constitutional bodies are lying defunct. The State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC) is one of the bodies where vacancies have not been filled. In December 2016, SERC chairman's term expired while two members had already completed their term earlier.

The defunct statutory body means lack of regulation in power purchases and supply in the state.

The State Vigilance Commission (SVC) is without chairmen and members for the last many months, with "no work" being done in their absence.

In SVC, Kudeep Khoda, R K Jerath completed their four year term as its chief vigilance commissioner (CVC) and vigilance commissioner (VC), respectively, on February 21, 2017. Gou-sul-Nisa Jeelani attained her term as vigilance commissioner on March 31, this year.

JITENDRA

"Life span of every terrorist has been shorten," he said.

Replying to a question about Pakistan making desperate attempts to keep the pot of militancy boiling in the state, Singh said, "This speaks of their (Pakistan) helplessness and despair." "The longer Pakistan continues to remain in denial mode, the more it is risking its own security and its own existence," he added.

On the Supreme Court judgement on the issue of Rohingya immigrants, the minister said, "As far as the BJP and its government are concerned, we are very clear about it... The security concern is the prime concern for all of us including those of us who have stakes in Jammu and Kashmir, where you have a sizable population of Rohingyas."

He said it was "not the right interpretation" to say that

Rohingyas are not to be deported from India.

The Supreme Court "has said that there was security concern and at the same time, there is a human angle that is to be kept in the mind," he said, adding that "judicious view of the entire matter will be taken".

Reacting to the diktat of Majlis Shoura that boys and girls should not study together, the minister said, "Without intruding into anybody's religious prerogative, as far as we are concerned, we believe in policy of justice for all and appeasement to none."

"We live in a democratic country and heterogeneous society, where gender equality is inherent... I think concerned agencies will take cognisance of it," he said.

To a question on separatist leader Asiya Andrabi's photo being showcased in a government poster, he said, "The government has taken serious view of it and taken action also. It is condemnable."

Singh said the Congress was raising frivolous issues in Gujarat ahead of the assembly polls later this year.

"The Congress was totally demoralised (in Gujarat) and they are trying find various futile issues... When they flagged various futile issues during Rahul Gandhi's three-day visit to Gujarat, I told them this is childish behaviour, which do not mean anything to us," he said.

"As far as (BJP president) Amit Shah and his son are concerned, instead of the opposition's demand for a probe, his son has gone to court with a defamation suit and let them put their views in the court or prove it," Singh said.

DFP

the chastity of women is timely and justified. He said the claims of government that it has control over the situation have fallen flat.

Strongly criticising the administration, the spokesperson said by caging the pro-freedom leadership, the government declared victory for itself but didn't succeed in creating a wedge between people and the resistance leadership. He said the administration pushed the state into further anarchy and uncertainty.

The spokesperson strongly condemned the continuous detention of party chairman Shabir Ahmad Shah in Tihar jail and continuous detention and house arrest of leaders including Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Muhammad Yasin Malik, and dozens of others and said this all is done to suppress the voices of truth.

He said the state government is living in a fool's paradise if it thinks that by maligning the image of resistance leadership through media trial or other means, the people of Jammu Kashmir will be forced to accept the readymade solution. He said Kashmir dispute is a living reality which needs to be resolved through dialogue between all the stakeholders as violence is not solution to it. The people of Jammu Kashmir cannot be made to surrender for their rights nor can they be suppressed through military might.

Terming the cutting of braids while barging into homes as attack on the chastity, honour and dignity of women, the spokesperson said such situation is unacceptable to any nation. He said the authorities by failing to nab the culprits have exposed themselves that they are good for nothing.

Terming the government's assertion that braid cutting is a mass hysteria as direct attack on the honour of people of Kashmir, the spokesperson said it is done under a well planned conspiracy.

GOVT

justice. The Minister said this while reviewing functioning of court cases pertaining to Vigilance Organization and Crime Branch. The meeting was attended by Advocate General Jahangir Iqbal Ganai, Secretary Law, Abdul Majid Bhat, Director Vigilance SJM Geelani, IG Crime, Alok Puri, DIG Crime Ashkur Wani, SSP Crime Kashmir, Javid Ahmad Koul, Deputy Directors, Special Prosecuting Officers, Chief Prosecuting Officers of Crime and Vigilance Departments.

During the meeting it was observed that most of the cases are disposed off without conviction as either witnesses turn hostile or Investigating Officers and other government officials don't turn up in the courts during trial.

The Minister took serious note of the matter and directed the officials to proceed against such witnesses under perjury for hampering the process of investigation and the subsequent deliverance of justice. He said acting against such erring witnesses is important for deterrence and will ultimately help in delivery of justice. He said steps should be taken to ensure that all Prosecution witnesses appear in cases before the courts.

Law Minister also called for cooperation between different law enforcing agencies, investigation agencies, prosecution wing of Law Department and investigation wing of Police Department to ensure fool proof investigation and early disposal of cases in courts.

He said different departments should cooperate with the vigilance and crime departments with regard to producing documents, records, files and other data to the investigating agencies within a specific time so that investigation by these agencies is not hampered or delayed. He said in this regard an order will soon be issued to all the departments to ensure data is given to these agencies as soon as possible.

Minister asks the investigating agencies to work with extra zeal and vigorously to make their investigation foolproof by using modern scientific ways of investigation. He said a foolproof investigation will ensure that no corrupt official or any other criminal will go scot-free. He said if a criminal gets away owing to faults in investigation, she/he becomes a serial offender and a nuisance for the society.

During the meeting, Minister was informed that there are 503 cases pending in different anti-corruption courts of the state out of which 56 cases are at final stage while 391 cases at evidence stage and charge sheet has been produced in 56 cases. Minister said government is going to improve the criminal justice system in the state by fine tuning the investigation process, improving infrastructure and deputing dedicated Police officers for investigation.

He said it is the responsibility of the state government to ensure that justice is delivered to citizens and directed the officials of prosecution to ensure speedy disposal of criminal cases so that justice is delivered at earliest.

Abdul Haq said he will regularly monitor the performance of prosecutors, public prosecutors and other field staff and action will be taken against those who fail to ensure speedy trial or investigation of cases. Minister further stated that promotions will only be made based on performance of the officers.

DEMAND

in their pay from 3600 to 10000, Rs 2 Lakhs as retirement benefits like other states, and pension after retirement.

The workers also demanded that government should stop backdoor appointments of supervisors and the promotion of workers should be done on seniority basis.

INDIA

militants, Ajmal Kasab, was captured alive and hanged on November 21, 2012.

On the morning after the siege began on November 26, Mukherjee was informed that his Pakistani counterpart was at a press meet. Mukherjee interrupted the press conference through a journalist he knew and asked her to inform Qureshi that he wanted to talk to him urgently.

When Qureshi came on line, Mukherjee read out a note prepared by the foreign secretary.

"Mr Minister, no purpose will be served by your continuing to stay in India in these circumstances. I advise you to leave immediately. My official aircraft is available to take you back home. But it would be desirable if a decision is taken as quickly as possible," Mukherjee told the minister.

The BJP, then in the opposition, had blamed the UPA government's alleged soft stance towards Pakistan for the attacks though Islamabad denied any knowledge of the terror strike.

Mukherjee said the Pakistani high commission later informed him that Qureshi had expressed gratitude for the offer and that a Pakistani air force aircraft would take him back home.

Qureshi had excused himself from a dinner with Mukherjee on the evening the terror strike began "as he had scheduled an engagement with his country's high commissioner".

The Indian government, he said, had evidence that the terrorists came from Karachi port in a small vessel. They were dropped mid-sea where they captured an Indian fishing vessel and killed the crew before reaching the Mumbai coast.

Giving details of the aftermath of the attack, Mukherjee said the first call from a foreign country came from then US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, who was concerned about the fallout.

"The situation is grave. I do not believe in romanticising relations or indulging in any sort of adventurism but there is a limit to one's patience," Mukherjee told her.

Over the next three days, he spoke on phone to more than 100 foreign ministers across different time zones. "I didn't seek support from Israel since it carried the risk of isolating 54 Islamic countries that backed India," Mukherjee disclosed in the book.

He also shed light on the political developments post-26/11. On 29 November, a Congress Working Committee meeting was held to discuss the post-attack scenario.

At the meeting, P Chidambaram was "stridently vocal" against then home minister, Shivraj Patil, and wanted him to be replaced. Two days later, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called Mukherjee to his office and informed that Patil had resigned.

Singh said Congress president Sonia Gandhi had suggested Mukherjee's name as Patil's replacement but the PM advised her against it as the external affairs minister was handling a "warlike situation".

It was decided that Chidambaram would replace Patil.

CONGRESS

was chopped off in Boniyar area today. "The locals tried to catch the braid chopper," witnesses said, adding that the forces used tear smoke shells to disperse the locals while they were chasing the braid chopper.

Seven civilians were also injured after force used pellets against the locals, witnesses said.

Another braid chopping incident was reported from Sheeri area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. "The hair of a woman was chopped off in the area," the KNS correspondent, Manzoor Sheeri while quoting a senior Police official said.

According to the KNS correspondent, Mushtaq Ahmad, a fresh incident of braid chopping was also reported in Baderkoot area of Tangmarg today.

The locals following the incident took to streets and protested against such incidents and demanded authorities to nab the culprits.

Meanwhile, the locals at Nowpora area of Srinagar also staged protest against the growing incidents of braid chopping.

The protesting locals chanted slogans against the administration and Police. They said that the state administration has utterly failed to provide relief to the people over regarding the mysterious braid chopping incidents.

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) activists and leaders also staged a protest against the mysterious braid chopping incidents and asked the PDP-BJP coalition government to resign for failing to ensure the safety and security of the womenfolk.

The congress leaders chanted slogans against the current coalition government and demanded immediate end to the braid chopping incidents in Kashmir.

Congress leader, Shameema as per the KNS correspondent said that the administration has failed to nab the culprits behind these 'mischievous acts'.

She said that the current regime has no right to rule the people, who are feeling insecure even inside their homes. "The government must act against the braid choppers or should resign from the chair," she said.

Notably, over 100 braid chopping incidents were reported in Kashmir so far while the government has said that the steps have been taken to nab the culprits behind these acts.

