

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

FRIDAY

- NOVEMBER, 03, 2017
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	22.2	3.2
JAMMU	26.3	15.1
LEH	17.2	-5.4
KARGIL	15.0	-1.6

SUNSET SATURDAY: 05:39 PM
SUNRISE SUNDAY: 06:53 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Mainly clear sky... Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 21°C & 3°C respectively.

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

STATE | 3

INTERSTATE | 5

BUSINESS | 7

SPORTS | 8

DEV OF HEALTH SECTOR GOVT'S TOP PRIORITY: ASIEA NAQASH

NARENDRA MODI, SHEIKH HASINA TO LAUNCH INDO-BANGLA TRAIN

INDIAN ECONOMY IS MAKING TREMENDOUS PROGRESS: PEPSICO'S INDRA NOOYI

HAFEEZ'S BOWLING ACTION TESTED IN ENGLAND, REPORT LIKELY IN TWO WEEKS

I will be coming to Srinagar on Nov 6: Sharma

'My stay depends on delegations I will be meeting'

SRINAGAR, NOV 2: Despite rejection of dialogue by the Hurriyat Conference, the Government of India's representative Dineshwar Sharma will be visiting the Kashmir valley on November 6 to hold talks with different delegations.

Talking to KNS from New Delhi, Sharma said, "I will be coming to Srinagar on November 6 to Srinagar to meet delegations and people there."

Sharma said that he is yet to finalize the number of days he is going to stay in Kashmir.

"It (My visit and stay) depends on the number of people and delegations whom I will be meeting," he said about his visit.



Asked that the Hurriyat Conference has rejected the dialogue, the representative said, "Let me come there, then I will see."

Over the fate of earlier interlocutors and their reports submitted by them, he said he did not want to comment on them.

"I have no comments on the reports submitted by earlier interlocutors."

Sharma, a former IB Director, was announced by the Home Minister Rajnath Singh

See I will...Pg 02

Deputations seek tourism promotion, support to artisan community, sericulture development with CM

Also demand horticulture, MSME promotion, early completion of Tangmarg-Poonch road; Mehbooba assures action

SRINAGAR, NOV 2: Several deputations from all walks of life today met the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti and brought issues concerning them into her notice.

The deputations generally sought launching a vigorous campaign to promote tourism within the markets of country and outside particularly ASEAN countries. They also sought incentivising LTC facility for employees to visit Jammu & Kashmir besides prioritising winter and conference tourism.

The deputations of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) and J&K Chapter of PHD Chamber of Commerce also requested the Chief Minister to consider a loan waiver and support to the artisan community to protect and promote handicraft industry in the State.

The KCCI deputation also strongly pitched for establishing an integrated Textile Park besides release of incentives to tourism industry.



The PHD Chamber deputation headed by leading hotelier, Mushtaq Ahmad Chaya sought setting up of warehouse in the Valley, an action plan for weavers to strengthen hand-

icraft sector and GST waiver on the industry besides developing horticulture, sericulture and MSME sectors in the State. They also demanded development of Tattoo Ground and

opening of interior lanes in Bal Garden, Karan Nagar and Kak Sarai areas.

A deputation from Gulamarg

See Deputations...Pg 02

Tassaduq calls for immediate stop of burning of fallen leaves

'Burning of leaves, willow, popular twigs hazardous for health, environ'

SRINAGAR, NOV 2: Taking cognizance of grievances received, Coordinator Chief Minister's Grievance Cell Tassaduq Mufti today urged upon all the educational institutions, Srinagar Municipality Committee (SMC), and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to immediately put a stop on the practice of burning of abscised leaves, willow and popular twigs (biomass) as it leads to severe winter air pollution.

Highlighting the ill effects the burning of leaves, the Coordinator said, "The



burning of abscised leaves, willow and popular twigs (biomass) releases large amounts of airborne particulates which

include fine bits of dust, soot, harmful particles and toxic gases aggravating air pollution. The moisture in these leaves makes them burn slowly causing emission of smoke which is hazardous for both health and environment.

He further added that the leaves smoke also irritates the eyes, nose and throat of small children and adults, particularly the elderly and people with asthma, emphysema, lung or heart disease. The incessant burning of leaves

See Tassaduq...Pg 02

Allowing trade of liquor at Airport unfortunate: Er. Rasheed

KUPWARA NOV 2: Appealing Govt. to reconsider its decision to establish a liquor shop at Srinagar Airport, AIP Supremo and MLA Langate Er. Rasheed has said that while states like Bihar have imposed a total ban on sale and purchase of liquor, there is no justification in promoting the liquor culture in J&K.

Addressing annual day function at a public school at Laderwan Kupwara today, Er. Rasheed said that promoting tourism at the cost of moral values is disgracing and matter of great concern.

Speaking on the occasion Er. Rasheed said it is a known fact that majority of the population in the entire state is very much



been to see a total ban on liquor products in the valley, but allowing a liquor shop at a public place like international airport in Srinagar is unacceptable.

He said, "PDP and BJP needs to be

See Allowing...Pg 02

Veeri for vibrancy in Revenue Deptt

BARAMULLA, NOV 2: Minister for Revenue, Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Disaster Management Abdul Rehman Veeri today stressed on bringing vibrancy in the functioning of Revenue Department.

The Minister was speaking at a one-day zonal revenue conference of Revenue Officers of Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara here.

Secretary Revenue Shafiq Ahmed Raina, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Bascer Ahmed Khan, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Nisar Ahmed Naqash, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Sajad Ahmed Ganie and Assistant Commissioner Revenues, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Sub District Magistrates, Tehsildars of these districts were present in the meeting.

He said that government is taking various measures to bring vibrancy in the revenue department.

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

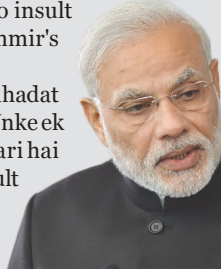
See Veeri...Pg 02

Congress can not insult our soldiers by talking about Kashmir's Azaadi: Modi

SRINAGAR, NOV 2: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday targeted senior Congress leader P Chidambaram over his Kashmir remark, saying "Congress doesn't have right to insult our soldiers by talking about Kashmir's Azaadi."

"Kya Congress ko veeron ki shahadat ka apmaan karne ka haq hai kya? Unke ek neta ne Kashmir ki Azaadi ki baat kari hai (Does Congress have the right to insult the sacrifice of the brave? One of

See Congress...Pg 02



Osama followed developments in Kashmir, Headley trial, reveal documents

WASHINGTON, NOV 2: Osama bin Laden closely followed developments in Kashmir and the trial of Pakistani-American David Coleman Headley in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks case, indicated the documents seized during the 2011 US raid on a Pakistani compound that killed the al-Qaida founder.

The Central Intelligence Agency on Thursday released 470,000 additional files seized in May 2011 when US Navy SEALs burst into the Abbottabad compound and shot dead Laden.

The files include Laden's son's wedding video and diaries left by the Saudi-born terrorist.

The documents revealed that Laden closely-



ly followed news related to the arrest of Lashkar-e-Taiba operative Headley and was a regular reader of some of the top Indian publications.

An article in a National daily titled 'Omar

See Osama...Pg 02

Superintendent of exam center removed for ulterior motives in Kupwara

KUPWARA, NOV 2: A teacher posted in Girls Higher secondary school Trehgam allegedly have been removed from the charge of superintendent at Center No.5127 (Government Boys Model Higher secondary school Kupwara) for conducting 10th Class Board Examination in violation of examination conducting procedure for ulterior motives.

Sources said that a teacher Ashiq Husain was given charge of superintendent at Center No.5127 for the examination of class 10th in Kupwara, however immediately he was removed from the charge to provide special

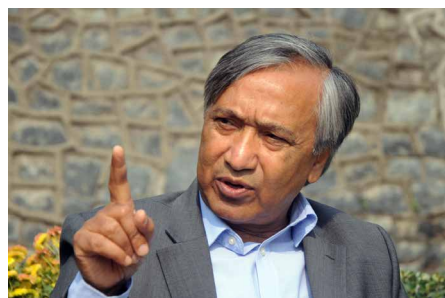
See Superintendent...Pg 02

Govt should come clean about return of J&K Hydel Projects: Tarigami

SRINAGAR, NOV 2: Senior CPI (M) leader and MLA, Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami, today said that J&K has always received step-motherly treatment regarding utilization of its hydropower potential.

He said that the Central Information Commission's (CIC) refusal to direct disclosure of the status of negotiations about the return of our Hydel projects back to us is only the latest indicator of this phenomenon.

"Let alone getting back control over our rivers, we are being told we do not have the right to know what is being discussed between J&K and the Central Governments on this long standing issue", he said.



He said, "Condemning the CIC's reasoning that no public interest would be served by disclosing details of the negotiations

See Govt...Pg 02

05 CRPF men wounded in militant attack

Hizb and LeT claimed joint responsibility

ANANTNAG, NOV 2: At least six Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were injured in a militant attack in Jammu and Kashmir. Reports said that a group of militants opened fired on a convoy in Anantnag district of South Kashmir on Thursday morning. The convoy according to police sources was on way to Mattan from Qazigund when militants targeted it. A police official told news agency CNS that a convoy of CRPF 96 battalion comprising six buses was on its way to Mattan when militants launched an



attack.

"Six personnel were wounded and shifted

See 05 CRPF...Pg 02

PDP enabled RSS to make inroads in the State: G.A. Mir

SRINAGAR, NOV 2: Stating that Congress has the legacy of uniting people and serving them to the best of its ability, the J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) President G.A. Mir said today that Congress is capable of defeating BJP RSS menace dividing people on religious and regional lines to serve their vested interests. G.A. Mir also hit out at PDP for enabling RSS to make inroads in the State.

G.A. Mir who was on two day's visit to Ladakh division addressed Senior Party Leaders and workers of District Congress Committee Kargil today and reviewed the organizational affairs and activities in the District.

See PDP...Pg 02



Continue from Front Page.....

I will

as the representative of the government of India, with cabinet secretary rank, to hold talks "with everyone" in the state.

The Joint Resistance Leadership trio Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and Yasin Malik have rejected the dialogue to be initiated by Sharma. (KNS)

Deputations

demanding construction of embankments on the Ferozepur nallah, early completion of Tangmarg-Poonch road and development of tourist villages in the area. Another deputation of PHE employees union sought rationalisation of vacancy position in the Department in view of the increased reach and scope of the Department. They also demanded change in the nomenclature of various positions in the Department.

Several deputations from Pulwama sought measures to be taken for the development and beautification of the town. They also demanded developing Pulwama Bye Pass into a road besides beautification of Dhobi khul. They also demanded setting up of a PHC at Litter, installation of street lights and construction of community hall in the town.

A deputation from Harwan sought more funds for the area development, earmarking land for a children's Park, sports ground and a health centre.

A deputation of scholars from Kashmir University and SKUAST-K sought rationalisation of eligibility criteria for selection by the Public Service Commission and other agencies. A deputation of transformer workshop owners Association sought payment of dues for their works.

Deputations of members of cooperative unions, IMPA faculty, contractual college teachers, Poultry Dealers Association, television artists etc also met Mehbooba Mufti and sought redressal of their issues.

The Chief Minister assured the deputations to look into the issues raised by them and take action at the earliest.

Tassaduq

also leads to the formation of smog which affects the general visibility. Similarly, the production of carbon dioxide also contributes to Global Warming, he said.

"Biomass waste burning is banned under relevant Environmental Acts. As it is harmful and illegal and needs to be stopped immediately.

Providing an alternative of the burning of fallen leaves, Tassaduq Mufti said composting leaves is the most eco-friendly option which is an excellent fertilizer and can improve agriculture fields and gardens and can also be used to fill low land areas.

Allowing

reminded that their law makers on more than one occasions in the past have brought bills in the Assembly seeking total ban on liquor in J&K and now allowing the same at a prestigious place like airport proves their double standards. Even the Supreme Court had last year directed authorities not to allow purchase of liquor around any national highway, as such allowing a liquor shop at Srinagar Airport has no justification. State Govt. must come forward and ensure that the decision is revoked".

On the occasion Er. Rasheed appealed teachers not to forget promoting moral education in schools. He said although quality education is need of the hour and in order to compete with the rest of the world we need to be well equipped with modern scientific techniques but the education should not create a materialistic mindset in the masses and education should be seen as a source to serve the people, not to rule them".

He added that while social media has become not entertainment but a necessity it is one of the primary duties of teachers and parents to ensure that the new generation makes a very positive and fruitful use of social media rather creating a divide in the society and ruining moral values by misuse of social media. (PTK)

Veeri

issued resolved, the Minister asked the officers to ensure the presence of patwaris in their respective halqas.

Veeri directed the officers to set up toll-free numbers for the disposal of grievances and complaints regarding Revenue Department at District level as well.