Police has also formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the braid chopping incidents while it also announced a reward of Rs six lakhs for giving credible information about the braid chopper.

The Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti had also termed such incidents as an attempt to undermine the women dignity on the state and said that such attempts are aimed to create mass hysteria.

COP

upon it near Nandmarg.

Due to sudden attack, the driver of the vehicle lost control and it turned turtle. "A police constable Khurshid Ahmed was killed while Sub-Inspector Khurshid Ahmed Tak and Constable Ghulam Nabi were wounded," the official said. The deceased cop hails from Pahlul Kulgam. No militant outfit claimed the responsibility.

Engineers' delegation calls on FM

Dr Drabu assures redress of career progression issues, removal of pay anomaly, enhancement of FTA

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 14: A delegation of All J&K Engineering Graduates Coordination Committee called on Minister for Finance, Employment & Labour, Dr Haseeb Drabu here today and apprised him of the issues confronting the engineering fraternity in the State.

The delegation was led by Er Farooq Ahmed Ganie, President, J&K Civil Engineering Graduates Association and Er Firdous Ahad Bhat, President, J&K Mechanical Engineering Graduates Association.

The delegation sought Finance Minister's intervention in issues like approval of running grades (assured career progression), removal of pay anomaly/disparity at all levels and enhancement of fixed travel allowance from Rs 30 per month to Rs 3000—5000 per month.

The delegation also apprised the Minister about the menace of adho-



cism prevalent in the engineering departments and sought his intervention in redressing and removing pay disparity and bringing it at par with other professions such as Health and Animal Husbandry Departments.

The delegation also demanded implementation of "Running Grades" for engineering community. The del-

egation also brought in to the notice of the Finance Minister the issue of degradation of pay grades of all cadres in previous successive pay commissions and stressed that the engineers, being low paid professionals, should be treated equal among all professions as for as the wages and emoluments are concerned.

A joint memorandum of J&K Civil Engineering Graduates Association (J&K CEGA) and J&K Mechanical Engineering Graduates Association (J&K MEGA) was submitted to the Minister in this regard.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to the delegation and assured them of speedy redress of all their grievances, particularly implementation of "Running Grades (Assured Career Progression)" and removal of the "Pay anomalies/Disparities" and "Enhancement of FTA" etc.

The delegation also included the Executive and Guidance Council Members of both the associations including Er Basharat Ahmad Kawoosa, Er Ashaq Ahmad Ashaq, Er Shakeel-u-Rahman, Er Muzaffar Ahmad Jan, Er Ansar Hamid Sheikh, Er Fayaz Ahmad Ganie, Er Faisal Farooq, Er Umar Jan and Er Ajaz Ahmad.

Upgradation of infra under core sectors to ensure sustained dev: Mir Zahoor

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 14: Minister of State for Forest, Environment, Animal, Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and Cooperative, Mir Zahoor Ahmad today said that the present dispensation is committed



to ensure holistic development and measures are afoot to upgrade infrastructure under core sectors to achieve the goal of sustained development of the State.

The Minister said this during interacting with various public deputations during his extensive tour of various villages in Pampore Constituency after launching macadamization and other developmental projects in the area.

He said that the Mehbooba Mufti led Government has given top priority to provide better road facility to all habitations including remote and far-flung areas to ensure speedy and all-round development of all areas of the State. He said similarly, water and drinking water facility along with good health, education and power services are being ensured. The Minister said that the Constituency

has witnessed unprecedented development in all sectors during the tenures of former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed be it the construction of roads, opening of health and educational institutions, providing drinking water and irrigation facilities.

He said to promote saffron cultivation in the area a number of water pumps and sprinkle irrigation pumps have been constructed under the Saffron Mission. He said Degree College at Pampore and a large number of high and higher secondary schools have been opened in the Constituency to ensure increased access to quality education. He said AIMMS and Nursing College at Awantipora and upgradation of facilities at other health centres has ensured improved health care in the Constituency.

Govt committed to bring education at people's doorstep: Amitabh Mattoo

Concludes weeklong tour of Ladakh region

NOUBRA, OCTOBER 14: Advisor to Chief Minister, Professor Amitabh Mattoo today said that the Mehbooba Mufti led Government is committed to bring education at the doorstep of common man and various initiatives are already under implementation in this regard.

Prof. Mattoo, who is chairman 'Knowledge Initiative' Committee, was addressing peoples from various walks of life at Deskit Nubra in Leh. The function was also attended by Additional Secretary Higher Education, prominent educationists, members of civil societies of Nubra region and students of different educational institutions of the district.

On the concluding day of his weeklong tour to the Ladakh region, the Advisor underlined the aim of the visit as to address the problems of student fraternity in and to ensure creation of basic educational infrastructure along with deployment of required faculties in all educational institutions besides imparting skill development courses to both the teaching staff and students so that they can have access to quality education.

While seeking feedback from various stakeholders and



experts, Prof. Mattoo said that all constructive inputs would be translated to curve out a Vision Document for reorganization of education scenario that would in real terms lead the State and its future generations to overall development.

On the occasion, he appreciated the Education Minister, Syed Altaf Bukhari for his commitment towards improving the educational standard and infra in the State.

During the function at Deskit Nubra, Councillor Deskit Tsering Wangchuk and Councillor Turtuk Mehdi in sought immediate intervention

in filling up of the vacant posts of lecturers and other subject teachers at all the educational institutes in Nubra. Principal Degree College, Nubra also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the issues and demands of the education sector in the subdivision.

SDM Nubra, Sonam Norbu thanked the Prof. Amitabh Mattoo and entire team of Knowledge Initiative and hoped that their visit would prove beneficial for the region in strengthening the education system.

The civil society of Nubra put forth charter of demands that includes holding of pro-

fessional development training to upgrade the competency of teaching fraternity, capacity building workshops and exposure tours for teachers as well as students, vocational training courses in traditional knowledge, harnessing local human resources and talent, introduction of science and commerce streams in Higher Secondary School, construction of hostel and staff quarters, multipurpose hall, providing school bus and to address the issue of delay in conduct of examination and issuing of degree certificate and marks cards on priority.

Good governance, accountability benchmarks of present Govt: Veeri

ANANTNAG, OCTOBER 14: Minister for Revenue, Relief Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Disaster Management Abdul Rehman Veeri today said that Good governance, accountability and performance are the benchmark of present government.

The Minister was speaking at high level Revenue Conference of Revenue officers of Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian here.

The Conference was attended by Financial Commissioner Revenue Lokesh Jha, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Baseer Ahmed Khan, Settlement Commissioner Shahid Inayatullah, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Younis Ahmed Malik, ADCs, ACRs, SDMs, and Tehsildars of these districts.

He also said that government is contemplating many steps to make the revenue department people friendly and accountable.

The Minister said that serving people is the top priority of the present dispensation. To ensure people do not face any inconvenience for getting their revenue related issues resolved, the Minister asked the officers to ensure the presence of Patwaris in their respective Halqas.

Minister directed the DCs of Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian to establish Grievance



Redressal Cells at the district headquarters level.

Veeri further said that the aim of establishing grievance cells besides redressing revenue related grievances is to bring more efficiency in the working of the Department.

He also said that it will help in monitoring the progress of officials to adhere to timelines in issuance of certificates and revenue related documents.

The Minister said that rationalization of Patwar Halqas will go a long way in easing out the process of seeking revenue extracts from Patwaris. He also said that government is contemplating many steps to make the revenue department people friendly and accountable.

He again reiterated the commitment of the Government to ensure transparent, accountable administration

in the state.

Mr Veeri said that Revenue Officials have an important role to look after the functioning of the different departments and implementation of various schemes envisaged to provide succor to the common man.

The Minister stressed on the officers to call for regular meetings of different departments supplemented by field visits to ensure smooth functioning of these departments on the expectations of the general public.

For better revenue management, the Minister directed for framing of timeline for completion of Jamabandi at Tehsil level. Veeri impressed on the officers to fix the target of Jamabandi to every concerned Revenue official.

He also asked them to have the periodical review of the preparation of Disaster man-

agement and formulate inventory of tools, boats, boatmen, high rise buildings in their respective areas.

He also assured the Revenue officers of taking all steps for their smooth career progression.

The Senior Officers of the Department also shared their experiences with the Tehsildars and had an interactive session regarding the technicalities of Revenue matters. Veeri also said that Digitization of settlement is the need of the hour as it will curtail down the frequency of litigations.

The DCs detailed the minister about the achievements made under preparation of jamabandi, girdawaris, number of revenue estates measured under settlement system, extent of Kahcharia and measures taken for disaster mitigation.

Altaf Bukhari takes stock of sports infrastructure in Amira Kadal constituency

Announces sports ground, model football school, community hall

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 14: Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today conducted extensive tour of Amira Kadal constituency and took stock of sports infrastructure being made available for the people and especially for the students. He also listened to the grievances of the people and assured for their timely redressal.

The Minister was accompanied by Secretary, State Sports Council, Waheed Ur Rehman Para, Secretary, Youth Services and Sports, Hilal Ahmad Parray, District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Director School Education, Kashmir, Dr G.N Itoo, Zonal President, Amira Kadal Constituency, Mohammad Ashraf Dar, officials from Youth Services and Sports and other sectoral officers.

During his visit to Rawalpura Rangreth, Bukhari announced that the sports ground will be established at an identified land where the children will be provided with facilities for multiple games.

On the occasion, a delegation of the residents of the area met the Minister and apprised him about the drainage related problems which has caused inconvenience to the residents. Promising the redressal of their issues, Bukhari said that development proj-



ect for drainage in the area already stands allotted and the work on the same will be executed soon.

On his visit to Government Girls High School, Rawalpura, the Minister announced that the school will be converted into Model Football School. He also announced that the community hall will be established in the area which will cater to the needs of the people living in the area. After visiting the nearby temple that lies besides the school, the Minister said that it is our responsibility to take care of this temple and directed the concerned officials to install lights and take care of beautification of temple.

At Hari Nambal ground in Natipora, where the work for the develop-

ment of ground is ongoing, the Minister announced Rs. 2 lakh for the construction of room for the sports academy.

While visiting Khal, Rambagh, Bukhari directed the officials to install high mask lights in the ground and also directed them to make a bore well for the ground. He also said that leveling of ground will be done besides making track for jogging.