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 documents like Reserve Category Certificate, Dependent Certificate, Income Certificate, Fard Intikhab, Extract of Girdawari, Extract of Massavi, Extract of Jamabandi, Attestation of Mutation, Marriage certificate and other 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.

The Minister also asked the officials to submit a report on the rationalization of Patwar Halqas in proportionate to the Patwaris in every Tehsil.

Revenue Minister made it clear that those revenue officials who bring a bad name to the department would be taken to task and honest, bright officers will be deployed at sensitive postings. He

again reiterated the commitment of the Government to ensure transparent, accountable administration in the State.

While calling the Numberdars and Chowkidars basic tool of the revenue department, Minister said that Government is taking many initiatives to bring vibrancy to the institution of Numberdars and Chowkidars at the village level.

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 succour 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.

The Minister asked district administration to enhance public partaking by setting up various citizen councils for revamping the public services delivery system.

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 management 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.

The Minister also inaugurated Tehsil Office at Sheeri which was a long pending demand of the area.

The meeting later addressed a gathering of people and assured them that government is committed to develop remote areas of the State.

The MLA Baramulla Javid Hussain Beigh, MLA Rafiabad Yawar Hussain Mir, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Nisar Ahmed Naqash were also present on the occasion.

Later Minister also inaugurated an ambulance donated by the concerned MLA.

Congress

their leaders have talked about 'Kashmir ki azaadi', PM Modi said at an election rally in Kangra area of Himachal Pradesh.

"There is no war in which sons of Himachal have not participated. India is fighting Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir," he told the gathering.

He also said that Congress has now become a laughing club.

They need to introspect why people are turning away from them across the country.

Recently former home minister P Chidambaram had backed the idea of greater autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir.

"The demand in Kashmir Valley is to respect in letter and spirit Article 370. And that means that they want greater autonomy. My interactions in Jammu and Kashmir led me to the conclusion that when they ask for azaadi (independence), most people -- I am not saying all -- (an) overwhelming majority want autonomy. Therefore, I think we should seriously examine that question and consider on what areas we can give autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir," Chidambaram had said.

Osama

Sheikh's Pak handler Ilyas Kashmiri also handled Headley' was found from the computer of Laden in Abbottabad. The article was dated November 16, 2009.

An article 'Fears of air-borne terrorists strikes in India, UK' published in Sri Lanka Guardian was also found in a separate file on Laden's computer.

An Indian news agency story, 'al-Qaida helping Taliban to destabilise Pak Government: Gates', dated February 9, 2010, was also found on Laden's computer.

Another article found on Laden's computer was about the coded communications between Headley and his HuJI links. The news article was published by The Time of India on November 15, 2009.

Laden also saved on his computer a PTI article, titled: 'India to send magistrate to US to record Headley's statement'.

Laden highlighted in yellow some portion of the article titled 'Pak Major handled Headley's India recce', published on March 16, 2010.

The highlighted portion reads, "The dossiers also sought the custody of Pakistani terrorist, Ilyas Kashmiri. Kashmiri is the chief of the '313 Brigade' and acts as the 'military operations head' of the al-Qaida. Intercept reveals that Kashmiri told two attackers inside Nariman House, 'Keep fighting, Brigade 313 has been deployed'."

The documents also revealed that Laden was interested in news related to Kashmir and several terrorists especially Ilyas Kashmiri.

An Economic Times story 'US asks Pakistan to find Ilyas Kashmiri' dated January 7, 2010 was found among the saved documents on Laden's computer.

A February 2009 article 'Pakistani Kashmiri militants now fighting NATO forces' was also found.

Superintendent

concession to the blue eyed ones in the examination center.

When contacted Ashiq Hussain, he said that he was given charge of superintendent of 10th board examination scheduled to be conducted from 2, November adding that when he reached Sub office of Jammu & Kashmir board of school education in

Kupwara for taking stationary for conducting examination, he was told that he have been removed from the charges. He said, "I was not given any reason but told someone else have been asked to execute duties".

When contacted Assistant secretary board, Noor Mohammad, he said it was done after an erroneous acceptance letter was received from the teacher. However, the said official could not justify the error in the acceptance form.

It is believed the superintendent for the center have been removed for the ulterior motives by the concerned officials besides it seems a clear violation of examination conducting procedure (PTK)

Govt

, he called upon the J&K Government to immediately put all correspondence with the Central Government in the public domain as per its statutory obligation of proactive information disclosure under Sections 4(i)(c) and 4(10)(d) of the J&K RTI Act".

"A few weeks ago in October, the CIC had ruled that NHPC does not have an obligation to disclose details of the discussions for return of the seven Hydel projects covered by the MoU signed between the J&K and Central Governments in July, 2000. The NHPC took the plea that disclosure of the correspondence between the Central and State Governments would lead to confusion and speculation among its shareholders. NHPC is a central public sector undertaking granted mini-Ratna status. An earlier RTI intervention in 2016 had revealed that NHPC had earned close to Rs. 200 billion by generating electricity from J&K's rivers during the last 15 years. J&K contributes nearly 30% of the Hydel power generated by NHPC across the country", Tarigami said.

Tarigami said that while J&K is supplied 12% of this power free of charge, it is required to buy almost 20% of the power generated from its rivers at market rates. He adds, "This kind of economic colonialism is always unacceptable in a democratic set up, especially when right-wing elements across the country are burning the midnight oil to destroy the special status legitimately granted to J&K under the Constitution".

"Recalling that the World Bank brokered Indus-Watery Treaty with Pakistan in the 1960s deprived J&K of the opportunity of fully harnessing the close to 15,000 MW hydro power potential, the State is forced to depend on the Central pool for meetings its ever-burgeoning demand despite being a power-surplus State. Frequent and long power outages, especially during peak winter have crippled the State's economy. Even school going children are not spared by power outages when they have to often study for their exams", he said.

"Denouncing the repeated refusal of the Power Ministry under the NDA to return of the Dulhasti and Bursar projects as recommended by the 2006 Task Force on Economic Development of J&K led by Dr. Rangarajan, he asserted that that economic costs of return of the projects can be worked out through a mutually accepted formula, the excuse of lack of local capacity to run these projects in J&K is nothing but a red herring. "How can local capacity are developed unless there is local control over the projects?", he asked.

He urged the Chief Minister to persuade Government of India (GOI) to honour the Agenda of Alliance which includes plans for exploring ways for transferring Hydel projects from NHPC to J&K. This would go a long way in ensuring that J&K becomes self-reliant and less dependent on Central subsidies. Economic development can take place at a rapid pace and people's control over their natural resources would stand restored.

05 CRPF

to District hospital in Anantnag. Their condition is said to be stable," he said.

"The jawans were going back to their camp near Pahalgam when their vehicle was attacked. While three jawans received bullet injuries, two were hit by broken glass panes of the vehicle," said Zulfikar Hassan, Inspector General, CRPF.

The militants reportedly managed to escape, though area was cordoned off and a search operation to track them down was launched.

The wounded CRPF personnel have been identified as Inderjeet Singh, S.K Mahesh, Amit Kumar, Subhash Kumar, Mukesh Sharma and Mudrakar.

Meanwhile, militant outfits Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahadeen while claiming the responsibility said that the attack was carried out jointly by the militants belonging to the both outfits.

Hizb Operational spokesperson Burhanuddin told news agency CNS over phone that the 'deadly' attack was carried out by the valiant militants of Hizb and LeT.

"The attack left many Indian troopers either dead or wounded," he said and added that panic gripped among Indian troopers during the attack.

The spokesperson reiterated that such attacks will continue across Kashmir Valley.

LeT spokesperson Dr Abdullah Ghaznavi in an emailed statement said that the attack was carried out by the outfit which left many troopers dead. (CNS)

PDP

On this occasion Senior Leaders MLA Asgar Karbalai, Former Minister Haji Nissar Ali, Gulam Raza and prominent Party workers of the entire Kargil District. The leaders briefed the President of political activities of Congress Party in the District.

According to PTK correspondent G.A. Mir emphasized that every Congress men should feel duty-bound to unite people in all the three regions as that will be real defeat to communal and fascist

forces dividing regions to serve their vested interest.

He said our people are suffering immensely on every count due to wrong policies of the both State and Centre Govt, besides the negative rhetoric on the part of BJP Leadership is manifestation of their insincerity and dual standards.

He said I am not bewildered to see the negative approach of BJP towards the State, as that, they are in habit of sending confusing signals across the country aiming to change the narratives, but at the same time, Congress President added that people in all the three

regions have realized what BJP PDP is saying and what they are doing leading to the mistrust and deep alienation among the people.

He said Congress has the legacy of uniting People and serving them to their best of its ability will continue to fight against the discrimination and politics of exploitation by PDP BJP in the State. We will not allow them to play with the emotions of people for political benefit, G.A. Mir said.

He urged upon Congress Workers to remain steadfast to serve the people for the fact, it (Congress) is an instrument of service to the people. (PTK)

Doubling farmers' income govt's main goal: Dy CM

Inaugurates paddy procurement centres at Billawar



KATHUA, NOV 02: Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Nirmal Singh today said that doubling farmers' income was the main goal of the government and for this every possible step is being taken by it.

"Providing better price for their produce, subsidy on farm inputs and latest technical intervention in farm practices are the areas where government is focusing to achieve this ambitious target" Dy CM told farmers after inaugurating paddy procurement centres here at Durgara and Lakhri of Tehsil Billawar. These centres have been established by department of Agriculture in collaboration with FCI.

The Vice Chairman state advisory Board for Development of Kissan, Daljit Singh Chib was also present at the inaugural functions.

Dr Singh said that these procurement centres will promote healthy competition among private millers to give maximum price to farmers and discourage the unfair practices. He said that new procurement policy has been made farmer friendly by opening centres at close distances.

He informed that the minimum support price for Grade A (Semi Fine) paddy has been fixed Rs. 1590/- per quintal where as the price for coarse paddy is Rs. 1550/- per quintal. He further added that farmers are integral part of the development process as they are feeding the nation. He also highlighted the benefits of FSA and MMSFES.

For facilitating the farmers, DyCM announced Rs 5 Lakh seed money from his CDF for the establishment of permanent paddy procurement centre at Billawar. He directed the ADC to identify the land for this purpose. He also said that the State government has successfully introduced the mechanism of procurement so that farmers can be encouraged to carry on with the agriculture activities and get maximum returns. He further encouraged the farmers to help government to meet the procurement target of 10000 quintal against the previous year achievement of 4000 quintal.

Stressing on promotion of modern cultivation techniques, Dr Singh said that it was high time that farmers are educated about integrated farming model to increase profit-

ability. He stressed upon the need to work out policies keeping in view the economic well being and nutritional needs of poor farmers.

An awareness camp on SBM and MGNREGA was also organized by the Rural Development Department at village Lakhri where DyCM was the chief guest. Financial assistance under PMAY and for construction of IHHL was also given to the beneficiaries amounting to several thousands.

While addressing huge gathering at Lakhri, Deputy Chief Minister reiterated Government's resolve to conduct Panchayat elections in near future to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions as part of the larger vision of decentralization of power. He said PRIs will get strengthened after Panchayat Polls to ensure active participation of people at grassroots level in day-to-day governance and formulation of developmental policies.

Dy CM also announced that Mandli block of Billawar would soon achieve the status of ODF block of district Kathua.

In his address, Daljit Singh Chib said that government opened 2 procurement centres at Billawar to provide better facilities to the farmers and discourage middleman's role. He urged upon the concerned agencies and departments to put in their best efforts to ensure that the farmer do not face any inconvenience in selling their produce. He also underscored the benefits of various State and Central sponsored welfare schemes for the farmers.

Later, The DyCM listened to public issues at public grievances redress camps organized at Gujroo Nagrota and Dher. People in large numbers apprised the Dy CM about various problems being faced by them and sought their early redressal.

DyCM gave a patient hearing and assured that their problem will be redressed in a time bound manner. He issued on the spot directions to the officers for making concerted efforts in resolving people's problem.

Others present were ADC Billawar, Joginder Singh Rai, ACD Kathua, Rohit Khajuria, DAO, Davinder Sharma, GM FCI, Kishore Kumar, SDAOs, BDOs, Tehsildars, SDPO Billawar, Social Activist, Mamta Singh, prominent citizens, villagers in large numbers and other district and sub division level officers.

Loss of Driving licence

I have lost my Driving licence bearing registration No: JK-0520090015887 Date of Issue: 29-05-2009. If anybody have found please return the same of below the mentioned address otherwise i have to apply for the duplicate of the same any body have any objection regarding this may file before ARTO Baramulla within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections will be entertained after the cut of date.