Bukhari also visited Bakshi Stadium, Gindun Stadium and Polo Ground where he directed officials to install lights and take proper care of cleanliness of the grounds. He also directed the officials to mark a proper boundary of Polo Ground where in various vehicles have been kept from some time.

On his visit to Synthetic Turf Football Stadium at TRC, the Minister announced that the entrance area of the stadium will be macadamized and also directed the officials to remove the nearby encroachment. He also said that the football tournament to be organized for Amira Kadal constituency will be played in this stadium.

The Minister said that the majority of the public parks and grounds in Srinagar fall in Amira Kadal constituency and there is a need to develop these places so that the large population of children can be benefited from them. He praised State Sports Council for their commendable work in restoration of grounds after 2014 floods.

Lal Singh for creating awareness on importance of tree plantation

JAMMU, OCTOBER 14: Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment, Choudhary Lal Singh today inspected the plantation drive launched on national highway along Samba-Kathua stretch and its peripheral areas.

He asked the forest functionaries to personally monitor the ongoing plantation drive and take good care of the saplings in their respective jurisdictions. He stressed on covering all road side strips, forest compartments and open spaces.

The Minister asked the Social Forestry Department to launch massive campaign to spread awareness on the need and importance of plantation among the general masses. He asked the officers to grow seasonal and fruit plants in all the nurseries to meet the demand of trees for next monsoon. He said that Government is planning to cover all the left out open spaces with green gold, adding that instructions have been issued to the Forest functionaries of the state to develop nurseries with seasonal and ornamental plants to meet the target of planting two crore plants during next year monsoon.

Meanwhile Choudhary Lal Singh warned the functionaries against any laxity in protection of forests and forest land. "Strict action under the Forest Protection Act will be taken if any officer of the Forest and its allied department is found involved in encouraging encroachment on Forest land", he asserted.

The Minister asked the officers of different wings of the department to work in coordination to facilitate effective implementation



of schemes so that benefits reach to the targeted populace. He exhorted upon the department to further intensify their efforts for increasing green cover and meeting the requirements of the people especially in rural areas.

Later, a deputation of families of Gujjars displaced during Kargil conflict from Ramgarh area and presently settled in temporary sheds at Rakh Broofian of Vijaypur met the Minister and sought permanent rehabilitation at safer place.

Interacting with them Choudhary Lal Singh said that the government is committed to provide decent place for their proper rehabilitation. He said that for this purpose instructions have been issued to the District Development Commissioner Samba for identification of State land in Vijaypur and its adjoining areas. He assured that the displaced families would be rehabilitated properly under revenue department norms.

DAILY
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J&K

BENEFIT OF DOUBT

The Allahabad High Court verdict acquitting Rajesh Talwar and Nupur Talwar of the charge of murdering their 14-year-old daughter Aarushi and domestic worker Hemraj in May 2008 is not merely an indictment of the Central Bureau of Investigation Special Court that sentenced them to life in 2013; it exposes the shoddy investigation by the Noida police in the first few days after the double murder, and hints at the lack of probity even in the way the CBI handled the case. The Bench terms some witnesses as "planted", and concludes that circumstances indicating that someone else could have committed the crime had been ignored. At one point it even observes that there was "clinching evidence" about the presence of outsiders in the Talwar residence on the fateful night. It is in keeping with the see-saw nature of the investigation that the trial court's findings — that the dentist couple committed the crime, that they shifted Hemraj's body to the terrace, dressed up the crime scene and hid the weapons — now lie in tatters. The Talwar trial is illustrative of the vast gulf between public perception, now lamentably exemplified in speculative media coverage and social media frenzy, and courts of law that go by evidence and reason. However, the facts and circumstances were such that anyone would have been torn between blaming the parents and sympathising with them. It did not help their case that the murders took place in their home. The claim that they were fast asleep while Aarushi was being killed in the very next room and the body of Hemraj was being moved to the terrace did stretch credulity.

In the end, they have got the benefit of doubts that surfaced during the probe and the trial. Usually, in a case based on circumstantial evidence the court looks for a cogent narrative pointing to guilt, and will not treat suspicion as proof. Few would dispute the fact that the investigation was botched up. The crime scene was unprotected. Hemraj's body was not found for a whole day. Three associates of Hemraj were suspects, but there was not much evidence to proceed. A DNA report implicating one of them, Krishna, was dismissed as a typographical error. To be fair to the CBI, it did want to close the case for want of evidence, but was forced by the court to pursue the prosecution. At the end of the appellate stage, it is difficult to say whether the case should never have gone to trial or that it was desirable that the entire evidence underwent scrutiny at two levels. Acquittal in a murder case is an injustice of sorts. It either means the state has failed to bring home the guilt of the accused or that it prosecuted the wrong people. Those exonerated will naturally feel vindicated, but the perception of justice having been done is limited to the accused and their well-wishers. It is difficult to ignore the fact that the culprits who murdered Aarushi are yet to be nailed and duly held to account.

The house on Primrose Hill

► Ananya Vajpeyi

On October 14, 1956, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism during a massive public ceremony held in Nagpur, at a place thereafter named Deeksha Bhoomi. He took Buddhist vows in order to reject his Hindu birth at the very bottom of the caste order, and because, as he declared: "I like the religion that teaches liberty, equality and fraternity." More than 400,000 people, most of them born Dalit, underwent the conversion, along with him, on that historic day 61 years ago.

The blue plaque in the London borough of Camden, on Primrose Hill, No. 10 King Henry's Street is a townhouse that bears a round blue plaque, announcing its historical significance: "Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, 1891-1956, Indian crusader for social justice, lived here 1921-22". On an evening in late September as I stood on the sidewalk looking at the building — bought by the government of Maharashtra in 2015, but yet to be opened to the public as a museum — I thought about what that house represented.

Ambedkar lived there as a boarder during his final years as a graduate student. He was over 30, married since he was 17, with a young wife and a small son back home in Bombay. He and his wife had lost two children in infancy. He had resigned his position as the Military Secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda, breaking a bond of 10 years of service in exchange for a scholarship to study abroad from 1913 to 1917. This displeased both the Baroda Maharaja as well as other powerful persons in Bombay, but Ambedkar was determined to complete his studies overseas, even at his own expense.

From 1918 to 1920 he taught political economy at Sydenham College, and saved money to return to England. He was now racing to complete a doctorate at the London School of Economics — his second PhD after the one he got at Columbia University in New York — as well as a law degree at Gray's Inn, London, before he ran out of time and funds.

According to his biographer Dhananjay Keer, Ambedkar lived a frugal, penurious life in those years, braving hunger, poverty and loneliness to gain extraordinary educational qualifications. He read voraciously from morning to night at the British Museum Library, the India Office Library and the University of London Library. He was forced to borrow money from his Parsi friend Naval Bhatena. After he had earned his American and British degrees, he proceeded to Bonn, in Germany, to study even further. Only when he had exhausted his savings in 1923 did he head back to India, where his double career in law and politics began in earnest.

The thought of the hardship that Ambed-



kar withstood to equip himself with impressive academic titles brought me back to the very same house again the next morning. It struck me that the house memorialises not just another passage in Ambedkar's early life, but rather, his profound desire for freedom. He wanted freedom from caste, from humiliation, from racism, from colonialism — from every kind of discrimination whether in India, America or England, that he had experienced throughout his life.

Knowledge sets you free
"Savidya yavimuktaye," runs an ancient Sanskrit verse fragment that Indian schools and universities sometimes use as their motto — "whatever liberates, that is knowledge". I have always understood Ambedkar's revolt against caste as a quest for equality and justice. I perceived his drive to become more educated than his privileged, upper caste, nationalist elite contemporaries as an effort to overcome the stigma of his 'untouchable' birth. But for the first time I saw that underlying his crusade to annihilate caste, including through hard-won personal achievements, was a fundamental desire for freedom.

The search for freedom can take many forms that need not be overtly 'political'. In a piece in The New York Times on September 15, the Arab writer Mansoor Adayfi, a former detainee at Guantánamo, describes how prisoners longed to catch a glimpse of the sea all around them, that they were debarred from seeing. Adayfi's essay is moving in how it conveys the human longing for freedom, which seems to run even deeper than our cultural identities and political circumstances, to be hardwired into our very souls.

After years of denying prisoners the sight of the sea, camp authorities took down the barriers for fear of a hurricane approaching Cuba. For a few precious days, there was an eruption of art, poetry and creative expression among the inmates. On seeing the reactions of his fellow prisoners, many of them Afghans who had never seen the

sea, Adayfi understood that "the sea means freedom no one can control or own, freedom for everyone. Each of us found a way to escape to the sea."

Closer home, the Tamil novelist Perumal Murugan, hounded by right-wing critics for writing about his own Gounder community, has penned a number of poems. Some of these are addressed to the local deity, Madhorubagan (Ardhanaarishwara, a half-male, half-female fusion of Shiva and Parvati). Others are themed on the five elements (pancha-bhuta) as also the landscapes, flora and fauna of his native Kongu Nadu, a part of the broader Tamil region. His use of the dialect of this area heightens the authentic flavour of his poetry. The palm tree (Palmyra or Toddy Palm, panai maram in Tamil) is for him emblematic of home and roots.

In a decision revealing a keen and canny aesthetic imagination, Murugan has gifted his poems to the Carnatic vocalist T.M. Krishna, who has been tuning and releasing them of late. The singer gives a voice to his writer friend who has had to endure censorship and intimidation to the extent of committing "authorial suicide" for a period of time.

Together they protest the repeated attack on the freedom of expression — the deadly threat that took the life of Gauri Lankesh. Krishna's gesture of solidarity beautifully breaks the silence, amplifying Murugan's call for free speech and his assertion of the right to dissent in a democracy.

In the course of an on-going engagement with Krishna's music and ideas, I have been following Murugan's poetry in translation. His viruttams (shlokas in Tamil) express anguish to his beloved deity Madhorubagan, asking for protection and acceptance. His kirtanas to the elements celebrate the very land and language that have inspired and nurtured him. He takes comfort in nature and verse as he experiences alienation and injustice from his fellow caste-members

and their bellicose backers in the Hindu Right.