Mohd Zaman Dar
S/o Abdul Majid Dar
R/o Kursoo Rajbagh
Mobile: 9906662599

MIN LAYS FOUNDATION STONES OF TWO HEALTH CENTERS AT BEERWAH BLOCK

DEV OF HEALTH SECTOR GOVT'S TOP PRIORITY: ASIEA NAQASH

BUDGAM, NOVEMBER 02: Minister of State for Health & Medical Education and Social Welfare Asiea Naqash said that development of infrastructure in the health sector is the top priority of the Government so that people, especially those residing in rural and far-flung areas, receive quality healthcare facilities. The Minister said this after laying the foundation stone of two New Type Primary Health Center (NTPHC) at Chewdora and Ratsun villages at Beerwah Block in district Budgam.

The Minister was informed that the estimated cost of these NTPHCs is Rs 1.88 crore each and will be completed by next year. Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that the health care is one of the top priority sectors for the Government. She added that the Government is committed to reach out to rural areas with the latest technology in the field of diagnostic and treatment.

"Government had provided Rs. 134 crores for upgradation of Health centers

across the State. Five new medical colleges are under construction, new maternity hospital coming up at Bemina, PET scan facilities will be launched soon in SKIMS, LD hospital will have an additional wing. The Government has a proposal to built accommodation for doctors and paramedical staff near their health centers so that rural people get health care round the clock. It is working round the clock to provide best healthcare facilities to the people. For the Welfare of poor girls, the government had already distributed Rs 10 crore under marriage assistance Scheme," she said. Locals appraised various demands to the visiting dignitary and the Minister assured them that their genuine demands will be addressed on priority basis. She directed the health department to complete the work of Rs two crore funded PHC Centre at Peth-Muqam immediately so that the locals get health care facilities at their door-step. The Minister also directed DC Budgam to



macadamize all roads leading to Chewdora and Ratsun villages immediately, besides start renovation work of schools in these villages. She also asked for starting the work on the Beerwah-Ratsun Water scheme on priority basis so that the locals get benefit from it. Deputy Commissioner Budgam Haroon Malik, Director DSK Dr. Saleem-u-Rehman, Ex MLA Dr. Mohammad Shafi, PDP Leader Nazir Ahmad Khan, CMO Budgam, BDO Beerwah and other concerned officers were accompanied the Minister.

'It will be State of Art infrastructure with all facilities' DC Pulwama visits various sites for construction of mini-secretariat

PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 2: In order to finalize the identification of land for the proposed construction of Mini Secretariat at Tral, District Development Commissioner Ghulam Mohammad Dar along with a team of officers visited Tral today.

The DDC was accompanied by ADC Pulwama and Tral, ACR Pulwama, DGM JKPC, Tehsildar Tral/Aripal, BDO Tral and other concerned officers. The team visited various sites and assessed their feasibility for the proposed construction.

The DDC directed the Committee members that had already been constituted for this purpose to give a final report about the suitability of these locations within seven days so that construction work for mini secretariat will be started soon.

The DDC said to mitigate the sufferings of a vast population of Tral subdivision Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has committed to construct mini-secretariat at Tral and in this regard, Rs 3 crore has been sanctioned by the Government.

The DDC said that the mini secretariat will be a State of Art infrastructure and will have all the facilities like car parking, food courts, waiting rooms, surveillance cameras, round the clock security, bank facility and other facilities.

He further said that all peripheral and

sectoral offices of Tral Sub Division will be relocated in this Mini Secretariat so that the inhabitants of the subdivision will avail the hassle-free Government services various departments under one roof.

The DDC also chaired a meeting of all the officers of the Sub Division in the office chamber of Additional Deputy Commissioner Tral wherein he interacted with the officers and urged upon them to work with dedication, sincerity and in a transparent manner so that public do not face any inconvenience.

The DDC also paid a visit to SDH Tral and inspected the ongoing construction work. The executing agencies informed that the building is almost ready and only minor works have been left.

Later the DDC also participated in a school function organised by the managing body of Guru Nanak Public School. The members of Gurudawara Prabhndhak Committee appraised the DDC about various issues pertaining to the functioning of school and Gurudawara. They put forward certain demands in front of DDC like macadamization of school road from main road and construction of protection bund around the school premises. The DDC assured the Sikh community that all their genuine demands will be redressed with top most priority.

Altaf Bukhari reviews dev works of Edu Deptt

'Delay in execution work would not be tolerated'



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 02: The Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today held a detailed review of various developmental works undertaken for the upgradation of Education Department infra under various schemes in Kashmir division. Director School Education Kashmir, Dr G.N Itoo, senior officials from JK Housing Board, Police Housing Corporation and officials from construction wing of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan were present in the meeting.

Enquiring about the status of ongoing construction works being executed by various agencies under various schemes, the Minister impressed to

complete all the projects in the time bound manner, adding any unwarranted delay would not be tolerated. Assuring that the money for the developmental works will be released as per scheduled time-frame. Stressing on maintaining the quality of execution of works, the Minister called for judicious use of funds and strict adherence to deadlines.

Stressing on the need to implement the construction works on the modern lines, Bukhari asked the officials to come up with the model design for an auditorium which will be replicated for the construction of other auditoriums at different educational institutions.

DC Kishtwar reviews implementation of RDD schemes

KISHTWAR, NOVEMBER 02: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Angrez Singh Rana convened a meeting to review the functioning of Rural Development Department here today

He took a detailed review of the performance in implementation of MGNREGA, PMAY & SBM and other schemes of the department. Expressing dismay over slow pace of geo-tagging of works executed and being executed under PMAY and SBM schemes and failing to update/ upload data on MIS equivalent to man-days generated under MGNREGA,

IHHL constructed under SBM and houses approved under PMAY, DDC gave stern warning to the concerned to expedite the process and ensure timely updation of data.

Taking strong note of sluggish progress under PMAY Deputy Commissioner has given directions to Assistant Commissioner Development,

Executive Engineer REW, District panchayat Officer and Block Development Officers to put in strenuous efforts in this regard.

He warned that any laxity in this regard shall be viewed seriously and non performance shall invite strict against the concerned officers

The DC has directed the officers and field functionaries to complete the process of Geo-tagging & registration of houses under PMAY, geo-tagging under SBM, updation of MGNREGA works on web portal inclusion of deserving poor in the baseline survey and exclusion of undeserving from the SECC list by or before 20th of November 2017,

failing which strict action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against the defaulters. He further warned officers to ensure transparency in the working of the department and keep public informed about the decisions taken at village level.

Reviewing the Block-wise performance of the department in view of the implementation of MGNREGA, SBM, PMAY, the Deputy Commissioner exhorted the concerned officers to ensure that the benefits of all the developmental projects percolate down to the desired beneficiaries.

He urged to officers to work with zeal and enthusiasm so that the expectations of people are met.

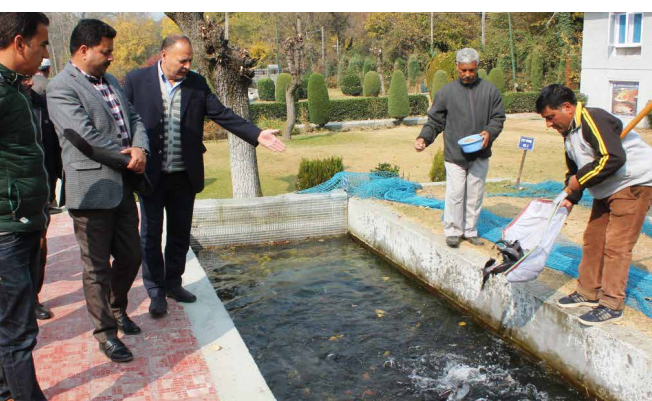
Calls for protection, preservation, conservation of forests Mir Zahoor visits Dachigam National Park, Laribal Trout Farm

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 02: Minister of State for Forest, Environment, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and Cooperatives, Mir Zahoor Ahmad today visited Dachigam National Park and Laribal Trout Farm and took stock of their functioning and activities. During his inspection of Laribal Trout Farm, the Minister was appraised about the progress achieved during the current fiscal year. He was informed that the farm had been equipped with the latest hatchery equipments.

He was also told that the Farm produced the seed that caters to the demand of the Government and Private Farms running in the Valley. The Minister was briefed that the Unit has earned Rs 20 lakh with the production of 50 quintals trout during 2016-2017 and this year the production is expected to increase.

It was also given that 20 quintals of rainbow trout are available for sale and the Unit produced 1.5 Lakh fishlings of trout during the current fiscal, so far. It was also informed that the Laribal Farm has a capacity of 6 tones of production.

Taking stock of ongoing work on Main Feeding Channel at the Farm, the Fisheries authorities informed the Minister that the work on the Channel is apace and will be completed soon. He asked the Department to pace up the work and complete it with the stipulated time frame. He also asked them to prepare a comprehensive plan for the up-gradation and development of Laribal Trout Culture Farm and submit the same to the concerned quarter for the arrangement of funds. Dur-



ing the tour, the Minister also take stock of the activities carried out by the Wildlife Department. Mir Zahoor asked the concerned to work with utmost dedication and ensure protection, conservation, and protection of forest wealth. He also asked them to organize awareness camps in surrounding areas of Dachigam National Park. Mir Zahoor also inspected Rescue Centre in the Park and the concerned authorities appraised him in detail about the working of the Centre. He was informed that presently 4 Himalayan Black Bear, one Brown Bear and one Leopard are in the Centre. The Minister was further informed that the funds for day-to-day requirements of food for wild animals available in the Centre are being provided by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) known as SOS. He was informed that about Rs 1000 per animal is incurred daily. Senior Officers of Fisheries and Wildlife Departments, besides other concerned, were present on the occasion.

DDC Kulgam visits Chanser fish farm

KULGAM, NOVEMBER 02: District Development Commissioner Kulgam, Talat Parvez today visited fish farm Chanser to detailed take stock of its function-

ing. Director Fisheries Raj Nath Pandita, Joint Director Fisheries, AD Fisheries Kulgam were also present on the occasion and briefed the DDC about progress in the implementation of Blue Revolution Mission. The DDC stressed on tapping the fish potential of district Kulgam both in inland

and marine sector and called for undertaking measures to triple the production by 2020 in the district. Pertinently, under the Mission different Departments like agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy would be dovetailed to harness the potential of Pisciculture on large scale.

President of India inaugurates 21st World Congress of mental health, calls for fighting stigma

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 02: The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 21st World Congress of Mental Health being organised by the World Federation for Mental Health in partnership with Caring Foundation and other institutions in New Delhi today (November 2, 2017). Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the World Congress of Mental Health is taking place in India for the first time. And it has come here at an appropriate moment. Mental health issues are acquiring a serious magnitude in our country. Our National Mental Health Survey 2016 found that close to 14 per cent of India's population required active mental health interventions.

The President noted that those living in metropolitan cities and those who are young – whether in the productive age group, or children and teenagers – are most vulnerable to mental illnesses. In India, we have a young population, with 65 per cent of our people below the age of 35. And our society is rapidly urbanising. This leaves us staring at a possible mental health epidemic. The President said that the biggest obstacle that mental health patients have to encounter is stigma and denial. This leads to the issue being ignored or simply not discussed. We need to talk about mental health issues and treat ailments such as depression and stress as diseases that can be cured – not as guilty secrets that must be pushed under the carpet. A major gap in combating the mental health challenge is that of human resources. India is a country with 1.25 billion people but just 700,000 doctors – less than one million. In the field of mental health, the scarcity is even more acute. There are only about 5,000 psychiatrists and less than 2,000 clinical psychologists in our country. The President said that India's National Mental Health Programme is building 22 centres of excellence in the field of mental health. In parallel, the District Mental Health Programme has already covered 517 of the approximately 650 districts in India. It is taking the conversation about mental health to the grassroots of our society. The President expressed happiness that the World Congress will have sessions on yoga, meditation and traditional approaches to mental health. He stated that the example of yoga is very instructive. When people talk about yoga, they generally refer to its physiological benefits. However, the mental, psychological, and cognitive benefits of yoga are equally worthy of our study. He looked forward to feedback on the deliberations of the special session planned on the role of yoga in battling anxiety and depression – and in preventing the onset of mental health problems.

India set to become third-largest aviation market in the world: President

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 02: The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that India is witnessing a high-growth trajectory and set to become the third-largest aviation market in the world in terms of passengers by 2026. He was addressing the gathering after inaugurating the 2nd Aero Expo India 2017, here today. The Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Shri Ashok Gajapathi Raju Pusapati, the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Shri Jayant Sinha and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that the aviation sector not only plays a key role in promoting connectivity and creating jobs but is also an important driver of the economy. He further said that the aviation is the backbone of the global transport system. It indeed is the most vital sector for linking businesses, bringing people together and promoting tourism worldwide, he added.