One of Murugan's most vivid compositions is a kirtana to the wind, "Kaatru". Krishna has set this to the winged raga Nalinakanti, conveying the swift, airborne quality of the subject. The poem is about the unbridled force of the wind, that can never be tamed or controlled, that goes where it pleases, touches whom it likes, wipes away boundaries and divisions, tears down walls and obstructions, and sweeps across the earth unimpeded. Murugan's words, carried aloft on Krishna's tune, make the wind a metaphor for the freedom that is denied to him as a writer in an illiberal dispensation.

The wind is nothing other than life's breath — without breath, as without freedom, there is only death. "You are a being of untold freedom," writes Murugan, sings Krishna. The yearning of the censored and banned artist Perumal Murugan — of every person whose freedom is snatched away, regardless of her story or situation — flows perfectly in Krishna's voice, imbued with his special note of compassion. You can hear the unmistakable timbre of empathy that Krishna brings to bear on art and politics alike.

Like knowledge for Ambedkar, like the sea for Adayfi, like the wind for Murugan, the longing for freedom is synonymous with our very existence as feeling, thinking human beings. We must seek that freedom, and to survive, we must find it, whatever the impediments in our path. To deny us freedom is to deny us life. At the house on Primrose Hill, I could see through the window a banner hanging inside. It carried Ambedkar's declaration explaining why he chose Buddhism over Hinduism: "I like the religion that teaches liberty, equality and fraternity." Freedom is first on his list.

Ananya Vajpeyi is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at Cambridge University

THE LEGAL MESSAGE

► Gulika Reddy

In the Supreme Court's decision on Wednesday, criminalising sex between a man and his minor wife, while the court refrained from adjudicating on the larger issue of marital rape, its judgment made reference to the Justice J.S. Verma committee recommendations that explained why the exemption of marital rape must be removed, and that a marital or other relationship is not a defence or justification for a lower sentence.

Rooted in outdated notions Consider this: 2.6 billion women live in countries, including India, where marital rape is not a crime. Millions of others live in countries including the U.S., where marital rape is treated differently from other forms of rape. The unjust treatment of marital rape as an exemption stems from three common law notions: marriage constitutes a contract, which includes the woman's irrevocable consent to sex; a woman is the property of her husband, and rape is a violation of a man's property rather than a crime against women; and after marriage, a woman's identity becomes part of her husband's. Despite the outdated, problematic origins of this exception, the Indian government has consistent-

ly resisted a change in the law.

The gang rape of a 23-year-old student in Delhi in 2012 resulted in an amendment to the criminal legislation in India, including the definition and punishment of rape. However, the exemption of marital rape was retained, despite recommendations by the Justice Verma committee. Lawmakers reacted to its recommendation arguing: "If marital rape is brought under the law, the entire family system will be under great stress." A few years later, we face the same debate as the Delhi High Court hears a petition seeking the inclusion of marital rape under the existing rape law. This inclusion too is being rejected by the government. Counterintuitively, it is also being rejected by some women's rights activists, for completely different reasons. The government thinks it will be used as a tool to harass men, and that it will affect the institution of marriage — an argument that places greater significance on marriage than women's rights.

Ignores realities Women's rights lawyer Flavia Agnes has other objections. She does not "believe in placing rape on a pedestal within the hierarchy of crimes within a marriage. For a woman who is facing domestic violence, it is equally violating if her skull is fractured, her spine is broken,



her cornea is damaged, liver is injured, or her vagina is penetrated forcefully. What women object to is the violence involved." She also explains that while sexual violence is "very common, it is never in isolation", and that "those who isolate penetrative sexual violence within marriage, and place it on a pedestal, are oblivious of the women's social realities." Feminist researcher Sahla Aroussi made a similar critique in a recent publication where she examines sexual violence in conflict and argues that a narrow focus on sexual violence ignores the multiplicity of suffering faced by women and can result in inadequate attention being paid to their other needs. Ms. Agnes and Ms. Aroussi are right

within a marriage.

The challenge of sticky socio-cultural norms is not unique to India. The experience in countries such as the U.S. where marital rape is criminalised shows that despite changes in the law, the patriarchal notion that marriage overrides the legal and sexual autonomy of a woman still exists. In 2015, U.S. President Donald Trump's counsel Michael Cohen expressed his ignorance about the legal possibility of a man raping his wife. "You cannot rape your spouse," he said. "There's very clear case law." He later corrected himself, but his comment has sparked conversation about why he made this error. Although all 50 states had enacted laws against marital rape by 1993, almost half the States still treat it differently from rape outside of marriage. In some states, marital rape is a chargeable offence only if the perpetrator uses or threatens to use physical force. In others, proof of marriage is often an easy way to reduce or mitigate the consequences of the offence. These kinds of legal distinctions legitimise the perception among law-enforcement agencies that cases of marital rape should be treated as less serious than rape outside of marriage.

Towards justice, prevention These perceptions among law-en-

forcement agencies suggest that while it is important to work towards facilitating access to justice for victims, it is crucial to simultaneously focus on preventive measures. This view was reflected in a UN multi-country study on violence in Asia-Pacific which recommended that strategies must focus on structural factors that prevent the incidence of rape, rather than focussing only on strengthening response mechanisms. Since gender socialisation begins young, the study also speaks of the need to focus interventions on children and adolescents. This socialisation is reinforced through family and societal institutions, popular culture and media. Social learning psychologists have found that a disrupted home environment contributes to violent, anti-social behaviour of a child. Therefore, in addition to sensitising law enforcement authorities whose attitudes are merely symptomatic of widely-held beliefs about women and gender roles, we need to work with children, parents and the larger community to ensure marital rape is condemned, not condoned.

Gulika Reddy, a human rights lawyer and Founder & Director of Schools of Equality, is a Dubin Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School

Modi praises CM Nitish Kumar for Bihar's development

PATNA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated the efforts of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar towards development of the state on Saturday and said the progress of eastern India is the Centre's topmost priority.

"The commitment of Nitish Kumar towards the progress of Bihar is commendable. The Centre attaches topmost importance to the development of eastern India," Modi said at the centenary celebrations of Patna University in Patna.

Modi said when the country celebrates the 75th Independence Day in 2022, he wants to see Bihar standing among the list of prosperous states. Modi also said that many top level



officials of civil services are students of Patna University.

"In Delhi, I interact with so many officials, many of whom belong to

Bihar," he said.

"I consider it my honour to visit Patna University and be among the students. I bow to this land of Bihar. This university has nurtured students who have contributed greatly to the nation." He also urged universities to move from conventional teaching to innovative learning.

He said that Bihar is blessed with both 'Gyaan' and 'Ganga.' "This land has a legacy that is unique," he said.

Modi is to later lay the foundation stones for several projects, including four sewerage projects under the Namami Gange Programme and four national highway projects in Mokama area of Patna district.

Bombay HC sets aside NMIMS student's expulsion saying FIR is not enough reason

The Bombay High Court quashed an order passed by a college expelling a computer engineering student, observing that an FIR cannot be treated as "gospel truth" and cannot be a reason for expulsion.

A division bench of Justices B R Gavai and S K Shinde quashed and set aside an August 5 order passed by Mukesh Patel School of Technology Management and Engineering College affiliated to Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) expelling the 21-year-old student.

The order expelling the student was passed after an FIR was lodged against him in June for allegedly raping and cheating a girl under the false pretext of marriage.

The student approached the high court challenging the institute's order on the ground that he was not given an opportunity to put forth his case.

The bench earlier this week after hearing the parties concerned concluded that the institute had admittedly acted upon the FIR lodged against the petitioner and expelled him without holding any enquiry.

"In other words, the petitioner has been punished and kept away from pursuing further studies without a hearing given to him.

Thus, the order of the institute was in violation of principles of natural justice," the court said. "We are also of the view that, registration of a crime cannot be taken as a gospel truth and held out to be a foundation to expel the petitioner," it noted.

The bench said the petitioner had not indulged in illegal activities in the campus of the institute.

"No doubt, the offence registered against the petitioner is serious in nature, however, the fact remains that the institute expelled the petitioner merely on the ground that FIR is being registered against him by the complainant who is no way concerned with the institute," it said. "In our view, if the impugned orders are not quashed, would certainly harm his career, which cannot be compensated in terms of money or otherwise. The petitioner cannot therefore be made to suffer the consequences merely on the basis of the allegations made against him and that too, before trial," the court said. The bench while quashing the order directed the institute to admit the petitioner to resume his studies and condone any deficiency in attendance from the time the order of expelling him was passed till date.



Was Sonia Gandhi considering Manmohan Singh's replacement in 2012

NEW DELHI: Was Congress president Sonia Gandhi considering a replacement of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2012, about two years before the general elections? Then finance minister Pranab Mukherjee says that after a meeting with her on June 1 that year, he returned with a "vague impression that she might wish" to consider Manmohan Singh as the UPA's presidential nominee. In the third volume of his autobiography, The Coalition Years, Mukherjee has written that at the meeting Gandhi had a "frank" discussion with him on a range of issues, including the functioning of the government and the Prime Minister's Office, ways to improve the UPA's image, the apparent distance between the party and the government and the lack of pro-activeness within the UPA, the ruling coalition. "I thought that if she selected Singh for the presidential office, she may choose me as the prime minister. I had heard a rumour that she had given this formulation a serious thought while on a holiday

in the Kaushambi Hills," Mukherjee says in his autobiography that was released on Friday. At that time the UPA government was facing severe criticism for what political adversaries and a section of political commentators called a "policy paralysis" leading to economic downslide. The UPA's image had also taken a battering following a string of corruption scandals. Mukherjee, in his autobiography, has made no bones about his prime ministerial ambitions. In 2004, after Gandhi had declined the PM's post, he notes in his memoir, the prevalent expectation was that he would be the next choice for PM. Referring to media reports at that time about his unwillingness to work under Manmohan Singh, his junior when he was the finance minister, Mukherjee writes, "The fact was that I was reluctant to join the government and informed Sonia Gandhi accordingly. She, however, insisted that I should join the government since I would be vital to its functioning...." When the

government was being formed, he was "absolutely clear" that he didn't want the finance portfolio "since Manmohan Singh and I held different views on economic issues". In the run up to the 2007 presidential election, when Mukherjee's name started doing the rounds, Gandhi called him to say that it was difficult for her to spare him as he was a strong pillar in the government and in Parliament. She was reluctant five years later, too. "Pranabji, you are most eminently suited for the office, but you should not forget the crucial role you are playing in the functioning of the government." Gandhi, however, changed her mind later after Mamata Banerjee and Mulayam Singh Yadav addressed a press conference to declare their presidential nominees—APJ Abdul Kalam, Manmohan Singh and Somnath Chatterjee. A day after their press conference, Gandhi decided to nominate Mukherjee who enjoyed good personal equations with leaders across party lines. And he proved it again as both Banerjee and Yadav relented later.

123 Amaravati farmers to visit Singapore, learn business practices



HYDERABAD: Nearly 25,000 farmers who gave up more than 35,000 acres of land to the Andhra Pradesh government for construction of new capital city Amaravati might not be able to see the area's transformation in the near future courtesy the slow progress of development.

However, at least some of them will soon get an idea of what their capital city will look like. The Andhra Pradesh government has selected as many as 123 farmers from Amaravati capital region and is sending them to Singapore on a four-day tour.

According to sources from the chief minister's office, the trip is aimed at making

farmers learn the best practices in business and entrepreneurship. The farmers will leave in three batches — the first batch will depart on October 30 under the auspices of state urban development minister P Narayana and Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) managing director Cherukuri Sridhar.

The last batch is expected to leave in the last week of November. However, it is not a 'free' trip for the farmers. While the entire expenditure for accommodation, food and tour within Singapore city — which comes to around Rs 30,000 per head — will be borne by the APCRDA, the selected farmers have to bear the to-and-fro flight expenses, besides visa and insurance charges that amount to around Rs 25,000. "If it is a free trip, all 25,000-odd farmers will come forward and it will be too big a burden on the government to take them to Singapore," CRDA media advisor A Chandrasekhar Reddy said. Srinivas Rao Damini, a 52-year-old farmer, said spending Rs 25,000 was not a big deal compared to the experience they would gain.

Critics, however, said the government was trying to divert attention from inordinate delay in Amaravati's construction.

Denied natural justice by government in solar case: Oommen Chandy

KOCHI: Former Kerala chief minister Oommen Chandy, who is facing a probe in connection with the multi-crore solar panel scam, on Saturday alleged that he was being denied natural justice by the CPI(M)-led LDF government in the case.

Chandy said he has not been provided with a copy of the report submitted to the state government by Justice G Sivarajan Commission which probed the scam.

The scam relates to a fraudulent company collecting money from people by leveraging its connections with top government officials. The senior Congress leader said he would file an application before Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan seeking a copy of the report, if it was not provided to him under relevant sections of the Right to Information Act (RTI).

Soon after the government ordered a probe into the scam on October 11, Chandy had moved an application before the state Chief Secretary seeking a copy of the report on the scam under the relevant provisions of the



RTI Act. "Haven't got the report so far. It is denial of natural justice," Chandy, who is preparing for a legal battle against the government on the issue, told reporters here.

Chandy and other Congress leaders have said they would challenge the decision of the CPI(M)-led LDF government to order a vigilance probe into the scam. The government had

also decided to launch a probe by a special investigation team against Chandy, former ministers Aryadan Mohammed and Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan after registering a case against them in connection with the scam.

Two former congress MLAs -- Thampanoor Ravi and Benny Benhanan -- have also been brought

under the ambit of the probe.

The commission was appointed by the previous Chandy government after allegations surfaced about duping of several people of crores of rupees by the prime accused, Saritha Nair and Biju Radhakrishnan.

Announcing the probe, chief minister Vijayan had said a criminal case would be registered and "the SIT will probe allegations of rape levelled by Saritha against some politicians in her letter dated July 17, 2013".

Radhakrishnan, who was home and vigilance minister in the Chandy cabinet, had in order to protect the former chief minister "illegally" used police officers under him to "influence" the case, Vijayan had said.

According to the commission, a vigilance case should be registered against former power minister Aryadan Mohammed, as he had helped Saritha's Team Solar illegally.

Some Congress state ministers, MPS and MLAs were named by Saritha in the letter when she was behind bars in connection with the case.

BJP's Varun Gandhi slams Election Commission, calls it a 'toothless tiger'

HYDERABAD: BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Friday termed the Election Commission as a "toothless tiger" which, he said, has never derecognised any political party for not submitting poll expenditure details within the stipulated time.

Gandhi also said political parties spend a lot on poll campaign, denying opportunity to people from humble background to contest elections. His remarks come even as the BJP is under opposition attack for "pressuring" the Election Commission (EC) to not declare elections to the Gujarat Assembly with those for Himachal Pradesh legislature. The Congress has accused the BJP of using "shameless pressure tactics" with the EC so it could woo the voters in Gujarat with last-minute sops. "One of the biggest problems is the problem of the Election Commission which is really a toothless tiger. Article 324 of the Constitution says it (EC) controls and supervises elections. But does it really do that? "It does not have the power to



file cases once elections are over. It has to go to the Supreme Court to do so," Varun Gandhi said while delivering a lecture on "Political Reforms in India" at the NALSAR University of Law here.

He said the poll panel has never derecognised any political party for not filing the poll expen-

diture report on time.

"Though all political parties file late returns, only one political party belonging to the late PA Sangma (NPP) was derecognised for not filing returns on time, and the commission revoked the same a day after it filed the expenditure report," said Gandhi who represents Sultan-

pur seat in Uttar Pradesh.

He said the budget allocated for the poll panel for the 2014 Lok Sabha election stood at Rs 594 crore while there are 814 million voters in the country.

In contrast, the budget was double in Sweden which has a voter base of seven million, he said.

Gandhi acknowledged the excessive influence of money power in the electoral system and cited some examples.

He said it has become virtually impossible for people from poor and middle class background to contest elections to Parliament and state assemblies.

Noting that political parties spend large amounts of money on poll campaign, the BJP leader said, "Technically, an MLA (candidate) can spend between Rs 20 and Rs 28 lakh and an MP (aspirant) Rs 54-Rs 70 lakh. But you are not told that political parties spend unlimited amounts on elections...It is a skewed form of political expenditure which ensures that no middle class or poor people can fight elections anymore".

He expressed confidence that political parties will inevitably move towards transparency.

"...It may take five years...It may take 10 years...I am very optimistic," Gandhi added.

RSS leader wants balanced debate on firecrackers, says not all spread pollution

BHOPAL: Not all crackers spread pollution and the debate on fireworks should be balanced, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's general secretary Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi said on Saturday, in response to a Supreme Court ban on the sale of firecrackers in the National Capital Region during Diwali. Responding to a question at the end of a two-day RSS working committee meet, Joshi said no "extreme" decision should be taken about Diwali, which will be celebrated on October 19 this year.

"We have been saying there should be no pollution and environment should be protected. We are not against a ban on pollution-creating crackers. But this doesn't mean all crackers come under this category," he said.

"This festival of joy has been being celebrated in our society for such a long time. We light earthen lamps.

Tomorrow some will say there are problems with earthen lamps also. So there should be a debate in a balanced way," he added.

The Supreme Court's ban on the sale of crackers has received a lukewarm response, with many saying the industry will be badly hit and that fireworks were an integral part of the celebrations of the Hindu festival. But environmentalists have welcomed the decision, saying the ban will help improve the quality of air in the Capital.

Virtual 'humans' can better identify PTSD

A virtual interviewer is more likely to make people open up about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as anonymity with social connection helps patients reveal more about their mental health symptoms, a study has found.

Soldiers who have experienced combat can develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which includes disturbing thoughts, feelings and dreams.

The stigma around mental health problems means that troops can be reluctant to admit to symptoms or seek help.

"Allowing PTSD to go untreated can potentially have disastrous consequences, including suicide attempts," said Gale Lucas of the University of Southern California in the US.

Following a tour of duty, the US military assesses the mental health of its troops in a written survey called the Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA), which measures PTSD symptoms.

However, the results can affect a soldier's career prospects in the military. This means they may be

reluctant to be completely honest. Previous studies have shown that people are often more likely to provide sensitive information in anonymous surveys, as they feel safer and less exposed.

However, human interviewers can build rapport with interviewees, which is not possible in an anonymous survey. When an interviewer forms a social connection with an interviewee, they often open up more easily.

A computer-generated 'human' interviewer could provide a solution that combines the rapport-building skills of real human interviewers with the feelings of anonymity and safety provided by anonymous surveys.

Such virtual interviewers can use a variety of techniques to build rapport, including a welcoming expression and posture, and being attentive and responsive.

Researchers tested a virtual interviewer in a group of soldiers following a year-long deployment in Afghanistan.

The troops underwent their official survey, and then com-



pleted an anonymous version by selecting answers on a computer. They also underwent an anon-

ymous interview with a virtual interviewer, who built rapport before asking them questions about

common post-traumatic stress symptoms. Strikingly, the troops revealed

significantly more PTSD symptoms to the virtual interviewer than in either of the surveys.

The research team repeated the experiment in a larger group of soldiers and veterans, this time comparing only the anonymous survey and an anonymous interview with a virtual interviewer.

In this second experiment, soldiers and veterans with milder symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder opened up and disclosed more symptoms to the virtual interviewer compared to the anonymous survey.

This suggests that virtual interviews could help to uncover PTSD symptoms that current interview techniques can not detect and help soldiers access much-needed treatments.

"These kinds of technologies could provide soldiers a safe way to get feedback about their risks for post-traumatic stress disorder," said Lucas.

"By receiving anonymous feedback from a virtual human interviewer that they are at risk for PTSD, they could be encouraged to seek help without having their symptoms flagged on their military record," he said.



Baby talk: A mother's voice changes while talking to her newborns

A study has recently found that new mothers subconsciously change the tone of their voice when they talk to their babies so that their babies can learn to recognise their mothers from birth.

According to researchers from the Princeton University in New Jersey, U.S., regardless of the language spoken, all mothers use a universal 'motherese' or 'baby talk' when they address their infants, which is an exaggerated and somewhat musical form of speech.

While it may sound silly to adults, studies show it plays an important role in language learning, engaging infants' emotions and highlighting the structure of language to help babies decode the puzzle of syllables and sentences.