The Vice President said that India became the world's fastest growing domestic travel market for the 22nd time in a row recording a 26.6 per cent year-on-year growth in January 2017, according to IATA. He further said that while there is a downward trend in accidents, there cannot be any complacency and safety will have to remain the topmost priority of aviation authorities and experts. The Vice President expressed his happiness on UDAN scheme seeks to promote regional connectivity by serving the un-served and under-served airports. Connecting Tier-II cities, pilgrim towns and historic places with the wider air routes is important for boosting tourism and business travel, he added.

RRM Inaugurates Seminar on Challenges in Construction of Highway Tunnels in Himalayan Region

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 02: The Raksha Rajya Mantri Dr. Subhash Bhamre inaugurated a two-day seminar on 'Challenges in Planning, Investigation, Design and Construction of Highway Tunnels in Himalayan Region' organised by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) here today. Addressing the function, Dr. Bhamre said development of road infrastructure plays a vital role in overall development of the nation, creation of jobs, attract foreign investment and in integration of remote parts of the country with the mainland. He said, in the Himalayan region, road infrastructure is of special significance, as it remains the only means of communication for movement of inhabitants, their logistic support and for their overall development. For the areas having security concerns, necessity of reliable and all-weather connectivity becomes all the more important. Dr. Bhamre, however said that construction of road network in upper Himalayan region, poses severe challenges and to address such issues effectively and ensure all weather connectivity meeting the growing ecological and environmental concerns, underground structure like 'tunnels' are the only viable solution. "Therefore for mighty Himalayas, tunnel construction shall form an important feature of the road and rail network to ensure an all-weather, smooth and reliable communication, even if at initial stage it works out to be a costly solution" he stated. Dr. Subhash Bhamre further said that the country is now making a rapid advancement in the construction of tunnels both for road and rail network. Construction of Chenani-Nashri highway tunnel and Banihal-Quazikund rail tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir and number of tunnels in Delhi Metro has proved India's technical strength in this specialised field in the global community.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

HOBBLING MR SHARMA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attack on the Congress for "speaking the language used in Pakistan" in response to P. Chidambaram's remarks backing greater autonomy in Jammu & Kashmir is obfuscatory and deeply troubling. In response to a question at an event in Rajkot, the former Union home minister had said that when Kashmiris demand azadi, "an overwhelming majority" are actually asking for greater autonomy, as promised under Article 370. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley also pitched in, saying that such talk was anti-national. It cannot be possible that the top rung of the BJP does not know the difference between autonomy and what Pakistan stands for on Kashmir. It can only be concluded that it is deliberately conflating the demand for autonomy with separatism. Autonomy is well within the ambit of the Indian Constitution and is represented, as Chidambaram pointed out, by Article 370. The BJP wants Article 370 scrapped. This has been the position of the party and its forbears; no one calls the party anti-India, or even anti-Constitution for its espousal of doing away with a provision that has mediated the relationship between the Union of India and J&K on conditions agreed upon during the state's 1947 accession. Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has rightly underlined that J&K acceded to India, and did not merge with it, and is thus different from other states in the Indian Union.

The PM's remarks might have been a diversionary political tactic from what is proving to be a challenging campaign in Gujarat for the BJP and an attempt to turn the heat on its political opponent. Indeed, the Congress has been quick to distance itself from Chidambaram's remarks. But the PM could not have been unaware of the possible repercussions of his statements on the ground in Kashmir. The salvo came less than a week after the Centre's appointment of former Intelligence Bureau director Dineshwar Sharma as its "special representative" in Kashmir. His remit, as described by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, is to hold "sustained dialogue" to understand the "legitimate aspirations" of the people of the state. The labeling of the demand for autonomy as "anti-national" or "Pakistani" potentially hobbles Sharma's Mission Kashmir before he can even start. At any rate, it could severely circumscribe the limits of what is "legitimate" aspiration. In the Supreme Court on Monday, the Centre argued that the hearing on Article 35A — key to Article 370 — be deferred because it could have an impact on the government's initiative in Kashmir. Amid these mixed signals, it is just as well that the Supreme Court has deferred the hearing by three months.

Sharma's own brave statements that he had been given a free hand on who to talk with, and assertions by the BJP's Ram Madhav that Sharma had the mandate to talk to "everyone", now appear diluted by none other than the PM himself. The existing cynicism in Kashmir about yet another Centre-initiated "process" could have only deepened.

The new great game as it unfolds

Geopolitical interests in Southern Asia are complex — India must keep evaluating the U.S. grand strategy

► **Happymon Jacob**

Southern Asia is all set to witness the unfolding of several new geopolitical gambits. The U.S. appears to have found a new strategic balance in the region; China is pushing its way through the great American wall in Southern Asia; the 'cold war' between Kabul and Rawalpindi seems to be getting frostier by the day; Pakistan is focussed on several strategic moves; and New Delhi is looking to navigate various regional dilemmas and strategic indeterminacies. The stage is set for a new great game.

The flurry of American activities, including the recently concluded visit by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, indicates Washington's last-ditch attempt to regain control, and pre-eminence, over a region which is being pulled in conflicting directions, much to the discomfort of the U.S. administration. In doing so, Washington views New Delhi as the centrepiece of its regional grand strategy. New Delhi would do well to carefully, and constantly (re) consider its options vis-à-vis the U.S. grand strategy in Southern Asia.

Afghan calculations

Despite its initial reluctance, Washington is back to the Afghan chess table with renewed vigour — Mr. Tillerson and his colleagues in the Trump administration realise that an inability/unwillingness to get back in the game could potentially render them insignificant in the years ahead.

Having been militarily outsmarted by the Taliban in the recent past, the U.S. has renewed efforts to hunt down the Taliban leadership with the eventual aim of bringing them to the negotiating table as well as checking Rawalpindi's influence in the country, something Afghan President Ashraf Ghani would deeply appreciate. Washington and Kabul have expressed a desire to enlist New Delhi's support to do so. For Washington, courting New Delhi is also useful in balancing the increasing Chinese presence in the region, including in Afghanistan.

Moreover, the U.S. probably views its Afghan engagement as a face saver in the midst of its steady decline in Asia and President Donald Trump's

lack of credibility and standing abroad — hence there's likely to be a lot of focus on Afghanistan in the days ahead. In a way, then, the U.S.'s unsavoury statements about Pakistan are intended to woo India to cooperate closely on Afghanistan. But make no mistake, the U.S. is also courting Pakistan in pursuit of its strategic objectives in the region, its anti-Pakistan rhetoric notwithstanding.

Contradictions in U.S. policy

Shorn of the rhetoric and the feel-good melodrama, something every government in New Delhi has a strong liking for, a cold, closer look at the U.S. policy towards Southern Asia shows several inherent contradictions. Consider, for instance, the American strategy of courting India to counter Pakistan in Afghanistan, and engaging India and Pakistan to checkmate China in the region, while at the same time viewing China's role in Afghanistan as that of a potential stabiliser. Certainly, strategic engagement of a conflict-ridden region can never be a straightforward affair — yet the balancing of these contradictions can throw up unanticipated surprises.

Even as India takes delight over the American tirade against Pakistan, it is important to place the U.S.'s relationship with Pakistan in the correct historical and geopolitical perspective. The U.S. has had a deeply puzzling love-hate relationship with Pakistan since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 through to 2001, and thereafter. Pakistan is not only aware of it but also knows how to make use of it. The indispensability of this relationship needs to be properly understood by India when fashioning its own response.

We must also be aware that the absence of long-term commitments is one of the central features of American foreign policy. U.S. strategy has been susceptible to domestic, electoral, geopolitical and other determinants, and it has been no less so in the Southern Asian context. While being on the same side of the reigning hegemon is smart statecraft, a failure to cater for alternative futures would be shortsighted. International politics disincentivises



blind loyalty.

"Terror havens will not be tolerated," Mr. Tillerson declared at a joint press conference with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, echoing similar statements emanating from the Trump administration in the past weeks. Ms. Swaraj joined in by underlining that Pakistan must dismantle the terror infrastructure on its soil. Washington's hard talk on terror is welcome, but here again, one should not be deluded into thinking that the U.S. will punish Rawalpindi for not acting against India-specific groups in Pakistan. The focus is on groups fighting against Afghanistan where U.S. soldiers often get caught in the crosshairs of the Pakistan Army's manoeuvres. Recall that there was no reaction from Washington when Islamabad decided to drop terror charges against Jamaat-ud Dawah chief Hafiz Saeed.

The China conundrum

China is the new kid on the block in the Southern Asian strategic landscape — challenging American hegemony in the region, willing to build peace and mine minerals in Afghanistan, pushing India into a tight corner in its own traditional backyard, and selling dreams of inter-regional connectivity and economic prosperity to a conflict-

ridden, impoverished and under-linked region. Chinese President Xi Jinping's bold declaration at the recently-concluded 19th Party Congress that China intends to emerge stronger in the world stage indicates its new geopolitical resolve.

There is only so far the U.S. can ignore China's overtures, and there is only so much India can do to match the Chinese sales pitch. The dividends are already in sight. For instance, China is emerging as a key player in Afghanistan. The potential revival of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (comprising U.S., China, Pakistan and Afghanistan) shows just that. It's a matter of time before the U.S. utilises China's potential to serve its interests in Afghanistan. After all, national interests matter above all else.

Mr. Ghani stated last week that Afghanistan would not join the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor if Pakistan refuses to permit connectivity between India and Afghanistan. New Delhi must appreciate Mr. Ghani for being a true friend, but let's be realistic: Pakistan is unlikely to allow overland connectivity between Afghanistan and India through its territory, nor will Mr. Ghani jeopardise Afghanistan's relationship with China by insisting on bringing India on board.

Clearly, the emerging geopolitical landscape in the region requires deft handling by New Delhi. It should consider participating in Afghan peace talks while being conscious of its redlines and ability vis-à-vis Afghanistan. New Delhi should stick to its decision not to send troops to Afghanistan while at the same time enhancing its training of Afghan security forces and reconstruction efforts.

Much potential

Second, we must be able to see through complicated American geopolitical signalling in the Southern Asian region. To reduce complex American geopolitical signalling to binary equations vis-à-vis Pakistan or China would be a grave mistake. Third, New Delhi needs to carefully design the contours of its China policy: aligning our China policy to suit U.S. interests would not help our long-term interests. Recall that the U.S. kept a studied silence through the Doklam stand-off and the issue hardly figured in the public statements during Mr. Tillerson's recent visit. Fourth, Russia is not only an unavoidable traditional ally of India but it is in fact increasing its stakes in the region, including in Afghanistan, with close strategic ties with China, and increasingly with Pakistan. Let not the sound of what we would like to hear from Washington distract our attention from the strategic realities of the neighbourhood.

Finally, both geo-economically and geopolitically, the Indo-Pacific region remains pregnant with potential and possibilities for New Delhi. This is one crucial area where New Delhi and Washington, along with other regional stakeholders such as Tokyo and Canberra, could synergise political, diplomatic and military efforts to "uphold rule-based rights of navigation and overflight in the area" and promote free trade in the broader region.

Happymon Jacob is Associate Professor of Disarmament Studies, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

DEFAMATION, NOT AT THE COST OF GAGGING FREE SPEECH

► **Kapil Sibal**

Gag orders are rare. Ex-parte gag orders even rarer. Those that protect politicians raise eyebrows. Recently an Additional Senior Civil Judge in Ahmedabad granted an ex-parte injunction against 'The Wire', a website which recently published an article on Jay Shah's sudden turn of fortunes in his business enterprises after the present government came to power. Though he is a private citizen, Jay Shah happens to be the son of BJP president Amit Shah.

Another private person, Baba Ramdev, whose close association with the BJP is no secret, also recently obtained an ex-parte injunction by the Karkardooma District Court in Delhi on the distribution and sale of a book 'Godman to Tycoon: The untold story of Baba Ramdev'. In both cases, neither publisher nor author were given

the opportunity to present their version in response to the allegations.

The Supreme Court has frequently frowned upon such orders being granted. Recently, the Court in a response to a petition seeking to ban a book by Professor Kancha Ilaiah titled 'Samajika Smaggluru Komatollu', which is critical of the caste system, stated that any request for banning a book of this nature has to be strictly scrutinised because every author or writer has a fundamental right to speak out ideas freely and address thoughts adequately.

The curtailment of an individual writer or author's freedom of speech and expression should never be lightly viewed. Any person who feels that his good name is being tarnished is entitled to vindicate himself by filing for damages. But to gag the press is illogical. It serves no purpose except seen as an attempt to throttle the voice of others. Can such an order prohibit the press from reporting proceedings in court on the same



subject matter?

Reporting court proceedings can never be defamatory; so there can be no gag order in relation thereto. If that be so, such an order serves no purpose. When court proceedings are reported, the defence of 'The Wire' can be published by the website, thereby repeating the allegations. Besides, facts in themselves are occasionally bland, it's when they are collated and interpreted that they come to life. The questions asked by 'The Wire' in the light of filings before the Registrar of Companies were le-

gitimate in themselves, hardly justifying the ex-parte order of the court.

It may be possible, though it escapes credulity, that a company with limited business in 2015-16 saw its turnover spike to Rs 80 crores in 2016-17 and thereafter suffered losses and closed down in October: a saga which does raise questions. The press should not be gagged for asking legitimate questions. Maybe some courts in Ahmedabad are sensitive to issues of calumny and wish to protect reputations. The alacrity with which the injunction

was sought and granted reflects a certain level of efficiency that is to be admired!

Free speech is an inalienable right, recognised in our Constitution as a fundamental right. Since no right is absolute, it is subject to certain reasonable restrictions: sovereignty, integrity of India, security of State, public order, decency, morality, contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. So, the Constitution provides for a remedy in filing for both criminal and civil defamation as provided for in law. A gag order is no justification when seeking relief for defamation.

It may be possible, in certain extreme circumstances, for the court to order a gag on free speech for fear of inciting communal violence or if such speech were to jeopardise the security of State, say, a call for a revolt against the established order. In such circumstances gag orders seek to protect possible unwary, innocent victims of violence. 'The Wire' report against Jay Shah hardly fits into any of

these exceptions. I have yet to see a court pass a gag order against abuse, fake videos intended to incite communal discord and violence.

The present political dispensation is particularly sensitive to any form of criticism. The BJP's trolls in opposition to actor Vijay's movie 'Mersal' criticising GST and Digital India, is a reflection of both the level of intolerance and paranoia that consumes it. With prime minister Narendra Modi's popularity slipping, his bhakts will probably become insufferable. A tolerant India is being injected with venom jeopardising our civilisational values. If courts start protecting assaults on free speech there will be none else to turn to. Ex-parte injunctions of the kind seen in the case of Jay Shah are an aberration. Courts cannot afford to be on the wrong side of the law.

Jay Shah, I believe, has claimed Rs 100 crores for defaming him. If his claim succeeds the website will close down. If not, the intent of the claim was to intimidate those exercising their right to free speech.

There is an inherent contradiction in making such a claim. The extent of damages sought suggests that Jay Shah is a public personality. But he distances himself from his father and claims that as a private person his business transactions should not be questioned.

The fact that several ministers publicly came to his defence, though uncalled for, suggests that he is a public personality because of his proximity to the powers that be. So is Baba Ramdev for the same reason. The favours, if any, granted by cooperative banks, or a public sector undertaking need to be questioned. The honest thing for him would be to do is to disclose his transactions for scrutiny. Otherwise the needle of suspicion will continue to haunt him.

Kapil Sibal is a practicing lawyer in the Supreme Court. He headed several ministries in the UPA government, including that of Law & Justice. He tweets @KapilSibal

Narendra Modi, Sheikh Hasina to launch Indo-Bangla train

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina will flag off a new Indo-Bangla train next week, strengthening bilateral ties and communication.

The commercial service between Kolkata and Khulna, the third-largest city of Bangladesh, will roll out after Modi and Hasina flags it off through a special video conference on November 9.

The second passenger service — after Kolkata-Dhaka Maitri Express — between the two neighbours was announced during Hasina's last Delhi visit in April.

Modi, Hasina and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee had



launched the opening of the route, but the actual passenger service was planned for a later date.

Sources in the South Block told

HT that a programme has been planned to run the passenger train on November 9.

The two countries are keen to ex-

pand their communications and several other aspects of their bilateral ties despite little movement on the Teesta accord due to resistance from West Bengal government.

New Delhi and Dhaka also want to reopen some of the old, British-era road and rail communication links that were once vital for undivided India but were snapped after partition and the 1965 war against Pakistan.

While there are two roads and rail links between Dhaka and Kolkata, tenders have been floated to connect Agartala with Akhaura, giving the landlocked northeast easier access to ports of Bangladesh. Rail link between Dhaka and Agartala will also significantly cut down travel time.

Drones for e-commerce deliveries likely next year

The Indian air space is set to get more interesting in 2018, with the government issuing draft regulations on Wednesday for drone operations that could be used for anything from e-commerce deliveries to photography.

"The drone industry offers many advantages and can help development in several sectors such as agriculture, oil and gas... We want to make India the world's leader in drones and its applications, which is why we have drafted a policy that allows unfettered use of drones while taking care of the unique security challenges they pose," Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha said.

The draft regulations, which Civil Aviation Secretary R.N. Choubey said will be finalised by December 31 this year after hearing out stakeholders' views, envisage

a virtually unregulated flight at heights up to 50 feet for nano drones that weigh 250 grams or lower.

All drones will have to operate within a visual line of sight, will be allowed only during day time and below 200 feet.

Barring the nano drones that could also be used indoors, all drones will have to register with the Director General of Civil Aviation. Dropping human payload, animals or hazardous material will not be permitted, though, Mr. Sinha said, it was possible to imagine air rickshaw drones that could ferry passengers.

The other classifications of drones, officially termed unmanned aircraft systems, are Micro (250 gm to 2 kg), Mini (more than 2 kg to 25 kg), Small (more than 25 kg till 150 kg) and Larger (over 150 kg).

No conversion for money seen in 'love jihad' cases: NIA

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) informed the Supreme Court earlier this week that none of the men and women it examined in cases that emerged while investigating the Kerala 'love jihad' case were enticed by monetary benefits to convert to Islam. The agency said there were other methods used to convert them to Islam that included religious propaganda.

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, while addressing a press conference on the issue, claimed on Wednesday that "if anyone voluntarily wants to follow any faith that the Constitution permits it was their right...but inducement, intimidation and allurements (to convert) by money is illegal." Mr. Prasad also linked the conversions to terror cases. In a status report filed before the Supreme Court on Monday the NIA had said that it examined six persons who claimed they were lured to convert to Islam and a "common thread" ran through them.

The 70-page report in a sealed cover was filed by the agency pertaining to the ongoing investigation in the case where Asokan, the father of a 25-year-old Hindu woman, Akhila alias Hadiya, has alleged that his daughter was forced to convert to Islam and marry a Muslim man.

Mr. Asokan told the NIA that his daughter continues to maintain her stand that she converted to Islam on her own and married Shafin Jahan willingly.

"We have put the father's statement on record in the status report filed before the SC. We are yet to examine Hadiya and her husband.

The SC has asked the father to produce her on November 27," a senior NIA official said.

As reported by The Hindu, the NIA told the apex court that the agency was not able to question Hadiya even once as her father said she was not in the "right frame of mind."

"There are two aspects to the case, one that Hadiya converted to Islam and married on her own.

The other aspect is that a common set of people were involved in her conversion and those of others. The first aspect might not lead to a criminal case but the apex court has to decide about PFI, the organisation and the action to be taken against it," said the official.

The Kerala Police had handed over a list of 89 cases to NIA where families or individuals had alleged they were asked to forcibly convert to Islam. Of these cases, around 30 pertained to Hindu men and women and the remaining belonged to other religions.

The NIA said it examined nine such cases of conversion to Islam and in at least four, the involvement of members of the Popular Front of India (PFI) was established. The agency said it had examined a woman named Sainaba, an activist of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), the political arm of the PFI and would question her again.

Earlier this week, a Kerala-based social activist Rahul Easwar released a 17-second video of Hadiya where she is heard speaking about threat to her life from her father.

India, Bhutan security indivisible: President

NEW DELHI: The security of India and Bhutan is "indivisible and mutual", President Ram Nath Kovind said here on Wednesday. The first such statement on the subject since the Doklam standoff with China ended in August indicates a closer engagement between India and Bhutan after the months-long episode.

Mr. Kovind, who issued the statement after meeting Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck in Delhi, thanked the King for his "personal involvement" in addressing the Doklam crisis, the first time a reference has been made to his role during the tensions between India and China.

"Excellent ties" "[The President] conveyed deep appreciation for the King of Bhutan's personal involvement and guidance and the support provided by Bhutan in addressing the recent situation

in the Doklam area. He added that the manner in which both India and Bhutan stood together to address the situation in the Doklam area is a clear testimony to our friendship," said a press release issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan after the King and Queen of Bhutan met Mr. Kovind.

Expressing "satisfaction at the excellent state" of ties in a joint statement issued after his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the King also thanked India for its support to Bhutan's socio-economic development, which includes hydropower projects.

However, neither the External Affairs Ministry nor the Bhutanese Embassy responded to queries from The Hindu about the nature of the King's role.

Officials said the King, who is on a four-day visit to meet the President, the Prime Minister and senior



Cabinet Ministers, will return to India for a formal "state visit" next year, which marks the golden jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan statement is significant as it seeks to end speculation over India's decision to send troops into land caught in a dispute between Bhutan and China. While Indian officials said the

Indian troops went into Doklam at the request of the Royal Bhutanese Army, Bhutan's government has never said so officially. In statements issued on June 29 and August 29, the Bhutanese Foreign Ministry said China was in violation of its agreements, but gave no statement on the Indian Army's role there.

Clearing the air The visit by the Royal couple to Delhi this week is, therefore, being seen as not just a personal one, but one that signals a tacit endorsement of India's actions during the Doklam crisis, as well as a reaffirmation of ties, analysts said.

President Kovind's comment that "security concerns of India and Bhutan are indivisible and mutual" is also likely to be analysed closely for whether the two countries are considering a new formulation in their ties post-Doklam.

AAP govt vs Centre: Delhi L-G can't sit on files, must act in time with reasons, says SC

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday said the Delhi Lieutenant Governor cant "scuttle an executive decision by sitting over a file", as it heard pleas against the L-G being the national capital's administrative head. The Delhi government had challenged a high court verdict that said the L-G had primacy over the elected government. "He (L-G) must exercise his power in reasonable time with reasons," the court said. A Supreme Court bench had on February 15 referred to the constitution bench the batch of petitions filed by the Delhi government over the conflict with the Union government. The Delhi government told the Supreme Court on February 2 it had exclusive executive powers in relation to matters falling within the purview of the assembly and the Centre, President and Lieutenant Governor could encroach upon them. During the constitution bench's hearing on Thursday, justice DY



Chandrachud noted that the L-G must give reasons for his decisions, which should be taken within reasonable time.

The Delhi government said that the Centre -- through Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal -- had paralysed its executive functions. It said the L-G had created a situation where no bureaucrat was obey-

ing directions of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and his ministers.

The Supreme Court reiterated the L-G's primacy over the police, land and public order. Delhi was given an assembly and an elected government through Article 239 (AA) in the Constitution by the 69th amendment in 1991.

Toll in transformer blast near Jaipur rises to 14

JAIPUR: The death toll in the explosion of an electricity transformer at Khatulai village near Shahpura town in Rajasthan went up to 14 on Wednesday, as nine more critically injured persons died at the Sawai Man Singh government hospital here.

The massive explosion took place on Tuesday evening when a marriage procession was passing by.

Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has ordered a high-level inquiry into the incident.

About 10 persons with more than 50% burns are being treated at SMS Hospital, even as the police were trying to identify the bodies which were charred beyond recognition.

The Khatulai village falls in Jaipur district and is situated near the Jaipur-Delhi national highway.

Relief to family Jaipur Collector Siddharth Mahajan announced financial assistance of 10 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund and Jaipur Vidyut Vitaran Nigam Limited.

The participants in the marriage procession, mostly women, were performing the pre-wedding ritual of 'Bhaat' when the transformer exploded. According to eyewitness accounts, the transformer's scalding oil fell on women and children and their clothes caught fire.

Hardline preacher Zakir Naik finds refuge in Malaysia as politicised Islam grows

KUALA LUMPUR: When Zakir Naik emerged from a prominent Malaysian mosque last month fans swarmed about him, seeking selfies with the Indian Muslim televangelist whose hardline views have sparked a criminal investigation back in his home country.

Accompanied by a bodyguard, Naik was making a rare public appearance at the Putra Mosque in Malaysia's administrative capital, where the prime minister and his cabinet members often worship.

Naik, who has been banned in the UK, has been given permanent residency in Malaysia, and embraced by top government officials.

Critics see Naik's presence in Malaysia as another sign of top-level support for hardline Islam in a country with substantial minorities of Christians, Hindus and Buddhists, and which has long projected a moderate Islamic image. Support for a more politicised Islam has grown in recent years under Prime Minister Najib Razak, especially after he lost the popular vote in the 2013 general election — the ruling coalition's worst electoral performance.

Since then, his ruling party

has been trying to appease an increasingly conservative ethnic Malay-Muslim base and religion has become a battleground ahead of elections the prime minister has to call by mid-2018. Naik, a 52-year-old medical doctor, has triggered controversy with his puritan brand of Islam — recommending the death penalty for homosexuals and those who abandon Islam as their faith, according to media reports. A YouTube video shows Naik saying that if Osama bin Laden "is terrorizing America the terrorist, the biggest terrorist, I am with him".