The researchers explained that a mother shifts the timbre, which is defined as the quality of a sound, in her voice so her newborn can recognise and pay attention to her from birth. The team recorded the

mothers when they played with their seven-to-12-month-old newborns and when they spoke to another adult. The findings indicated that the differences in timbre were strong enough to be reliably picked out by a machine learning algorithm. The authors explained that the shifts suggested there was a universal form of communication with newborns. Researcher Elise Piazza said her team had discovered 'a new cue that mothers implicitly use to support babies' language learning'. The timbre shift was consistent across women who spoke 10 languages: English, Cantonese, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Mandarin, Polish, Russian and Spanish.

Piazza said: "We found that mothers alter this basic quality of their voices when speaking to infants, and they do so in a highly consistent way across many diverse languages." The study was published in the Current Biology journal.

Stay fit if you want to live a long life

Reducing excess weight and staying in shape may prolong life expectancy by two months, says a study.

The study showed that people who are overweight cut their life expectancy by two months for every extra kilo of weight they carry.

Cigarette smoking and traits associated with lung cancer also had the greatest impact on shortening lifespan. In addition, body fat and other factors linked to diabetes also have a negative influence on life expectancy, the researchers mentioned.

"Our study has estimated the causal effect of lifestyle choices. We found that, on average, smoking a pack a day reduces lifespan by seven years, whilst losing one kilogram of weight will increase your lifespan by two months," said Peter Joshi, researcher at the University of Edinburgh



in Scotland.

The team took the data from 25 separate population studies and analysed genetic information from more than 600,000 people alongside

records of their parents' lifespan.

People share half of the genetic information with each of their parents. Therefore, certain lifestyle factors become highly influenced by some

genes that further impacts life expectancy of people, like, increased alcohol consumption and addiction, the researchers explained, in the paper published in the journal Nature Communications.

The study also identified two new DNA differences that affect lifespan. The first in a gene that affects blood cholesterol levels and reduces lifespan by around eight months.

The second is a gene linked to the immune system which adds around half a year to life expectancy.

"The power of big data and genetics allow us to compare the effect of different behaviours and diseases in terms of months and years of life lost or gained, and to distinguish between mere association and causal effect," said Jim Wilson, Professor at the varsity.

Men, take note: What you eat before sex can impact your baby's health

A father's diet before sex can play as important a role as nutrition of the expectant mother in delivering a healthy baby, new research suggests. The findings suggest that men should avoid having a diet high in carbohydrates and low in protein. "We were really surprised," said Michal Polak, a Professor at University of Cincinnati in the US. "In many species, the moms do a lot of the care. So we expect there to be an effect from maternal diet on offspring because of that strong link. But it was a real surprise to find a link between paternal diet and offspring," Polak said. For the study published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, the researchers manipulated the nutrition of male fruit flies and observed a strong correlation between poor diet and poor survivorship

among their offspring.

Scientists regularly study fruit flies because they share 60% of our genes and more than 75% of our disease genes. Geneticists have mapped their entire genome. More than 150 years of study have made this unassuming little fly a good model system, Polak said. For the study, Polak isolated females and males of the fruit fly species *Drosophila melanogaster*, which is famous for its enormous red eyes and high reproductive capacity. A single fly can lay 50 eggs per day or as many as 2,000 eggs in her short two-month lifetime.

The researchers fed females the same diet. But they fed males 30 different diets of yeast and sugars. The flies could eat all they wanted from the agar mixture in the bottom of their glass beaker homes, but the qual-



ity of the food varied dramatically from low to high concentrations of proteins, carbohydrates and calories. After 17 days on the strict diet, the males were mated individually and consecutively with two females, which all received the same diet of yeast and cornmeal. The researchers found that embryos from the second mating were more likely to survive as their fathers'

diets improved in nutrition. These effects were less apparent in the first mating. Likewise, embryo mortality was highest for offspring of males that fed on a high-carbohydrate, low-protein diet. The study also found a slightly higher incidence of embryo mortality associated with male flies in the first mating that were fed the highest-calorie diet.

Pay attention to your gut health. It could be the key to ageing well

Chinese and Canadian researchers have found evidence to suggest that a healthy gut could be linked to healthy ageing. Carried out by researchers from Ontario's Western University and Lawson Health Research Institute as well as from Tianyi Health Science Institute in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, China, the research is one of the largest microbiota studies conducted in humans, looking at a cohort of more than 1,000 Chinese participants. Previous research too has shown that gut bacteria can slow down ageing. The researchers studied the gut bacteria in individuals, who were aged 3 to over 100 years old and self-reported as being "extremely healthy" with no known health problems and no family history of disease. The team observed a direct correlation between health and the microbes in the intes-



tine, finding that the overall microbiota composition of the healthy elderly group was similar to that of people decades younger, with little difference between the gut microbiota of those age 30 to those age over 100. "This demonstrates that maintaining diversity of your gut as you age is a biomarker of healthy ageing, just like low-cholesterol is a biomarker of a healthy circulatory system,"

commented Greg Gloor, the principal investigator on the study and also a professor at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Scientist at Lawson Health Research Institute. The study didn't identify the cause or effect between gut microbiota and healthy ageing, with Gregor Reid, professor at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Scientist at Lawson Health Research Institute

saying, "It begs the question — if you can stay active and eat well, will you age better, or is healthy ageing predicated by the bacteria in your gut?"

However, Gloor added that, "The main conclusion is that if you are ridiculously healthy and 90 years old, your gut microbiota is not that different from a healthy 30-year-old in the same population." The researchers now suggest that resetting microbiota in the elderly to that of a 30-year-old might help promote health.

"The aim is to bring novel microbiome diagnostic systems to population, then use food and probiotics to try and improve biomarkers of health," said Reid, adding, "By studying healthy people, we hope to know what we are striving for when people get sick." The findings can be found published online in the journal mSphere.

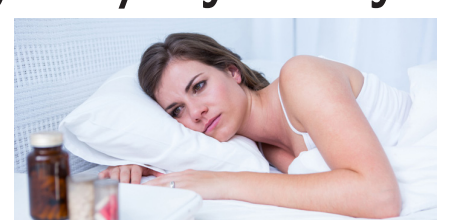
Neurological disease deaths up by 36% in last 25 years, says study

The number of deaths due to neurological disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, stroke and epilepsy has increased by 36.7 per cent worldwide between 1990 and 2015, a study says.

In 2015, these diseases comprised of 16.8 percent of global deaths, according to the report by the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) project published in the journal The Lancet.

The number of global disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) increased 7.4 per cent over the past 25 years, while in 2015 they accounted for 10.2 per cent of DALYs worldwide. "One of the main reasons for the increase in neurological disorders is longer life expectancy," said Vasily Vlassov, Professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Russia.

"People live longer and, accordingly, suffer dementia more often than several decades ago," Vlassov explained, adding "another reason is a growing population". The most prevalent neurological disorders were tension-type headaches (about 1,500 million cases), migraine (about 1,000 million), medication



overuse headaches (about 60 million), and Alzheimer's disease and other dementias (about 46 million cases). In addition, the rates of communicable neurological disorders, stroke, and Parkinson's are higher in males than females, and the prevalence is higher particularly in children under five, the report said. The rates of cases per 100,000 was 15.7 per cent higher in Parkinson's, 2.4 per cent in Alzheimer's, 3.1 per cent in motor neuron disease, and 8.9 per cent higher in brain and nervous system cancers. However, the number of deaths and DALYs per 100,000 people caused by stroke and communicable neurological disorders decreased by 26 and 29.7 per cent respectively between 1990 and 2015, the report noted.

RBI's policies anti-growth, says FICCI president Pankaj Patel

MUMBAI: FICCI president Pankaj Patel has slammed the Reserve Bank of India over its reluctance to cut interest rate, saying its policies were "not industry-friendly" and posed a hurdle in the country's economic growth. In its latest monetary policy review on October 4, the Reserve Bank of India had kept the policy rate unchanged at 6% even as it cut the growth forecast to 6.7% for the current fiscal.

Patel said such a move was "anti-growth". "RBI is not behaving properly. It (RBI policy) is anti-growth," Patel told a group of Indian reporters in Washington.

Indian industry, Patel said, wishes that there be a drop in interest rates, on which, he said, the RBI has adopted a rigid approach.

"We want a drop in interest rate. This (interest rate) is a huge problem now for us. Real interest rate in India today is touching 6%," he said, arguing that there should be balance between growth, inflation, and interest rates.

"Inflation is necessary irrespective of growth. There has been no growth without inflation," a visibly upset Patel said, adding that his views were known to the RBI and the government. Patel is leading a delegation of Indian industrialists to attend events on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

"A tighter monetary policy is hurting India's economic growth," Rashesh C Shah, senior vice-president of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) said, as he chipped in to express the prevailing sentiment against the RBI among the country's corporate sector.

"On the other hand, the government has adopted a business-friendly policy," said Shah.

FICCI secretary general, Sanjaya Baru, said it is a myth that there is no new jobs creation.

"Because we do not have produce annual employment data, so everyone is talking in thin air. The bulk of the work force has been created in sectors that have created this six percent growth," Baru said, adding that a lot of these jobs are in informal sectors.

"To accelerate growth, moving forward, it is clear that the government doesn't have the capacity. The private sector has to do it. Therefore, you need to ensure that there is conducive policy environment," he said.

"Message for the government is — let's go forward," he added. Another member of the delegation, former president of FICCI, Rajan Bharati Mittal, said technology is destined to play an important part in India's growth. "Once they get into mass production, countries like India should be worried about the impact of automation on jobs and employment," said Mittal.

India on very good wicket on privacy, says Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani

NEW DELHI: India is on a "very good wicket" on privacy in this age of digital technology, architect of the Aadhaar scheme Nandan Nilekani has said, expressing confidence that the government's unique-identity number plan would be able to successfully pass the test of privacy. Aadhaar card scheme, which has enrolled more than 1 billion people, was launched by the previous UPA government and has been supported by the current government. Addressing an audience at an event organised by the Center for Global Development on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, Nilekani said, "I think India is on a very good wicket on privacy".