Last week, India's counter-terrorism agency prepared charges against Naik, saying he has been "promoting enmity and hatred between different religious groups in India through public speeches and lectures."

Bangladesh suspended Peace TV channel, which features Naik's preachings, after some media reports claimed bombers of a Dhaka cafe that killed 22 people last year were admirers of him. Islamic State claimed



responsibility for the attack.

The Malaysian government accommodates Naik because "he remains a reasonably popular character amongst Malays, who gloss over his more controversial aspects," said Rashaad Ali, an analyst with S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore.

"If the government were to kick him out of the country, it causes them to lose religious credibility in the eyes of the public."

At his appearance at the Putra mosque last month, a female Reuters reporter asked about the investigation in India.

Naik would only say: "Sorry, it is not right for me to speak with ladies in public."

Naik did not respond to subsequent requests for comment from Reuters. Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi told parliament on Tuesday that Naik, who obtained permanent residency five years ago, was not being given "preferential treatment".

"Over the time spent in this country, he has not broken any laws or regulations. As such, there is no reason from a legal standpoint to detain or arrest him," Zahid said. The government has not received any of-

ficial request from India "related to terrorism allegations involving him", he added.

Zahid and the prime minister have both posted photos on Facebook of their meetings with Naik last year in Malaysia.

A group of Malaysian activists has filed suit in the High Court to deport Naik, saying he is a threat to public peace in the multi-racial society — about 40% of Malaysia's population is non-Muslim. The group said it was unaware Naik had been going to the Putrajaya mosque — or where he might be in Malaysia. Officials at the Putra Mosque said Naik has been attending Friday prayers there for about a month. He has also been spotted in other mosques, hospitals and restaurants in the administrative capital in recent months, according to witnesses that Reuters spoke to. Naik has in the past denied India's allegations. In an interview with a Kuwaiti television channel in May, he said he was being targeted by the Hindu nationalist government of Narendra Modi because of his

popularity. Malaysia's opposition Islamic Party (PAS), which has defended Naik in the past, last week urged the government to disregard any potential Indian extradition request, saying the allegations aim "to block his influence and efforts to spread religious awareness among the international community."

Nine sultans Islamic groups have stoked controversy for trying to impose their ethos in a multi-cultural country. Malaysian authorities cancelled a planned beer festival last month, citing security concerns, and for some years now international popstars who wish to make appearances in Malaysia face restrictions over clothing and dancing.

Islam is the official religion in Malaysia. The laws, however, are secular, though the country does have sharia courts for civil cases for Muslims.

Malaysia's nine sultans, who take turns as the mostly ceremonial monarch and are the official guardians of Islam in Malaysia, last month called for unity and religious harmony

after what they described as "excessive actions" in the name of Islam. One of them harshly condemned a Muslim-only laundrette. "We are seeing this gravitation towards fundamentalism and a conservative idea of Islam because the current government doesn't want to be seen as secular anymore," said Ahmad Farouk Musa, founder of a moderate Islam think-tank, Islamic Renaissance Front (IRF).

To ensure Malay support, the government thinks it has "to have Islamic credentials just like PAS," Farouk told Reuters. said. "Islam sells."

In September, Turkish writer Mustafa Akyol was detained for giving "an unauthorised speech" in the Malaysian capital, in which he argued that governments shouldn't police religion or morality. Zahid, also the home minister, said Akyol's book "Islam Without Extremes: A Muslim Case for Liberty" has been banned as it "contravened norms of the society in Malaysia". Farouk, who organised the speech, said he now faces charges for abetting Akyol.



Smoking cigarettes can harm your intestines, says study

Crohn's disease is a chronic inflammatory bowel disease that affects the lining of the digestive tract causing severe pain. Smoking cigarettes can be harmful to the intestines and

also increase the risk of developing Crohn's disease, says a study. Crohn's disease is a chronic inflammatory bowel disease that affects the lining of the digestive tract causing se-

vere pain. It is more likely to occur in people with reactive airway disease (bronchial spasm), suggesting that inflammation in the lungs is linked to inflammation in the gut', says an expert.

Smoking also increases the levels of CD4+ T cells, a type of white blood cell, which releases a pro-inflammatory protein called interferon-gamma. These white blood cells activated by

cigarette smoke in the lungs, travel to the colon to cause colitis, an inflammation of the colon resembling Crohn's disease. 'Our results suggest that cigarette smoking activates specific

white blood cells in the lung, which might later move to the colon, triggering bowel inflammation, explains the expert. Smokers, especially those who also have bowel dis-

ease, should reduce their smoking. The researchers also found increased levels of mucus and inflammation in the colon, and blood in the feces of the smoke-exposed mice.

Dear moms-to-be, breastfeeding for longer may improve maternal sensitivity

Women who breastfeed their children longer exhibit more maternal sensitivity well past the infant and toddler years, according to a 10-year-long study. Maternal sensitivity was defined as the synchronous timing of a mother's responsiveness to her child, her emotional tone, her flexibility in her behaviour and her ability to read her child's cues.

Previous research shows that breastfeeding for two months can cut risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome by half, and can help mothers cope with the changes taking place.

Researchers, including those from Boise State University in the US, analysed data from interviews with 1,272 families. They were recruited when their infants were a month old, mothers completed a home interview and became part of the initial study sample. The sample included a substantial proportion of less-educated parents - 30% had no college education, and ethnic minority families - 13% were African-American.



In the study, published in the journal *Developmental Psychology*, women breastfed for an average of 17 weeks. Fewer than one per cent breastfed for 24 months and 29% did not breastfeed at all. Researchers interviewed and

videotaped families in their homes periodically until their child turned 11. Parents interacted with their children during free play scenarios and age-appropriate problem-solving tasks. Researchers found that even though increased breastfeeding duration led to greater maternal sensitivity over time, the effect sizes were small.

That means the close interaction experienced during breastfeeding may be only one of many ways the bond is strengthened between mother and child, said Jennifer Weaver from Boise State University.

"It was surprising to us that breastfeeding duration predicted change over time in maternal sensitivity," Weaver said.

"We had prior research suggesting a link between breastfeeding and early maternal sensitivity, but nothing to indicate that we would continue to see effects of breastfeeding significantly beyond the period when breastfeeding had ended," Weaver said.

Antacid consumption may lead to stomach cancer



If you are habitual of popping up drugs to treat acid reflux and stomach ulcers, hold on as they might cause cancer.

As per a research, the link between common Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) like pantoprazole or rabeprazole may put you at double the risk of developing stomach cancer. Although the researchers from the University of Hong Kong said it was an observational study and no firm conclusions can be drawn about cause and effect and PPIs were generally considered safe, the link is significant as millions take such drugs to lower acid reflux.

To understand the link, the team led by Ka Shing Cheung from Department of Medicine at University of Hong Kong compared the use of PPIs with another type of drug used to dampen down acid production called H2 blockers (like ranitidine) in 63,397 adults treated with triple therapy - a combination of a PPI and two antibiotics to kill off "H pylori" over seven days - between 2003 and 2012. They were subsequently monitored until they either developed stomach cancer, died or the study ended (end of December 2015), whichever came first. The average monitoring period lasted 7.5 years.

During this time, 3,271 (5 per cent) people took PPIs for an average of nearly three years and 21,729 took H2 blockers. In all, 153 (0.24 per cent) people developed stomach cancer after triple therapy. None tested positive for H pylori at the time, but all had long-standing gastritis (inflammation of the stom-

ach lining). Taking PPIs was associated with a more than doubling (2.44) in the risk of developing stomach cancer, while taking H2 blockers was not associated with any such heightened risk," the study noted.

The average time between triple therapy and the development of stomach cancer was just under 5 years.

More frequent use was associated with greater risk, with daily use linked to a more than quadrupling in risk (4.55) compared with weekly use.

The drug first eliminates a bacteria called as *Helicobacter pylori* (H pylori) suspected of fuelling the cancer's development. However, even after H pylori was removed, the risk of developing the disease still rose in tandem with the dose and duration of PPI treatment, the researcher noted in the paper published in the journal *Gut*. The longer PPIs were used, the greater was the risk of developing stomach cancer, rising to 5-fold after more than a year, to more than 6-fold after two or more years, and to more than 8-fold after three or more years, the researchers said. Recent research has also linked long term use of PPIs to various unwanted effects, including pneumonia, heart attack and bone fracture. The "clear dose-response and time response trend" in the use of PPIs and stomach cancer risk, suggests that doctors "should exercise caution when prescribing long-term PPIs...even after successful eradication of H pylori", the researchers noted.

Your body structure affects your appetite too, says study



A study says that human skeleton is much more than just the structure supporting the muscles and other tissues, it has an affect on the appetite also.

Researchers in Canada studied a hormone produced by human bones, called osteocalcin, which affects how we metabolize sugar and fat. They unveiled a new piece of the puzzle that explains how osteocalcin works which might open the door to new ways of preventing type 2 diabetes and obesity eventually.

Just think about how women are more prone to suffer from osteoporosis when they reach menopause because their oestrogen levels drop,' said Mathieu Ferron, director of the IRCM's Integrative and Molecular Physiology Research Unit. However, the idea that bone itself can affect other tissues took root only a few years ago with the discovery of osteocalcin.

Thanks to this hormone, produced by bone cells, sugar is metabolised more easily.

"One of osteocalcin's functions is to increase insulin production, which in turn reduces blood glucose levels," Ferron said.

"It can also protect us from obesity by increasing energy expenditure," he said.

Studies have shown that, for some people, changes in blood concentrations of osteocalcin may even stave off the development of diabetes.

Osteocalcin is produced by osteoblasts, the same cells responsible for making our bones.

The hormone builds up in bone, and then, through a series of chemical reactions, is released into the blood, researchers said.

Here's why anti-ageing is a myth and ageing impossible to beat

Efforts to find the secret to everlasting youth may be futile, as scientists have mathematically proven that it is impossible to halt ageing in multicellular organisms like humans.

Current understanding of the evolution of ageing leaves open the possibility that ageing could be stopped if only science could figure out a way to make selection between organisms perfect. One way to do that might be to use competition between cells to eliminate poorly functioning "sluggish" cells linked to ageing, while keeping other cells intact. However, the solution is not that simple, researchers said.

"Ageing is mathematically inevitable. There's logically, theoretically, mathematically no way out," said Joanna Masel, professor at University of Arizona in the US.

Two things happen to the body on a cellular level as it ages, Nelson said. One is that

cells slow down and start to lose function, like when your hair cells, for example, stop making pigment. The other thing that happens is that some cells crank up their growth rate, which can cause cancer cells to form.

As we get older, we all tend, at some point, to develop cancer cells in the body, even if they are not causing symptoms, researchers said. They found that even if natural selection were perfect, ageing would still occur, since cancer cells tend to cheat when cells compete.

"As you age, most of your cells are ratcheting down and losing function, and they stop growing, as well," said Paul Nelson from University of Arizona in the US. "But some of your cells are growing like crazy. What we show is that this forms a double bind - a catch-22," said Nelson, lead author of the study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Eating walnuts may help ward off several diseases: Experts

Eating a diet rich in walnuts may help prevent several diseases prevalent in India such as cardiovascular disorders, cancer and diabetes, according to an international team of researchers.

Researchers and medical professionals from the field of Nutrition, Cardiovascular, Cognition, Alzheimer's and Diabetes today held a scientific meeting here to discuss the state of health in India, dietary patterns, chronic health conditions and promotion of healthy lifestyles. The day-long Scientific and Health Research Meeting hosted by the California Walnut Commission (CWC) discussed the role of walnuts in disease prevention and maintenance of healthy lifestyle in the country.

Several research findings have shown positive outcomes of walnuts in health issues such as cardiovascular disease,

cancer, diseases of ageing and diabetes. According to Dr Rekha Sharma, Former Chief Dietician, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, metabolic syndrome combined with physical inactivity and under nutrition co exists in India, as a double

burden on health.

Obesity, hypertension, diabetes and coronary artery disease are like a rising inferno in India, particularly in urban areas and on the other side of the spectrum we have under nutrition, especially in children, she said. Sharma quoted a Lancet study which found that India is the third most obese country in the world after US and China.

"Indian population should increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, legumes, whole grains and nuts in a daily diet," said Sharma. "All nuts are rich source of monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) and walnuts in addition also contain high amounts of omega-3 fatty acid, making it heart healthy," she said. Researchers said that the inci-



deuce to around 16,300 crores, they said. "Walnuts in the diet may improve cognitive function in normal individuals, and

reduce the risk or delay the onset or progression of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and dementia in Alzheimer's disease (AD)," said Abha Chauthan, from New York State Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities (IBRD) in the US.

The event saw the presence of several international researchers who talked about their area of study on walnuts.