Thanks to Aadhaar many activists went to the Supreme Court and they claimed that it was a privacy violation, said the 62-year-old non-executive chairman of Infosys -- India's second largest software services firm. That challenge by activists, he said, led to an even more existential question in India is privacy a fundamental right at all. The question went to a nine-judge Supreme Court bench and they gave "what I call one of the best judgements" in the Supreme Court history, he said, responding to a question on privacy and Aadhaar card. "And they (judges) said, yes privacy is a fundamental right. However, the state can circumscribe that privacy for specific social goals," he said, adding that they identified national security, prevention of crime prevention, protection of revenue and social welfare benefits as the four reasons.

Nilekani said that the judges said that circumscribing of privacy has to be based on three things.

It has to be based on a law. It has to be based on the test of proportionality and reasonableness.

"The court laid down an excellent framework. And at the same time they said that technology and digital technology are key enablers for social progress and innovation, the architect of Aadhaar card said," he said.

Now that the judges have laid a framework, there would be a second bench of the court, which will test whether Aadhaar meets that framework.

"We're very confident that it will," Nilekani said.

Responding to a question, Nilekani said that from a policy perspective "it has to be clear" that nobody should be denied an entitlement due to lack of access to technology. A good system would obviously have the ability to save if there's no connectivity or environment does not work, one should give the overriding capability to the service provider.

So, it is important to make sure that technology does not come as a hurdle in providing benefits to people. A combination of well-designed override with fraud analytics can solve these issues.

"As people learn the system, they are going to do that," he said.

India has high growth potential for next two decades: Jaitley

MUMBAI: India has the potential to grow at a reasonably high level in the next decade or two, owing to some structural changes by the government and a turnaround in the global economy, finance minister Arun Jaitley said on Saturday.

The whole environment of doing business has changed in a matter of months, Jaitley told a Washington audience at an event organised by the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum. "India has the potential to grow at a reasonably high level in the next one-two decades. This is mainly because of the series of structural reforms being carried out by the government, turnaround in the global economy, and the massive investment opportunity that the infrastructure sector offers," said Jaitley.

"I am certain that now that the growth is returning back to the world, the future holds an important direction as far as India is concerned. The sheer size of the country and economy would offer huge oppor-



tunity for investment in India in the next few years," he said.

Jaitley said that when the BJP government came to power in 2014, it had the choice to look the other way and allow the shadow economy to continue. "But it did not do so, as it took a series of courageous steps which ultimately culminated in demonetisation of high-value currency," the finance minister said.

The government knew that there would be short-term impact on the

economy, Jaitley said, "but, in the long term, it would benefit the country," he told a gathering of investors and corporate leaders.

In an effort to pitch India as an investor-friendly destination, the finance minister said that his government had taken a series of steps to improve the ease of doing business. "India today is one of the most open, globally integrated economy. In the last few years, we are moving up the ease of doing

business ranking," he said, as he listed out some of the key initiatives by his government. Among these are the "massive steps" that the Indian government has taken in using new digital technologies for governance and making them beneficial to the people, Jaitley said.

"Today, almost everyone is connected to the banking system. Almost every adult in India has biometric. The integrated data has helped the government to reach every citizen on digital platform," he said.

"This has helped us save billions of dollars," he said, adding that India is now using technology "in a big way" in order to ensure that the resources reaches the intended population. Speaking about the Goods and Services Tax (GST), Jaitley said it was "a more efficient system which has brought the country together, even economically, allowed free flow of goods and services across the country." However, he conceded, that it could cause disruption for a quarter or two. The

event closed a week of meetings that the minister attended in the US, including the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Members of the USISPF audience included senior representatives from companies such as Apple, Boeing, Google, etc. while senior officials from different departments of the US government also participated in the programme.

Mukesh Aghi, president of USISPF, noted the importance of the minister's visit, saying India had witnessed vast reforms and gained an ability for significant economic growth in the last few years thereby opening it to huge investment potential.

"US companies and investors are very much aware of the reforms the Indian government is making in order to expand the economy," he said. "With future reforms and increased partnership between US and Indian businesses, there is promising potential for this already important relationship," he said.

Gold rises on firm global cues, festive season buying

NEW DELHI: Gold recovered by Rs 50 to Rs 30,850 per ten gram at the bullion market on Saturday largely on positive cues from overseas and increased buying by local jewellers.

Silver also climbed Rs 300 to Rs 41,500 per kg due to increased offtake by industrial units and coin makers.

Sentiment got a lift after gold surged overseas buoyed by a weak dollar, with investors waiting for key US inflation data for clues on the outlook for potential hikes in US interest rates, traders said.

Globally, gold rose 0.79% to USD 1,303.30 an ounce and silver by 1.02% to USD 17.41 an ounce in New York in yesterday's trade. Besides, pick-up in buying by local jewellers to meet the ongoing festive season demand at domestic spot market too fuelled the uptrend, they said. In the national capital, gold of 99.9% and 99.5% purity went up by Rs 50 each to Rs 30,850 and Rs 30,700 per ten gram, respectively. The precious metal had shed Rs 30 in yesterday's trade.

Sovereign however remained unaltered at Rs 24,700 per piece of eight gram in limited deals.

Following gold, silver ready rebounded by Rs 300 to Rs 41,500 per kg and weekly-based delivery traded higher by Rs 15 to Rs 40,400 per kg. On the other hand, silver coins continued to trade at the previous level of Rs 74,000 for buying and Rs 75,000 for selling of 100 pieces.

Tesla fired 400 employees in past week for 'poor performance': Report

MUMBAI: Luxury electric vehicle maker Tesla Inc fired about 400 employees this week, including associates, team leaders and supervisors, a former employee told Reuters on Friday.

The dismissals were a result of a company-wide annual review, Tesla said in an emailed statement, without confirming the number of employees leaving the company.

"It's about 400 people ranging from associates to team leaders to supervisors. We don't know how high up it went," said the former employee, who worked on the assembly line and did not want to be identified.

Though Tesla cited performance as the reason for the firings, the source told Reuters he was fired in spite of never having been given a bad review.

The Palo Alto, California-based company said earlier in the month that "production bottlenecks" had left



Tesla behind its planned ramp-up for the new Model 3 mass-market sedan.

The company delivered 220 Model 3 sedans and produced 260 during the third quarter. In July, it began production of the Model 3, which starts at \$35,000 - half the starting price of the Model S.

Mercury News had earlier reported about the firing of hundreds of employees by Tesla in the past week.

India should prioritise public banking sector reforms: IMF

MUMBAI: India must prioritise implementation of public banking sector structural reforms, enhance the efficiency of labour and product markets, and modernise agriculture sector to accelerate its growth, the IMF said on Friday.

The country's growth is expected to accelerate in the medium-term as temporary disruptions due to demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) fade, the International Monetary Fund said in its Asia and Pacific Regional Economic Outlook Update.

The economic growth slowed in India in recent quarters due to the temporary disruptions from the currency exchange initiative — demonetisation — that took place in November 2016, and the recent rollout of the GST, it said.

The GST is a landmark tax reform that should help unify the domestic market and encourage businesses to move from the informal to the formal sector, the IMF noted.

IMF favours structural reforms in Indian banking sector, labour market and fiscal consolidation

MUMBAI: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has suggested a three-pronged approach for structural reform in India that includes addressing the corporate and banking sector weaknesses, continued fiscal consolidation through revenue measure, and improving the efficiency of labour and product markets. Deputy Director Asia Pacific Department of IMF, Kenneth Kang, said the favourable outlook for Asia was an important opportunity for India to push forward with difficult reforms.

"As such, there should be three policy priorities in the area of structural reforms," Kang, deputy director Asia Pacific Department IMF told reporters at a news conference here.

"First priority is to address the corporate and banking sector weaknesses, by accelerating the resolution of non-performing loans, rebuilding the capital buffers for the public sector banks, and enhancing banks' debt recovery mechanisms," he said. Secondly, Kang said, India should continue with the fiscal consolidation

through revenue measures, as well as further reductions in subsidies. "And lastly, it's to maintain the strong momentum for structural reforms in addressing the infrastructure gaps, improving the efficiency of labour and product markets as well as furthering agricultural reforms," said Kang. Responding to a question on labour market reforms, Kang suggested reforming the market regulations in order to create a more favourable environment for investment and employment.

"There is a need to reduce the number of labour laws which currently number around 250 across the central and the state level," said Kang. He said India should also focus on closing the gender gap which may help a great deal in boosting the employment opportunities for women in India. "Improvements in infrastructure can be one important way to facilitate the entry of women into the labour force. But in addition, there is a need to strengthening the implementation of specific gender regulations."

JAL files petition in SC looking to sell Yamuna Expressway toll

NEW DELHI: Jaiprakash Associates (JAL) has filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking permission to sell its toll project on Yamuna Expressway to cover liability towards homebuyers of Jaypee Infratech's under-construction projects. Jaypee Infratech BSE 2.29

% has defaulted on Rs 526.11 crore of loans outstanding to IDBI Bank.

"We have filed a petition with the Supreme Court to hive off our tolling project at Yamuna Expressway to generate Rs 2,000 crore to cover liability towards Jaypee Infratech homebuyers," said Anupam

Lal Das, the advocate representing Jaiprakash Associates. The case was brought before a bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices AM Khanwilkar and DY Chandrachud. "We have a prospective buyer who is willing to pay Rs 2,500 crore for the project," the lawyer

informed the bench. The court said it will hear the matter on October 23. Last month the top court had directed the company to deposit Rs 2,000 crore with it by October 27 for paying the troubled homebuyers. The court was hearing a plea by homebuyers in Jaypee Wish Town

who have challenged certain provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. Directors and managing directors of Jaypee Infratech and Jaypee Associates have also been ordered to not make any overseas journey without court permission.



Australia series done, New Zealand await India. Will there be any fresh faces



HYDERABAD: In a season of home series, the Indian cricket team has wrapped up yet another assignment. The Australian T20I challenge did not result in absolute domination, but the hosts can take heart from the way a young bowling attack stood its own in the first game.

Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar all got wickets as Australia were restricted below 120. Indian batsmen then ensured an easy win.

Again a bowler wrote his name all over the second T20I, this time from the Australian side. Newbie Jason Behrendorff was an unknown entity before the match, but the 27-year-old pacer's four-wicket burst ensured he would not remain so after the game. Fresh blood with youngsters grabbing limelight in the first two matches, it came as a dampener when the decider in Hyderabad was abandoned due to wet outfield.