"Walnuts are the only tree nut to contain a significant amount of the plant-based omega-3, alpha-linolenic acid, required by the human body," said Dr H K Chopra, who chaired the meeting.

"A handful of walnuts also offers four grammes of protein, two

grammes of fibre, and is a good source of magnesium," said Chopra. "With a variety of nutrients and a flavour profile that pairs well with an array of seasonal foods, they are an ideal ingredient any time of the year," he said. The CWC has been actively highlighting walnuts to Indian consumers through marketing activities that promote walnuts of California origin, quality, taste and positive health benefits.

These health benefits have been demonstrated through over 180 research papers published since early 1990's when the commission actively began assessing the role of walnuts in diet and effect on chronic disease prevention.

"This Scientific and Health Research Meeting was an exceptional platform to discuss the state of health in India, dietary patterns, chronic health conditions and promotion of healthy lifestyles," said Michelle McNeil Connelly, CEO of the CWC.

"We hope that this meeting provides an opportunity to maintain a network of researchers and medical professionals who may contribute to walnut-specific health research in India," Connelly said.

GSTN launches offline utility for GSTR-2

GST Network, which developed the technology backbone for new indirect tax regime, on Wednesday said it has launched an offline tool for filing purchase returns GSTR-2. The tool would allow taxpayers to export data of GSTR-2 to excel. This will be helpful in comparing this data with purchase register to take actions like accept, reject and modify, GSTN said in a statement.

"We keep introducing new features and tools for the convenience of the taxpayers. This new version of the offline tool for GSTR-2 is better than the previous one as it allows taxpayers to compare data with the purchase data," GSTN CEO Prakash Kumar said. So far, nearly 21 lakh businesses have filed GSTR-2 for July. The last date for filing is November 30. Nearly 47 lakh businesses had filed GSTR-1 or sales returns, which has to be correspondingly matched with GSTR-2 or purchase returns.

Besides, the portal has also activated form GST CMP-02 which allows taxpayers to opt for composition scheme.

The GST Council last month hiked the threshold for businesses to opt for composition scheme to Rs 1 crore, from Rs 75 lakh earlier. The window for opting for composition scheme will remain open till March 31.

Also GSTN has activated the form for intimation of details of stock on the date of opting for composition levy form GST CMP-03 is now available on the portal. However, this applies only for persons registered under the existing law migrating on the appointed day.

Form GST ITC-04 is also available on the GST portal. This will enable taxpayers to file quarterly statement that has to be furnished by taxpayers having details of goods or capital goods sent to job worker and received back.

Besides, taxpayers who are registered under the existing laws and has been migrated can cancel his registration if not liable for registration under GST.

In case a taxpayer has a grievance pertaining to discrepancy relating to payment, he can use Form GST PMT-07 which is available on the common portal.

Cognizant Q3 net up 11%, eyes 9.5-10% rev growth in 2017

US-based IT major Cognizant said on Wednesday its net profit has jumped 11.4 per cent to USD 495 million during September 2017 quarter from the year-ago period.

This is against a net profit of USD 444 million in July-September 2016, Cognizant said in a statement.

Cognizant, which follows January-December as a fiscal, has a majority of its workforce in India.

The company's revenues rose 9.1 per cent to USD 3.77 billion in the third quarter, meeting its guidance range of USD 3.73-3.78 billion for the period.

Cognizant has also revised its revenue growth outlook for the full year to 9.5-10 per cent (USD 14.78-14.84 billion) compared to a previous forecast of 9-10 per cent growth.

For the fourth quarter, it expects revenues to be in the range of USD 3.79-3.85 billion. "We are making consistent progress in executing the plan to accelerate our shift to digital services and solutions," Cognizant CEO Francisco D'Souza said.

Cognizant has systematically built the significant capabilities needed to help clients transform their business, operations, and technology models, he added. "We believe our long-term relationships with clients and deep understanding of their priorities put us in a privileged position to help them adapt, compete, and grow," he said.

Indian economy is making tremendous progress: Pepsico's Indra Nooyi

Indian economy is making "tremendous" progress and is adapting to the demands of life in the 21st century, Indian-American Pepsico chairman Indra Nooyi said on Wednesday, a day after India jumped 30 places to rank 100th in the World Bank's 'ease of doing business' ranking.

India, which was ranked 142nd when Narendra Modi government took office in 2014 and 130th last year, is the only large country this year to have achieved such a significant shift.

"India's economy is making tremendous progress adapting to the demands of life in the 21st century, particularly when it comes to digi-

tal infrastructure and using technology to turn demonetisation into remonetisation," Nooyi, 62, said.

"Given the Prime Minister's commitment to making it easier for international companies to do business, I have a feeling that the pace of change will only accelerate, and before long Incredible India will be known as Innovative India," Nooyi said in a statement issued by the US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF), of which she is a board member.

Lauding India for improving its ranking, the statement said this important achievement reflected the incredible progress the country has made in recent years in increas-

ing the ease of doing business.

John Chambers, chairman of USISPF, congratulated prime minister Modi for this achievement.

"India's future is brighter than ever thanks to the government's willingness to embrace tough but essential economic reforms, such as demonetisation and creating the Goods and Service Tax," he said.

"This, in combination with unprecedented investments in its digital infrastructure and workforce, will only continue to strengthen the US-India strategic partnership for years to come," Chambers said.

India climbing a historic 30 spaces forward is due to reforms and policy changes that have been

made by the Modi government, USISPF said.

This year's ranking represents India's highest ever increase and "signals the momentum for reforms" being made under the leadership of Modi, it said.

"India has streamlined the business incorporation process by combining elements for submission into a single form," said Punit Renu, USISPF board member and CEO of Deloitte.

He commended the efforts made by India, saying they will greatly improve the ease of doing business for the services sector, and across all sectors.

The improvements over the past

year have put India on this year's World Bank list of top ten improvers for doing business among all countries across the world, said Mukesh Aghi, president of USISPF.

"We applaud the efforts made by Prime Minister Modi's government. The 30 slot increase shows results made by the Prime Minister and will have a strong impact on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India going forward," Aghi said.

USISPF said it aimed to build upon this already significant trajectory that has been built and is working with both local and the central governments to further these reforms and build FDI by engaging US member companies in these efforts.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train in the works but 40% seats on route go vacant: RTI

As the Narendra Modi government proceeds with the grandiose plans for a bullet train between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, a RTI query has revealed that over 40% seats on all the trains on this sector go vacant causing huge losses to Western Railway. According to RTI replies received by Mumbai activist Anil Galgali, only in the past one quarter, the Western Railways' staggering losses on this sector is nearly Rs 30 crore, or around Rs 10 crore per month.

"The Indian government is over-enthusiastic and plans to spend more than Rs 1 lakh crore on the Bullet Train project, but it has not done its homework properly," Galgali said, adding it raises serious question marks on the viability of the Bullet Train project, whenever it comes up.

The Indian Railways have also admitted that they have no plans to introduce any new trains on this sector which is already in the red.

Replying to Galgali's query on seats occupancy on all the trains between the two cities, the WR revealed that in the past three months, 40% all seats went vacant on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad sector and 44% empty on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai route. WR's chief commercial manager Manjeet Singh said between July 1 and September 30, there are 32 mail/express serving this sector with a total seating capacity of 735,630 seats on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad sector.

Of these, only 441,795 seats were booked during that period generating



a revenue of Rs 30,16,24,623 against the total estimated expected income of Rs 44,29,08,220 — incurring a huge loss of Rs 14,12,83,597 in the past quarter. Similarly, on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai route served by a total of 31 mail/express trains with a seating capacity of 706,446, only 398,002 seats were booked, resulting in a revenue of Rs 26,74,56,982 against the estimated expected income of Rs 42,53,11,471, spelling a massive loss of Rs 15,78,54,489.

The WR provided the data of all the major trains plying on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad-Mumbai route like the Durantos, Shatabdi Expresses, Lokshakti Express, Gujarat Mail, Bhavnagar Express, Saurashtra Express, Vivek-Bhuj Express and others.

Faced with the vacancies on existing trains, the WR Divisional Engineer, Ahmedabad informed that there is no fresh proposal to introduce any new trains on this sector.

In fact, Galgali said that the most popular train, 12009 Shatabdi Express

with a capacity of 72,696 seats sold only 36,117 during the July-September period on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad route and in the return direction of the total 67,392 seats, only 22,982 were sold. This train, which once always ran packed in all seasons both ways has now proved to be a loss-maker, and the executive chair car with 7,505 seats was practically deserted with just 1,469 seats booked, plummeting revenues from the estimated Rs 1,45,49,714 to a paltry Rs 26,41,083 during the last quarter.

The position in all other trains was similar and though there is a higher demand for sleeper class compared to seats, the WR has not done enough to augment its capacity.

Galgali pointed out that given this current alarming scenario, coupled with growing preference for flights and improved road travel, the Central and Gujarat governments must review the expensive option of the Bullet Train before it becomes a white elephant for the Indian taxpayers.

Ease of doing business 'extremely relevant' for investment: Shaktikanta Das

World Bank report says India has jumped 30 places to rank 100th in the 'ease of doing business' ranking, helped by a slew of reforms. Improvement in ease of doing business is "extremely relevant" and will promote private investment, growth and job creation, former economic affairs secretary Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday.

Reforms which are underway would further improve India's ranking in the future, he said.

India has jumped 30 places to rank 100th in the 'ease of doing business' ranking, helped by a slew of reforms in taxation, licensing, investor protection and bankruptcy resolution, as per the latest World Bank report released on Tuesday.

"India's giant leap in the Ease of Doing Business is the result of several determined & collective steps by Centre & States. We can get there," tweeted Ashok Lavasa, who demitted office of Finance Secretary yesterday.

The latest report has not taken into account the Goods and Services Tax (GST) as the roll out was after the cut off date of June 1, 2017 for the study. The GST came into effect from July 1 this year.

"Ease of doing business extremely relevant for private investment, growth and job creation. Pipeline measures will aid this process further," Das tweeted.

Govt to implement 200 reforms to push India into top 50 in World Bank ranking

Ease of doing business: Rahul Gandhi, Arun Jaitley take potshots at each other over India's ranking

Many of the reforms that helped India to achieve this feat were undertaken during the tenure of these two secretaries.

India has received foreign direct investment (FDI) of over USD 170 billion in the last three-and-a-half years. "Congratulations to all my former colleagues in Govt. Keep it up. India has the potential to be in top 50," he said in another tweet. India, which was ranked 130th among the 190 nations, is "one of the top 10 improvers in this year's assessment, having implemented reforms in 8 out of 10 'doing business' indicators," the report said.

This is the first time India has broken into top 100 nations.

Jaitley-led panel may direct banks to examine merger proposal

Finance minister Arun Jaitley-headed ministerial panel on consolidation of PSU banks has been empowered to direct lenders to examine proposals for amalgamation.

The finance minister headed Alternative Mechanism (AM) will receive inputs from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) before according in-principle approvals, the government said in a statement on Wednesday.

"The proposals received from banks for in-principle approval to formulate schemes of amalgamation will be placed before the AM. A Report on the proposals cleared by AM will be sent to the Cabinet every three months," it said.

"Alternative Mechanism may also direct banks to examine proposals for amalgamation," it added.

It said the AM, which will receive inputs from the Reserve Bank before according in-principle approvals, may also direct banks to examine proposals for amalgamation.

The other members of the AM panel are Minister of Railways and Coal Piyush Goyal and Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman.

The AM would devise its own procedure for appraisal of amalgamation proposals by banks, and be guided overall by the objectives of the Nationalisation Acts [Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Acts, 1970 and 1980].

The statement further said that the "Final Schemes" formulated will be approved by the central government, and laid in both the Houses of Parliament.

While announcing the unprecedented Rs 2.11 lakh crore capital infusion road map for the public sector banks last month, Jaitley had said, this will be accompanied by a series of banking reforms over the next few months.

The constitution of AM is a movement in that direction. The Union Cabinet in August had decided to set up an Alternative Mechanism to fast track consolidation among public sector banks to create strong lenders.

The move to create large banks aims at meeting the credit needs of the growing Indian economy and building capacity in the PSB space to raise resources without dependence on the state exchequer.

Two Indo-British teams win Rs 1.7-crore Newton Award

Two Indo-British teams of scientists — one which developed a portable device to monitor maternal health and another that worked on producing solar energy more efficiently won the first ever Newton Award on Wednesday.

At a function in New Delhi, both teams were awarded £200,000 or Rs 1.7 crore to fund further research. It was the first ever award under the Newton Fund.

The Newton Fund was launched in 2014 to promote research collaboration between UK and 18 partner countries. Every year till 2021, a minimum of five Newton-funded projects will receive the award. Research on the CRADLE Vital Signs Alert (VSA), a portable hand-held device capable of measuring blood pressure and pulse, detecting hypertension and circulatory shock, was led by Andrew Shennan, a scientist based in London. He collaborated with Shivaprasad Goudar, professor at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical Col-



lege in Belgaum, Karnataka, to promote its use in India.

The solar project was a joint project between Hari Upadhyaya, from Brunel University and Viresh Dutta of the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi. The aim is for more efficient solar power generation by improving perovskite solar cells. Ahead of the award ceremony, India's science and

technology minister Harsh Vardhan met Britain's minister of state for science, research and innovation, Jo Johnson to review progress under the Newton-Bhabha programme, a partnership in the areas of science, technology and innovation.

"Harnessing science and technology for a better future of our people is the new spirit which

drives the present Indo-UK cooperation," Harsh Vardhan said about the Newton Bhabha programme.

The award function also saw the release of the antibacterial resistance (ABR) report to mark the launch of a virtual research centre that will promote collaborative work between Indian and UK scientists on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

45 US states accuse 18 companies of collusion in broad generic drug price-fixing

A large group of US states accused key players in the generic drug industry of a broad price-fixing conspiracy, moving on Tuesday to widen an earlier lawsuit to add many more drugmakers and medicines in an action that sent some company shares tumbling.

The lawsuit, brought by the attorneys general of 45 states and the District of Columbia, accused 18 companies and subsidiaries and

named 15 medicines. It also targeted two individual executives: Rajiv Malik, president and executive director of Mylan NV, and Satish Mehta, CEO and managing director of India's Emcure Pharmaceuticals.

Shares of Pennsylvania-based Mylan, also named as a defendant, closed down 6.6%.

The states said the drugmakers and executives divided customers for their drugs among themselves,

agreeing that each company would have a certain percentage of the market. The companies sometimes agreed on price increases in advance, the states added.

The states said Malik and Mehta spoke directly to one another to agree on their companies' shares of the market for a delayed-release version of a common antibiotic, doxycycline hyclate.

"It is our belief that price-fixing

is systematic, it is pervasive, and that a culture of collusion exists in the industry," Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen, who is leading the case, told a news conference in Hartford.

Mylan said in a statement it had found no evidence of price-fixing by the company or any of its employees, and vowed to defend itself vigorously. Malik, the company's second-ranking official, has received

more than \$50 million in compensation over the past three years, last year making more than CEO Heather Bresch. "Mylan has deep faith in the integrity of its president, Rajiv Malik, and stands behind him fully," the company said.

Emcure, also a defendant in the case, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Two former executives of Emcure's subsidiary Heritage Phar-

maceuticals pleaded guilty in January to federal charges of conspiring to fix prices and divide up the market for doxycycline and the diabetes drug glyburide.

The two men, former Heritage president Jason Malek and former chairman and chief executive Jeffrey Glazer, reached a deal with 41 states and territories in which they each agreed to pay \$25,000 and cooperate with the state probe.



Hafeez's bowling action tested in England, report likely in two weeks

LAHORE: Off-spinner Mohammad Hafeez's bowling action was the subject of an independent assessment held at the Loughborough University in England on Wednesday. According to sources, Hafeez was asked to bowl four overs for the test. The report is likely to arrive in two weeks.

If he's unable to clear the test, Hafeez will face suspension and be asked to correct his action and pass the test again. His suspension, in this case, is likely to be more than the one-year suspension which ended last year after his action was found to flout ICC rules.

However, the all rounder is con-

fident of a good outcome and is hopeful to be able to bowl again in international cricket.

"Everything went well and I am confident that the result of bowling action test will be good," he said while talking to Dawn.com.

He had also exuded confidence as he left for England earlier this week,

saying he's been bowling with the same, re-modeled bowling action previously cleared by the ICC.

Hafeez, who has been suspended twice — in December 2014 and July 2015 — was reported for bowling with a suspect action during the third ODI against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi on October 18.



England coach Trevor Bayliss writes off Ben Stokes' Ashes chances

PERTH: England coach Trevor Bayliss said he is preparing for life without Ben Stokes in the Ashes series, adding that any reprieve for the suspended all-rounder would be just a "bonus".

As England for their opening tour match in Perth on Saturday, Stokes remains at home awaiting the outcome of a police probe into his involvement in a brawl outside a nightclub.

The England and Wales Cricket Board have not yet ruled the vice-captain out of the Ashes series, which starts with the first Test in Brisbane on November 23.

But Bayliss said he has had to discount any chance of Stokes playing a role.

"I have," England's Australian coach told reporters late Wednesday, when asked if he had "written off" Stokes.

"If he turns up it's an absolute bonus. And if he did happen to turn up, I'm quite sure he would slip back in very easily.

"It's totally out of our hands. We have just got on with preparing as best we can."

The Stokes controversy has rocked England's preparations with former Australia Test captains Steve Waugh and Ian Chappell among those who believe England can't retain the Ashes without him.

"The players have a very important,

tough series coming up and they are totally focused on winning it," Bayliss said.

"They are concentrating on playing without him. We can't worry about something we can't control."

Despite England's chances of retaining the Ashes urn weakening without Stokes, Bayliss said he Australia were still "beatable". "If any team lose one of their better players it's going to be upsetting to a certain degree," he said.

"But we have time to smooth things out and find the right combination. We certainly wouldn't be here if we didn't think we could win without him." Certainly, we've been playing some good cricket, so have Australia. Both teams are similar.

They are beatable." With Western Australia's best players on Sheffield Shield duties, England will face a second-string WA XI squad in their two-day match starting at the WACA Ground on Saturday.

Only two players in the squad, captain Nathan Coulter-Nile and all-rounder Will Bosisto, have Shield experience. It will be the first of three warm-up matches for England before the first Test at the Gabba.

After taking on the WA XI side, England face a Cricket Australia XI in Adelaide and Townsville in four-day games.

Ashes 2017-18: England's Moeen Ali, Steven Finn injured ahead of tour opener

LONDON: England have fitness concerns over pace bowler Steven Finn and all-rounder Moeen Ali after the duo sustained injuries during training for the upcoming Ashes series against Australia. Finn, who replaced all-rounder Ben Stokes in the touring squad, injured his left



knee while batting during Thursday's session in Perth, while 30-year-old Moeen skipped practice due to a sore left side.

Both players will undergo scans on Friday to discover the extent of their injuries and are expected to miss the two-day warm-up match against

Western Australia in Perth this weekend.

Ali has played 44 Tests for England and his exclusion from any part of the five-Test series could prove costly for the visitors as they aim to retain the Ashes. The first Test of the series starts in Brisbane on November 23.

Fit-again Mathews available for India tour



COLOMBO: All-rounder Angelo Mathews has been declared fit and available for Sri Lanka's tour of India later this month as the islanders strive to end their limited-overs woes against their formidable neighbours.

Former captain Mathews missed the two-Test series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates with a calf injury, the latest setback in the injury-plagued career of the 30-year-old.

"Angelo and Kusal Perera have both recovered and they will be considered for selection for the Indian series," Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chief executive Ashley de Silva was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "Asela Gunaratne is fit as well," he added.

Sri Lanka registered a rare Test series victory in the UAE but have lost their last 16 limited-overs matches, including one-day and Twenty20 whitewashes at the

hands of India and Pakistan.

"It's pretty obvious what the mood will be like when you've lost 16 games," interim coach Nic Pothas said.

"With respect to new faces, that's a conversation that we need to have with the selectors," the former South African wicket-keeper added. "But I think it stands to reason that in any walk of life, when you've had negative results for a period of time you need to see some change somewhere."

SLC is expected to name a new head coach by the end of the year.

"We are discussing with about three or four coaches, including Nic Pothas. We hope to finalise the decision by the end of the year," de Silva said.

Beginning on Nov 16, Sri Lanka play three Tests in India, followed by the same number of One-day Internationals and Twenty20 Internationals.

Players call the shots when it comes to coach selection

NEW DELHI: Rahul Dravid explained the India team coach selection controversy in one short sentence. The players, he said, are more powerful than the coach.

That players (read captain) appointing the coach is a harsh reality of Indian cricket. Assorted cricket legends have realised India's coaching role is a risky snakes-and-ladders game. You may not need 'setting', to borrow a word from Virender Sehwag's lexicon, to survive but there is no denying the Indian team coach holds office under 'pleasure' (read mercy) of the captain.

Over the years, the role of the coach has evolved. Initially, traditionalists ridiculed the idea and Imran Khan/Ian Chappell/Shane Warne and KP thought a coach was useful only for going to the ground from the hotel. Cricket was strictly captain's territory — he took all on-field calls though some said SMG/Ganguly/Dhoni's clout extended beyond the boundary into



selection committee meetings.

When teams first appointed coaches, this became a convenient post-retirement job for eminent past players. John Buchanan, however, defied this trend to coach Australia for eight years despite a modest first-class career of seven first-class games in which he made 141 runs and did not take a wicket. With increased focus on 'professionalism', teams went overseas to hire the best and today England have an Australian coach and South

Africa have appointed a West Indian. Playing cricket 'at the highest level' is no more an essential eligibility requirement. Mike Hesson, New Zealand's coach for the last four years, has no first-class cricket experience. Same was the case with Russell Domingo, former South African coach. Trevor Bayliss (England), Nick Pothas (Sri Lanka), Micky Arthur (Pakistan), all current Test team coaches, have not played Test cricket.

Coaches today are more managers

than technical gurus. They organise nets and build team culture to create the right environment for players to express themselves.

The coach is friend, elder brother and mentor rolled into one. India appointed foreign coaches in the hope an outsider would be free of bias and deal the same cards to everyone. Successive foreign coaches (John Wright, Gary Kirsten, Duncan Fletcher) stayed low profile and adjusted to Indian cricket's culture which gives special privileges to cricketers. Greg Chappell refused to understand this reality, no wonder star players joined hands to take him out.

But a lot has changed for coaches in India since. Indians (Shastri and Sanjay Bangar) are with the Indian team and top stars (Sachin Tendulkar, Sehwag, Laxman, Dravid, Zaheer Khan, Anil Kumble) work in the IPL as 'mentors' where, interestingly, they enjoy far greater clout than a conventional coach!

PATTINSON SET TO UNDERGO SURGERY

SYDNEY: Injury-prone Australia quick bowler James Pattinson is set to have spinal surgery in a last-ditch effort to fix a recurring problem that has dogged him for years.

A lower back stress fracture kept the 27-year-old out of Australia's recent tour to Bangladesh and he will also miss the upcoming Ashes series against England. Cricket Australia's sports science chief Alex Kountouris said they were talking with several New Zealand specialists, including one who helped save paceman Shane Bond's career.

"He's got four stress fractures that haven't healed since his teenage years," Kountouris told The Aus-



tralian on Wednesday of Pattinson. "What he's doing is getting bone stress on the healthy part of the bone. And that one part of the bone keeps

breaking." CA medical staff has yet to sign off on spinal surgery as the best option, but Kountouris said: "We're a long way down the track of looking at it." "It doesn't sound like there's a lot to lose," he added. "There are obviously some complications that could possibly happen, there are concerns with any sort of surgery, but that's probably the way we're going to go."

Injuries have limited Pattinson to 17 Tests since his 2011 debut and he has not played since July 1 when he represented Nottinghamshire in the final of England's one-day tournament against Surrey at Lord's.



Ashish Nehra did not want to continue playing at expense of Bhuvneshwar Kumar

NEW DELHI: Ashish Nehra said that he did not want to continue playing at the expense of in-form India medium pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, moments after retiring from all forms of cricket late on Wednesday.

The first of the three T20s between India and New Zealand was Ashish Nehra's final match, that too at his home ground of Ferozeshah Kotla in

New Delhi, which the hosts won by 53 runs.

Nehra, known for speaking his mind, said that it was during this year's Indian Premier League (IPL) he felt that Bhuvneshwar Kumar — who wasn't a certainty in India's T20 team for most of 2016 due to poor form — is ready to spearhead the pace attack in limited-overs. It was during IPL 2017

that I felt Bhuvneshwar Kumar was ready. His form went up and down until this year's IPL. But after it, I felt that this is the way forward, that as a bowler I would not like to keep playing at the expense of Bhuv. If there was a big tournament six months down the line like the World Cup or if I have a plan to play for the next two years, then I have earned this spot,"

said the 38-year-old Nehra. "If somebody plays better than me, he can take it. It is not as if I was getting any favour by getting selected. You can check my record over the last two years. When I was doing well, I said to Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri that it is not that I don't want to play. If you need three fast bowlers, I am here, or if Virat says, 'No, I want you.' I was

available. "Even on Wednesday people were wondering if Ashish Nehra will play or not, but if I was in the XI today, I was obviously going to play. I didn't come here to roam around," Nehra said. The left-arm pacer, who has played 17 Tests, 120 ODIs and 27 T20s, said that he is satisfied with himself in spite of several injuries which plagued his career.