Nevertheless, India will continue to play till

the end of the year at home with their next opponents being New Zealand in an ODI series, starting October 22. The New Zealand squad that India faces will have six players from the A team that is currently playing India A. It is an interesting incentive for those fringe players, vying for a place in the senior team. The Indian selectors have also started a process of rotation since the Sri Lanka away series in August-September and the same is likely to continue against the Kiwis. Seniors like Ajinkya Rahane, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja have in recent series' made way for the younger lot as the permutation continues to find a right mix ahead of the 2019 cricket World Cup. Likely choices for India, there have been several young players who have been making the right noises. It might be prudent for selectors to give them a look-in, in familiar conditions.

Wicketkeeper-batsmen Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer have both been in the India A side for quite some time now. Spinners Karn Sharma and Shahbaz Nadeem did well to their chances with a good show against New Zealand A. Pacers Shardul Thakur and Mohammed Siraj have also shown potential.

Ton-up Babar Azam, Shoaib Malik help Pakistan ease past Sri Lanka



DUBAI: Babar Azam scored an impressive hundred while Shoaib Malik smashed a quickfire half century to help Pakistan thump Sri Lanka by 83 runs in the first one-day international in Dubai on Friday. (Scorecard)

Azam compiled a well-made 103 from 131 deliveries, while Malik's 81 came off only 61 balls in Pakistan's total of 292-6, before pacemen Hasan Ali (3-36) and Ruman Raees (3-49) restricted Sri Lanka to 209-8 from their 50 overs.

The victory was a good response by Pakistan after losing the preceding two-match Test series 2-0, in their first ODI since winning the Champions Trophy in England four months ago. Lahiru Thirimanne was the only Sri Lankan top-order batsman who played with any authority for his 53 as Pakistan took regular wickets to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series. Akila Dananjaya (50 not out) and Jeffrey Vandersay (25) delayed the result as they took Sri Lanka from 132-7 to 200-8 during their 68-run eighth-wicket stand but it was too little, too late.

Left-arm Raees broke a quick 30-run opening partnership as he removed Niroshan Dickwella (19) and Dinesh Chandimal in successive overs, while Mohammad Hafeez dismissed captain Upul Tharanga for 18.

Medium pacer Ali had two wickets off two balls as he dislodged Kusal Mendis and Milinda Siriwardana to leave Sri Lanka struggling at 67-5. Raees re-

turned for his second spell to trap Thirimanne leg before to end Sri Lanka's hopes of a successful chase.

Thirimanne hit three boundaries in his 74-ball stay. Pakistan, sent into bat, owed their total to Azam and Malik, who added 139 for the fourth wicket.

Malik holed out in the 47th over after smashing five fours and two sixes.

Malik, declared man of the match, said he was happy to do the job. Azam's hundred came off 128 balls in the next over with a single, but three runs later he miscued a drive off paceman Suranga Lakmal, who finished with 2-47 from his ten overs.

Azam, who hit only five boundaries, had managed a poor 38 runs in the preceding 2-0 Test-series defeat but batted with guts to prove his credentials as a limited-overs batsman.

Pakistan plundered 89 in the last ten overs. The nominal hosts got off to a poor start when opener Ahmed Shehzad fell for a 12-ball duck, caught off Lahiru Gamage in the fourth over of the innings.

Fakhar Zaman and Azam took the total to 75 before Akila Dananjaya bowled the opener with a googly.

The left-handed Zaman played well during his 45-ball 42 though, hitting four fours and a six.

The remaining matches will be played in Abu Dhabi (October 16 and 18) and Sharjah (October 20 and 23).

David Miller set to play 100th ODI and join elite list of South Africa batsmen

NEW DELHI: David Miller is due to play his 100th ODI when South Africa take on Bangladesh in the first of three matches at the De Beers Oval, Kimberley on Sunday.

Miller, who has been a regular feature in South Africa's limited-overs sides since 2010, has aggregated 2,396 runs at an average of 39.27 and a strike-rate of over 100. The left-hander will join Jacques Kallis, AB de Villiers, Faf du Plessis, Hashim Amla, Graeme Smith and other great South African batsmen in a list of players who have played 100 ODIs or more for the Proteas.

In a statement released by Cricket South Africa, Miller said his international journey so far has been up and down. "I have taken more responsibility in my game and off the field as well; it has been a huge learn-



ing curve over the last seven years, one that I will not forget."

In the last two years, Miller has enjoyed a prolific run in ODIs. In

2016, he played 11 ODIs and averaged close to 67 and a strike-rate of 120. His crowning moment was his knock of 118* off 79 balls against Australia

in Durban and it played a major part in South Africa chasing down 372, the second-highest successful run-chase in ODI history.

IPL stalwart

Miller's big-hitting gained popularity thanks to his exploits for Kings XI Punjab in the Indian Premier League. In 66 games, he has smashed 1,563 runs with his best being a 101 off 38 balls against Royal Challengers Bangalore in the 2013 edition of the tournament. After the brilliant century, Miller came up with a memorable quote that summed up his approach to batting. "If it's in the V, it's in the tree; if it's in the arc, it's out of the park." The left-hander will be a vital member in the South African team as they aim to build-up for the 2019 World Cup and break their jinx in the tournament.

State Football League-2017: Safalo FC wins Super Division match

J&K Bank beats Iqbal Sports 4-0 in Premier Division match

Srinagar, Oct 13: Safalo FC and J&K Bank XI won Super Division and Premier Division matches respectively in the ongoing State Football League-2017 on Friday (Oct 12).

In the Super-Division match played at Synthetic Turf TRC, Safalo FC beat State Football Academy (SFA) by two goals to nil. Mohammad Altaf opened the account for the winning team while Niyaz Ahmad doubled the lead.

The Premier-Division match also played at Synthetic Turf TRC, J&K Bank thrashed Iqbal Sports by four goals to nil in a one-sided affair. J&K Bank dominated the match right from the start and sustained the pressure throughout the 90-minutes of the game. Shahid Mushtaq scored two goals for the winning team while Urfan and Danish scored one goal each. Goutan was declared player of the match for his performance.

Meanwhile, B-Division league of the ongoing State Football League is already completed with IFC Nowgam winning the title and Noorbagh FC finishing as runners up. The A-Division League has reached to the semi-final stage with Novelty Blue, Jehangir Club, Fort Club Views and Novelty FC qualifying for semifinal.

More than 50 percent match of the Super and Premier Division league have been completed till date. More than 500 football teams and clubs with over 12000 players and over 1500 team officials are participating in the mega event, the aim of which is to unearth the hidden talent across the State.

The event is being held across the 22 districts of the state these days and is being organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Football Association (JKFA) under the auspices of State Sports Council and on the directions of All India Football Federation (AIFF).

Every day thousands of football fans watch the keenly contested matches not only in Srinagar, but in other district headquarters of Kashmir. At Srinagar's Synthetic Turf Football Stadium, not even a single seat remains free in the evenings with football spectators from all corners of the city converging at the venue to support their favourite teams and the clubs.



FIFA U-17 World Cup: Dominant Spain beat North Korea 2-0 to reach Round of 16

KOCHI: Spain booked their place in the Round of 16 of the FIFA U-17 World Cup with a 2-0 win over North Korea at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here today. Needing a win to secure second place in Group D, Spain put in a dominant show, and despite a number of misses, managed to get the necessary goals against a Korean side that eventually finished the game with ten men.

The Spaniards took the lead in the fourth minute when playmaker Mohamed Moukhliiss found himself in space near the goal after a clever pass by striker Cesar Gelabert. Moukhliiss promptly finish off the chance to peg back the Asian opponents.

It was always going to be a mountain to climb for North Korea, and they struggled against a side that enjoyed a lion's share of possession throughout the game. In the 11th minute, Barcelona starlet Abel Ruiz had a shot blocked inside a box, while seven minutes later, a powerful shot by Moukhliiss from the edge of the box went just over the bar.

With 21 minutes on the clock, Sergio Gomez came close for Spain when he reached the end of a cross from the left flank. His shot, however, was well over.

Ferran Torres and Abel Ruiz both missed chances to score in the next 15 minutes, while Gelabert had a shot saved in the 40th minute. Torres came close in the stoppage time of the first half again when he tried to curl a shot with his left foot from the



right side of the box. His shot hit the post as North Korea had a reprieve.

Striker Gelabert was at the thick of things in the second half too, and a shot from him in the 56th minute went just over. Abel had the chance to hand his side a two-goal cushion in the 68th minute when Gomez sent in a cross from the left flank.

His header, however, went over despite there being no pressure on him from the Korean backline. Three minutes later, Spain finally had their second goal. Jose Lara sent in the ball from the right flank, with Gelabert waiting in the middle.

Taking a deflection on its way, it finally landed at Gelabert's

feet, who shot it home inside the net. In the 84th minute, North Korea had substitute Paek Kwang Min sent off after he seemed to impede Moukhliiss in the middle of the park. It was a decision that didn't go down well with North Korea coach Kim Yong-su.

"His foul was not so severe to be punished with a red card. It was not a fair decision," he told reporters at the post-match press conference. Spain were comfortable to keep the ball for most of the match, and saw out the game with the 2-0 lead despite having a one-man advantage in the dying minutes.

"Focus was on defence" Yong-su defended the lack of goal-scoring opportunities

created by his team in their three matches here, saying the focus was always on their defence.

"The teams in our group, especially Brazil and Spain, are very strong, so we were more focused on defence. This is why we did not create many goal-scoring chances," he said.

"Today's performance was not as good as against Brazil. Our players were a bit nervous because this was our last chance (to progress to the Round of 16). Players were under mental pressure, and our defence made a few mistakes," he added.

Spain coach Santiago Denia stressed on the need to continue improving as a team. "I wouldn't call this a perfect win.

We need to improve to achieve our goals. We still have room for improvements," he said.

With a potential Round of 16 clash against France next week, Denia said he wanted to wait till Saturday's Group E matches before discussing about the game. "We know that there is a chance of playing France (in the Round of 16), but we don't want to talk about it yet because we have to respect the teams playing France in their group. But we do believe that France have improved since the European Championships," he added.

Spain had beaten France 3-1 in the quarterfinals of the U-17 European Championships earlier this year.